



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
November/December 2005

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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

Volume XLVI, No.6

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Paddlers on the Upper
Dearborn River, Montana.

Photo by Steve Rodgers



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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, 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.

Executive Director


The Journey Ahead

A small, square portrait of a man with short, light brown hair, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt. The background of the photo is a blurred natural setting with green foliage.

Building membership

Increasing our membership is serious work for our organization. We need to gain a critical mass of whitewater paddlesport enthusiasts that will ensure the future financial health of American Whitewater. At our recent Gauley Festival we were able to sign up 373 new and renewing members (as a benchmark, in 2004, 130 members were added at Gauley Fest). As you read this, membership is growing modestly, yet less than 1 in 10 whitewater enthusiasts are members of American Whitewater. We have some real work ahead of us to build our membership and gain a larger share of the paddlesports community. If you have friends who are not members, please take some time to talk with them about membership in AW.

Membership in AW is more than a subscription to the Journal; it's about access and preservation of the places we love on the planet. Our community-based activism, supported by talented AW staff, and backed by national membership, has proven to be an effective strategy in obtaining access and preservation of our whitewater assets.

Moving into the future, these changes provide AW with a sustainable business model while supporting our stewardship objectives. There has never been a more focused approach to our mission or a better time to support the work of American Whitewater. 

See you on the water,
Mark Singleton

River Stewardship

AW's strong conservation and access program was refocused and transformed into River Stewardship, an integrated approach to the mission work of our organization.

- Stewardship is an umbrella that covers the major project areas of AW.
- Stewardship is the process for an integrated approach to AW mission work.
- Stewardship includes an educational approach and tools for turning recreational users into conservation advocates.
- Stewardship is fundable.
- Stewardship builds partnerships with land management agencies.
- Stewardship enhances the public perception of boaters.

Under the leadership of Kevin Colburn, National Stewardship Director, our Stewardship Team is in place to lead, train and support community-based activism representing the interests of boaters and the rivers we care for. Tom O'Keefe in the Pacific Northwest and Dave Steindorf in California joined the Stewardship Team in the spring of '05 and have been very successful with regional projects. AW will continue with this regional approach to our core work.

Our River Stewardship Team remains focused on our mission, “To conserve and restore America’s whitewater resources

Office Relocation

In June American Whitewater moved into new executive offices located on the campus of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. This choice was the outcome of a request for proposal process that included over 20 proposal requests to colleges, universities and economic development entities nationwide. The new location is working very well and has proven to be a significant reduction in office overhead expense for the organization. Some of the side benefits of our new location include access to college interns, joint opportunities for grant applications and shared applied research.

Staff Consolidation

Through a process of attrition, AW staffing levels were reduced this year. This represents a challenging process of tightening our belts and living within the means of our organizational income. There will always be more projects than we have the paid staff resources to take on. Thus, we will focus on engaging volunteer members and providing them with the tools and knowledge they need for successful community-based grassroots activism.

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Safety First!

Winter Studies

by Andrew Jillings

Winter Studies for the Recreational Boater

Thinking of moving up a grade but need just a little more confidence in your ability to take care of you and your buddies on the river?

Practicing knots and can't remember where the rabbit comes out of the hole or if Mick Jagger sticks his tongue over his head or round it?

If the answer is yes, then you may need to brush up on your river rescue skills. Unquestionably, the best way to do this is to take a Swiftwater or River Rescue Clinic. These are offered by a number of reputable organizations such as the American Canoe Association and are, hands down, the best way to learn. But if there are no courses near you or it's the wrong time of year, pick up one of these books or videos in order to learn some life-saving skills, or maybe just kill some time between pool sessions. (By the way, the rabbit traditionally comes out of the hole, round the tree and back down the hole.)

Videos

Lets review what's out there. Each film gets a Spam can rating for carnage, and a throwbag rating for technical content.



Heads Up!
River Rescue for River Runners
If you like Ace helmets and Perception Corsicas, you'll love this film. It wins four Spam cans for excellent carnage, and two and a half throwbags for rescue content. The script is very flowing and there's a lot of good information, but there's little organization and no section dividers.

It does emphasize how different it is to do a rescue than to read about one—an important point.

This may have been the first video to promote having your name written on a piece of duct tape stuck on your helmet, a tradition which has lasted to this day among the more socially-challenged rescue instructors. Apparently, this is an essential part of being in a rescue video, as is music that almost made it to that CPR video you had to watch in eighth grade Phys. Ed. Class.

Cold Wet and Alive

Dated but accurate description of how hypothermia affects a paddler, both physically and mentally. Soon to be updated, so stay tuned. Half a Spam can, but three throwbags for the detailed description of hypothermia. Some of us can relate.

Whitewater Self Defence

Decent layout, still the annoying music, but much less duct tape on helmets. The film makes an effort to show "regular" paddlers—Tevan and all—and this makes it more watch-able than most. The skills shown are simple, quick and effective and include discussion on group organization and decision-making. Only two Spam cans for this one, but three and a half throwbags for great technical content.

Staying Alive

This new DVD has the benefit of being laid out so that you can skip to any section. This film is written primarily for rescue personnel, so it completely misses

throwbags, wading and decision-making in favor of complex rope systems. If Whitewater Self Defence left you craving more technical skills, this is the one for you. There's a good section on haul systems and nice one on knots, although, ahem, purists will raise an eyebrow at some of the names and spelling. Three and a half Spam cans for some nightmare scenarios like you see on the Weather Channel, and three throwbags and a prusik minding pulley for more technical pointers than you can shake a stick at. Alas, not an Ace helmet or piece of duct tape in sight, but it's always good to see fire fighters in turnout gear throw themselves into raging rivers. On second thought, no it's not.

Books

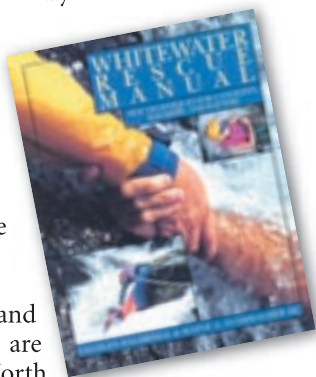
There are books out there for every level of interest.

Shorter than the latest Harry Potter and more interesting than a doctoral dissertation on French folksongs, these three books are all the average boater will ever need.

River Rescue: a Manual for Whitewater Safety
by Les Bechtel and Slim Ray

White Water Safety and Rescue
by Franco Ferrero

Whitewater Rescue Manual by Charlie Walbridge and Wayne Sundmacher



The Bechtel/Ray and Walbridge books are the standard North American texts and have quite similar approaches. The Ferrero book is the British equivalent and the only rescue book offered on the British Canoe Union's website. If you can get used to the foreign spelling and slightly different vocabulary then this book is very useful. Personally, I give a very slight edge to the Walbridge/Sundmacher book, as it has the best index

and layout, but you can't go wrong with any of them.

For the over-achievers and those who tend to drive around with 200 feet of rescue line in their truck "just in case," indulge yourself in Slim Ray's *Swiftwater Rescue: a Manual for the Rescue Professional*. The section on helicopter identification alone should cause a few late nights. Another one for the highly safety-conscious is the *Technical Rescue Riggers Guide* by Rick Lipke, a field manual for high angle rescue. Mere mortals wishing to learn more about anchors before diving into Lipke's section on Kootenay High Lines can look at *Climbing Anchors* by John Long, a classic text in the climbing community.

The truly rope-obsessed should look no further for winter fun than the *Ashley Book of Knots*—over 3900 different knots in one cinderblock of a tome. This is it, the Bible of knot tying and if I were in charge around here there would be a law requiring one near every toilet in the land.

Also strongly worth a look are two waterproof/plastic "aid memoirs," little booklets that you can carry in your boat in case you forget some of the basic knots, signals and systems. Slim Ray's *Swiftwater Rescue Field Guide* has almost as much information as his book, and is overkill for the average boater—it's more for the professional rescuer. But if you can't quite remember all 12 points on the Helicopter Decision Checklist then this is the one for you (personally, I always have a hard time with the twelfth).

A more useful field manual is the American Whitewater Safety Card Set. Written more for recreational boaters and containing only a reminder of things to do and skills to have, they are well worth having along on every trip—at least until you're totally familiar with all the information. They're made of sturdy plastic so they won't get soggy or scrunched up and contain just the right amount of information. They can be taped to the inside of your boat in a visible but out-of-the-way place (e.g. just behind the seat, high on the side of the hull).

Drills

Ya gotta practice this stuff, because it doesn't stick in your head very easily and when you need it, you'll be under some considerable stress.

Throw bags: Practice the usual underhand throw, then stand behind a tree and throw sidearm. Next, try kneeling down and throwing overarm, very similar to throwing while standing in a shallow eddy. Now do it all again with your other arm. Practice gathering the rope and throwing without stuffing (hint: coil by zig-zagging the rope across your hand, not the traditional circular coil, then put half the loops in each hand, and throw the end without the bag).

Pulleys: Using a table leg as an anchor, rig a Z-drag over to the dog's bed and see if you can move him (bigger dogs make for more pulleys).

Knots: Practice is essential, as knots are forgotten faster than high school calculus. Learn the Figure Eight family (Single, On a bight, Follow through, Double) a tractor knot of your choice (a Prussik or your carefully researched and practiced alternative) and a way of attaching two ropes together (e.g. Double Fisherman's). The Clove Hitch is useful, as is a Truckers' Hitch to tie down your boat on a roof rack. Always remember, if you don't know what knot to tie, tie a lot of whatever you do know. If you can tie them all, try doing so with your eyes closed or behind your back (ice water optional).

Anchors: If you know how to rig a Z-drag, you need to know how to build a variety of anchors, because there won't always be a big tree or car bumper just where you need it. Learn the principles from a book like *Climbing Anchors* by John Long. Paddlers tend to have fewer resources available when it comes to building anchors, so practice building SRENE anchors with less and less gear (SRENE anchors are Strong, Redundant, Equalized and with No Extensions—now stop asking questions and go read the book).

continued on page 66

This year
how about
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Safety Float Bags

by Paul Rolandelli

To Air is Human: Float Bags as Safety Devices

In the January/February 2005 issue of the *American Whitewater Journal* Dr. Thomas Johnson discussed HEED (Helicopter Emergency Egress Device), “Spare Air,” the civilian equivalent for the sport diver, and Rapid Air units, a commercially available “small rectangular tank that fits in the front pocket of a PFD. It provides about 3000 PSI of compressed air (15 breaths or so) to a submerged individual via an enclosed mouthpiece.”

This article will introduce a completely new way to combine float bags and an emergency reserve air delivery system. We will also discuss other concepts: Yankee ingenuity, common sense, a false sense of security and personal responsibility. First, let’s be clear that I don’t disagree with Dr. Johnson or Rapid Air products, nor are they lacking in Yankee ingenuity, common sense or personal responsibility. However, we all need to understand what a false sense of security is. The proposal that you are about to read, and the existing Rapid Air units, should not be the reason that you finally decide to run that hitherto un-runable river for your skill level. That would be creating a false sense of security. My idea is about pulling out all the stops to keep someone alive that has gotten into, shall we say, water over their head, rather than expanding the playing field of places that you or I are not qualified to run but now feel safe doing so.

You do not become invincible simply because you bought, borrowed, or a mate has any particular piece of equipment. You have, however, added another thing that can fail or distract you from realizing that not only does equipment have limits but you, me and everyone else all have limits to our abilities and there are situations that we shouldn’t be in. It may be okay for someone else with their skill level to be on that river with the conditions that day but not you. The last thought in this series is that you may be the limiting factor, not the river.

Recently I attended a river safety course in which I had a blast and left it all on the river, as they say. I later described it to friends at work as the log flume ride at the amusement park without the log. When we got back in the boats and started back to the take-out, which involved paddling up some relatively minor rapids, I was whipped, too tired for the situation that I would have been fine in if we had done it earlier that day. I was the limiting factor in that situation and I knew it. Thankfully, due to good instructors and classmates I wasn’t in any real danger, but it is often the last rapid of the day or when people get tired that they get into trouble. Part of our responsibility to ourselves and to our mates is to realize this trend and take steps to minimize our exposure to such situations.

At work, I have earned the nickname Macgyver for my ability to resolve complex situations. Okay, how does that apply here? We are looking for a few well-timed extra breaths of air—up to “fifteen or so” breaths that are always readily available. Being able to refill the emergency reserve on the river without having to visit a special shop or have special certification would be ideal. Currently, high-pressure air tanks, such as Rapid Air, are rare on the river but floatation bags in kayaks and whitewater canoes are common. By designing or changing the length of the inflator hose, choosing a different but existing push-pull valve design that is easier to manipulate underwater and possibly adding a bite mouth piece and check valve, each of us can have one to two cubic feet of air with them any time we are within three feet of our boat. The total cost is under five bucks for a retro fit to existing float bags. It is incredibly simple but no one has put the combination of parts together until now.

Will this actually work? While not a crisis situation but in a controlled testing situation, I was able to float face down in a calm pool for 4 minutes and 45 seconds by breathing the air that was in one of my float bags that I normally use in my kayak.

That bag was equipped with a longer inflator hose but not equipped with a valve that is user friendly underwater. It instead had the standard twist valve that is on most float bags. It wasn’t great but it was possible to breath for almost five minutes.

What is the advantage? Hopefully with an extra breath or two you have self-rescued or your mates have found you, fixed the situation or ripped a float bag out of one of their kayaks re-inflated it and passed it to you. Rescuers alternating two full float bags to someone trapped in a submerged kayak could theoretically keep the boater alive underwater for an extended period of time while rescuers set up a the needed extrication. Ordinarily you can’t refill a pressurized tank on the river but a crew or even a single buddy can inflate a pair of float bags until help arrives if someone’s life depends on it. The existing small diameter of the inflator tube could be replaced with a larger diameter but the smaller size has a hidden benefit. It necessitates slow breaths that will help calm a person, may help control panic, and extends the length of time that the air will last, which is a big advantage in rescue situations.

How is this possible? Take a CPR class and they teach you that exhaled air contains about 16 percent oxygen. Normal air contains 21 percent oxygen and humans can stay alive on as little as 12 percent oxygen. Filling the bags with short puffs of air, air that hasn’t been taken deep into your lungs will increase the percentage of oxygen that gets into the bag. Using an air pump that doesn’t “use” oxygen will fill the bag with 21 percent oxygen. Installing a separate line to fill the bag with a manual air pump and a second hose with a check valve that prevents the user from blowing the used air back into the bag will prevent a person in a state of panic from continuously re-breathing their own expired air until they pass out from lack of oxygen. This system is designed to breath from the bag once and then exhale the air into the water before taking another breath from the bag.

Imagine a float bag in the back of your kayak with a 3 to 4-foot hose that runs up between your skirt and your life jacket and terminates in the kind of bite valve used on the backpack-style hydration systems. It is critical that the design not impede a wet exit, meaning that the tube has to slip out, permitting a swimmer to separate from the boat and not get caught on the air hose. If necessary, a breakaway valve can be installed in the line. Others may choose to simply keep the tube in the cockpit area under skirt, figuring they will not use it unless they have popped the skirt. Having the hose pass through the hull or skirt while maintaining a watertight seal is another option.

Why not twist valves? Twist valves, such as Halkey-Roberts 320TEx tube end valves, are not the best choice for this dual use float /reserve air bag. In the open or unscrewed position it is most comfortable to bite on the hard plastic. This places the lower end of the threaded twist portion of the valve outside your mouth and in the water. When you suck on the tube to draw air out of the bag a venturi effect is created, pulling small amounts of water through the spaces around the threads. The result is small amounts of water in your mouth with each lifesaving breath of air. Simply wait until you are ready to exhale and blow the water out of your mouth. If you try to avoid this by keeping the entire twist valve in your mouth and use your tongue to block the end of the tube when you are not breathing you are getting into the gag reflex area at the back of your mouth. We can all agree that adding gagging or vomit to an already bad situation underwater is not helpful. Twist valves will work in a pinch but it is better to select a new in-line push-pull valve that eliminates the threads and the leak point. In a crisis, the fewer details that you have to remember or deal with, the better. As an added benefit, the push-pull valves are smoother on the outside and shouldn’t snag when pulled out from under a life vest. Combined with a bite valve, this system provides a double lock against air accidentally escaping in its primary role as a float bag.


Other considerations: if you are more than three feet from your boat, you are out of air unless you thought to take the bag with you when you wet exited. Keep in mind that an inflated float bag out of the boat will be subject to water pressure and currents. Another consideration is how removing air from inside the bag and replacing it with water outside the bag will change the handling characteristics of the stuck boat. Most importantly, there is no reserve on the reserve, meaning when the bag is fully collapsed you run out of air with no warning.

It should be noted that the bag that I used in the test was out of the kayak and fully inflated. Obviously, the size of the kayak will determine the size of the float bag and consequently the number of breaths that are available. Many of us already have one to two cubic feet of air in our boats. All that we need is a way to deliver it to ourselves and others when needed.

Halkey-Roberts, a commercial valve maker, makes a push-pull valve (320AC) that is already in production and only needs to be added to the new float bag specifications. Cap it off with a bite valve of the type marketed by the backpack hydration systems and you have a float bag/reserve air/air splint that takes up no more space than your current float bag. Any models that are sold commercially should include a check valve to prevent a user from exhaling oxygen-depleted air back into the bag.

If you intend to retrofit your existing bags, hardware stores sell the clear tubing by the foot and the glue to hold it in place. Read the warning label on the glue. It will tell you not to breath the fumes. That means not getting the glue inside the tube and waiting for it to fully dry before testing it. You also void all warranties on your bag and I offer none. Try this at your own risk. But if someone’s life is at stake it’s worth a try. In an emergency situation, you need to improvise and make do with what you’ve got. This whole article deals with common sense but true emergencies are

the ultimate test of Yankee ingenuity. If you can’t raise the bridge, lower the water; if you are facing a problem and the first solution doesn’t work, find another way to do it. And quickly!

Use a little common sense. Try this before you need it. First try the bag with you out of your boat in calm water where you can stand up. Record how many breaths you get, then put the bag in the kayak with you still outside and see how many breaths you get. Only then should you try it sitting in the kayak. Make sure the hose does not trap you in or tie you to the boat. If you take these simple preparatory steps, you will be better able to exercise this option in an actual crisis. 



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Whitewater Junior Olympics Add New Events to Attract More Youngsters

It started with the “rumble on the raceway,” in which Canadian Kathleen Taylor of Ontario was ambushed by American Colleen Hickey of Illinois upon leaving the first gate. In a kayak-flipping melee that saw both boaters being submerged, young Anna Periotti from Durango, Colorado, whizzed past and won the Junior Women’s race in the new boater-cross free-for-all competition at the 2005 Whitewater Junior Olympic Championships. Canadian David Lynch from Ontario was the winner in the Junior Men’s category.

The Canadians continued to show their strength as Andrew Jobe of Alberta picked up a win in the Junior Men’s division in freestyle/rodeo, with Elliot (Piston Arms)

Poe of Asheville, North Carolina, taking top honors among the Cadets. There was even an exhibition free-style competition for the coaches, with Matt Weldon of Howard, Pennsylvania, a former Junior Olympic star himself and now a grad student at MIT, finishing first.

This was followed by a downriver sprint race, with promising young Jessica Subido from suburban Sacramento, California, leading the Junior Women. Meanwhile, Alex Dodge of Golden, Colorado, posted the fastest time for the Junior Men. He edged Rochester, New York’s Adam Contant, who just a few weeks earlier had beaten Alex and seven others in the junior bracket of the famed FIBArk 26-mile downriver race in Colorado. “It was payback time,” said Alex.

And, of course, there was the traditional Olympic-style slalom competition,

with Erin Eichfeld initiating the event by singing the American and Canadian national anthems. Victors in the slalom races were Caleb Bethea, Casey and Devon Eichfeld, Jeff Gette, Jessica Groeneveld, Colleen Hickey, Zach Lokken, AJ Martinez, Caroline Queen, Michael Taylor, Rachel Thomas, and Danny Warner. These athletes represented five U.S. states and two Canadian provinces.

These events all took place in South Bend, Indiana, on July 27-31, as the U.S. welcomed its Canadian neighbors to the USACK International Whitewater Junior Olympics. The 10th annual running of the much-expanded JO Championships was conducted on South Bend’s East Race, a multi-million-dollar urban whitewater course. In addition to slalom, there were the freestyle, downriver, and boater-cross events, all designed to attract more young paddlers and provide them with

a true international-type experience. Youngsters who were not on the U.S. and Canadian Junior National Teams—which were competing in Europe over the summer months—qualified for the JO Championships at a dozen regional and provincial races conducted from coast to coast earlier in the year.

At the Championships, there were gold, silver, and bronze medals in each of the four disciplines – slalom, freestyle, downriver, boater-cross—with the competing kids further divided into Junior Men’s and Women’s (ages 15-18), Cadet (13-14), and Cub Cadet (12-under) categories.

For the third straight year, the 10-member team from the Nantahala Racing Club of North Carolina, coached by Pablo McCandles and Zuzana Vanha, won the slalom races and the separate CH Cup competition with 31 points. Trailing were the Mach One Racing Club of Pennsylvania with 20½, Valley Mill Camp of Maryland with 18, Front Range Paddling Assoc. of Colorado with 16½, and six other teams. Coach McCandless said, “Our kids were at the top of their game. I was really impressed with their effort.”

Front Range finished first in the scoring for the new Ray McLain Cup, in which points were accumulated in all four of the aforementioned disciplines. Coached by Chris Wiegand, the 14-member Front Range team totaled 148½ points, followed by Mach One with 94½, Nantahala with 85, and Valley Mill with 53. Winners of the Ray McLain River Meister trophies for individual excellence in all four disciplines were Colleen Hickey of Okawville, Illinois, and Tyler Hinton of Lafayette, Colorado. This new award category memorializes the long-time efforts to promote multi-event youth paddling by the recently-deceased McLain from Green Bay, Wisconsin. We miss you, Ray!

In both the slalom and overall competition, Ontario led the Canadian entries, with Alberta second, Quebec third, and British Columbia fourth. Lynn Jobe, one of Canada’s team leaders, said, “Thanks for making the Canadians feel

so welcome ... we really liked the idea of encouraging the kids to cross-train and compete in the different disciplines ... it shows our athletes that multi-talented kids can succeed.”

Almost everyone attending the 2005 JO Championships praised the efforts of Competition Directors Bill Constable from Indiana and Mike Hickey from Illinois. Others contributing to the event’s success were Mach One Coach Dave Kurtz, whose 8 youngsters not only earned a couple of runner-up trophies but also demonstrated the best in good sportsmanship; Pyranha and its representatives Josh Bechtel and Dixie-Marree Prickett, sponsors of the freestyle competition; other sponsors such as Lotus, Smith, and Teva; and a bunch of volunteer leaders that included JO Committee Chairman Richard Perlmutter, Eric Lokken, Walt and Christian Hinton, and Canadian Coach Greg Hunter, to mention just a few, plus all those from South Bend who assisted.

Looking ahead, the site for the 2006 JO Championships remains undecided, but Colorado, New York, and North Carolina all have indicated an interest in hosting this event.

In the meantime, those of us involved with the Junior Olympics feel we have taken a major step forward in promoting youth paddling and racing in North America. As Olympian Ben Kvanli from San Marcos, Texas, stated while donating his time to help at South Bend, “Everyone seems to be finding a way to get along ... this will go down as the most fun JO’s yet ... hopefully even more youngsters will participate next year.”

For further information about the Whitewater Junior Olympics Program, contact USA Canoe and Kayak, headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, at: info@usack.org, or the author at: RiveRhapsody@aol.com.

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Notes from the Field

Why Compete?

by Clay Wright

Sometimes I like to drift down hard rapids to see if I can make it without paddling. Sometimes I like to front-surf and straight-hop even when I'm on a big, bouncy wave. But more often than not I'm trying to get the most out of whatever piece of river I'm on.

I like to challenge my abilities in a dynamic and creative way at each feature and on every surf. Stretching your limits and creating your own new challenges is, to me, what kayaking is all about. For those of you who share this view, may I suggest another type of challenge—a competitive one? Most paddlers think that competing in whitewater events is only for the pros, but in reality, competition can be beneficial for you, too.

There are so many reasons not to compete in a kayak event, it is important that we get them out of the way first:

1. It usually costs money.
2. You waste much of the day waiting for your turn.
3. What's the point anyway?

Okay, point number 1 is pretty much true. Except for the Green Race, the Cherry Creek Race, the Wavesport Open, and assorted Red Bull events, you've usually got to pay to play.

Point number 2: guilty as charged. You'll find even if the lines aren't too bad before the freestyle event, they go really slow and nobody's taking a break. Before races, you

are waiting too; sitting around waiting for your chance to go as fast as possible. Ironic, isn't it?

Which brings me to #3: what is the point, anyway?


It's that challenge thing. Where else can you grow your abilities faster than when confronted by the most practiced paddlers around?

In freestyle events, many people compete to win—as if that were the only reason to be there. It isn't. While you may have a few tricks to show off, chances are somebody's got a few you don't and can throw them in places you can't. Instead of concentrating on your inadequacy, LEARN from the people around you while you have the chance. There is rarely such a great opportunity to get coached as there is in the days before and after a rodeo because there is always plenty of time to talk between rides. See tricks you've never heard of get done in places you wouldn't have guessed, sure, but becoming a better kayaker in the process ... that's what makes the entry fee worthwhile.

Do you think racing is about seeing who's fastest in a boat? Okay, you're right. But it

is also a great way to push your skills to the limit while rewarding yourself with a big race-buzz to boot. Running rapids as fast as possible improves not only your strength and stamina, but also your mental and technical game immensely. It's great training for running harder whitewater and especially good for getting used to the "push" of high-water runs. Not only do you have to plan how to grease the rapids, but also how you will leave it and flow into the next one, because catching eddies is NOT in the program. Racing forces your brain to speed up: you find yourself flowing in slow-motion down one super-long rapid with nothing in your head but the line's you are nailing, one after the other. Then that race-buzz kicks in and you are feeling fine hours after the finish: it's worth the price of admission every time.

Well, I paid my fee, didn't win, and now it's over: What a waste!

Nope. The real reward of competing in events is the improved paddling skills you will enjoy after it's all over. With the pressure lifted you will start to pop that move you were learning and have a whole new arsenal of new ones to work on. You'll still enjoy greasing that race-line when the clock isn't ticking and find the whole thing got easier at high water because you no longer need any of the eddies. Then, if nothing else, the river will seem less crowded even on a Saturday in June. And that's gotta' be worth something. 

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History Yough & Ohiopyle

by Sue Taft

I returned this past summer to Ohiopyle to meet up with a small group of boaters, aka Team Dead-Beat, for a few leisurely weekday runs down the Lower Yough.

The relative quiet of the weekday river brought back memories of a river and its town from some of my earliest boating days.

The river itself has changed very little. Its regulated releases have mitigated episodes of rapid-changing floods. The names of the major rapids have not changed either, although a few playspots have newer names, like Nemo's in Entrance. Swimmers is still the main playspot on the river for boaters perfecting their skills, trying out new boats, showing off, or just plain having fun. Killer Falls is still run backwards, too.

While the river itself has changed very little, other aspects of boating the river have. In looking back, the closing of the Stewarton take-out marked the beginning of the changes that were the result of the growth in popularity of the Yough and of whitewater in the mid-1970s. The

Stewarton trail at the river's edge is now difficult to locate, except for the two main entrance-marker trees. Nature has disguised most of the trail scars. Even boaters who started with Mirages and Dancers do not know its location now, let alone boaters in G's and Y's.

The take-out was on river right above Maze (apparently now a relatively unused name) between Killer Falls and Bruner Run. The trail crossed active railroad tracks, owned by the Chessie System, ending at a dead-end one-lane road along the tracks with no real parking area. In 1978, Chessie officially closed the Stewarton access, even posting guards to enforce its closing. Until the state-owned Bruner Run access was ready, one year later, a shuttle system was initiated to accommodate private boaters from Indian Creek via private access on river right a couple of miles beyond Bruner Run.

The shuttle system suffered through its own growing pains, particularly the temporary arrangements at the Indian Creek take-out. The boater parking lot for Indian Creek was nothing more than a cleared area near the Indian creek bridge on Rt 381. The shuttle used an abandoned railroad bed and a single bus often served the non-commercial boaters. This meant that the wait for the bus could be upwards of an hour—sometimes much more. The seats of the bus were taken out and we were loaded in like cattle—for which we often provided the appropriate “mooring”

sounds en-route. After a few such episodes, some of us went back to using Stewarton, carefully parking away from the railroad and sneaking past the guards.

The institution of permits at the same time Stewarton was closed further complicated boating the Lower. With as many as 95,000 people converging on the river that year, the daily allocation of only 192 permits for hardboaters versus 768 for rafters (commercial or private) added to our frustration. Execution that first year was a nightmare. The first-come-first-served permit system for hardboaters resulted in long waits at the put-in, adding to the already long waits at the take-out. The current evolution of the permit system and the Bruner Run take-out arrangements are heaven in comparison.

As for the put-in, the new one is much more user friendly, particularly for a boater like myself carrying an OC-1 to the river. The old put-in was in the same vicinity as the current one, but was a straight shot down a boulder- and rock-strewn trail to the river at Three-Foot Rock. Three-Foot Rock, the rock abutting the gauge at the river's edge, got its name because the rock was just covered at the old 3-foot level, which was based on the gauge painted on one of the railroad bridge supports. (The old 3-foot level now corresponds to roughly 4½ feet on the current gauge). Considering that the original gauge was based on Randy Carter's system (dating back to the late 1950s), where the “zero” level was marked



Sue Taft in her OC-1 on the Lower Yough.

Photo by Everclear Images Whitewater Photography

at the lowest level that was runnable in a canoe, the summer releases of about 1.7 feet are roughly at zero.

The town of Ohiopyle has changed, too. This is not only a reflection of the growth of whitewater, but of other outdoor activities like biking and fly-fishing that bring people to town. Where there was once only Leo and Falls Market, there is now a variety of new eating establishments where you can buy everything from veggie wraps to a burger and beer. Other new services including childcare, massage, and even dog care, are also available. The Diary Queen, a relative latecomer, is now gone, as is Greg at Cucumber with his SLR film camera. Both are replaced by

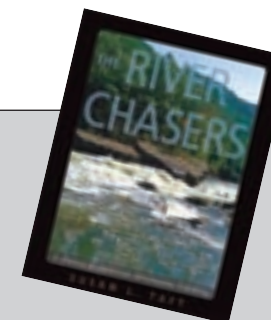
Chris and her all female crew with digital photography—so that we can share our boating images with our friends via email.

This all brings to mind the lyric, “and it ain't coming back again,” from the Dixie Chicks song Long Time Gone. While we may pine for the good old days, in this case many of the changes are welcome.

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, the history of American Whitewater Paddling. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to editor@amwhitewater.org and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.



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DVD Review

Basics for Women

Review of *Whitewater Kayaking Basics for Women* with Anna Levesque

by Jeanne Catalano

Two years ago at the Cheat Festival in Albright, West Virginia, a friend of mine ran up and handed me a bookmark for a kayaking/yoga trip in Mexico with Anna Levesque. She thought we should go on the trip but, at the time, it was my first year in a kayak and I didn't have the confidence to dream of going. Since then, I've had that bookmark posted on my desk at work and I often find myself daydreaming about kayaking in Mexico and enjoying the culture and whitewater. Anna Levesque's latest installment in the *Girls at Play* instructional kayaking series, *Whitewater Kayaking Basics for Women* with Anna Levesque, is not only an outstanding instructional DVD and a 25 minute Yoga routine, but it is also eye candy for the gorgeous sights and sounds of Jalcomulco, Mexico.

The DVD begins with pulsing music, which made me want to get up and dance. After the spirited intro, the DVD allows the viewer to choose between playing the DVD straight through or selecting chapters/special features. The chapters are divided into Strokes, River Running, and Playboating Basics.

In the Strokes chapter, Anna emphasizes proper stroke technique, which helps prevent paddling-related shoulder injuries. She demonstrates the importance of females using strength from the core muscles for efficient, effective strokes and provides useful drills, which can be used for a warm-up routine or practice. From paddle placement to arm positioning, she clearly explains and demonstrates the forward stroke, back stroke, sweep, draw strokes and braces. The Strokes segment uses helpful metaphors and exceptional camera angles to provide insightful, easy to follow instructions for learning basic kayak paddling strokes.

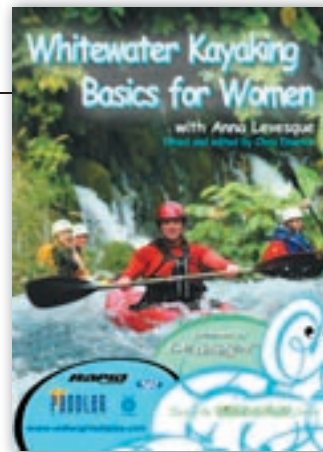
Building upon the skills from the Strokes chapter, the River Running chapter explains how to navigate a river. Anna begins with the basics by defining and depicting eddies, entering and exiting eddies, and the significance of catching eddies. Special graphics and camera shots depict proper angles. From here she explains and demonstrates additional river running skills such as the ferry and S-turns. She also illustrates the usefulness of these moves while running a river.

The next segment focuses on river features and reading water. Anna defines major river features, how to read them in their respective rivers, and what to do if you find yourself encountering a river feature such as a rock or a diagonal wave—just to name a few. The inclusion of the undercut rock would make this section complete. This segment also provides insightful advice to both male and female paddlers. She counsels the males on gender differences in learning (i.e. scouting rapids and finding lines) and coping with stress and advises females on how to build confidence and self-reliance.

Anna then moves from river features to playboating basics. She introduces this segment by telling the viewer that the most basic skill in building confidence for the beginning kayaker is the roll. Although the DVD does not include instruction on the combat/Eskimo roll, Anna explains and depicts skills for staying upright and she demonstrates useful bracing techniques (which are also included in the Strokes segment). She encourages female paddlers to go to roll clinics and to practice the roll as much as possible.

The playboating chapter uses slow motion video capture effectively to demonstrate how to catch a wave and what to do once you get on a wave. Once again Anna emphasizes and demonstrates proper arm placement to prevent injury. Useful information on getting out of a hole and applying the playboating basics on challenging whitewater is also provided.

The Special Features section contains a 25 minute Yoga routine, interviews with



female paddlers and a Mexico promo. The Yoga routine focuses on stretching the muscles that we use in kayaking as well as breathing and centering the mind. I found the Yoga very useful as I enter my second year in a kayak and find myself needing a way to calm my nerves before hopping on a Class IV river or stretching my muscles after spending more time in my kayak. The interviews provide advice from top female paddlers such as Ruth Gordon and Tiffany Manchester regarding building confidence, pushing one's limits, safety, and choosing a kayak. It was reassuring to hear professionals share their experiences and provide guidance for other female paddlers. The Mexico promo includes festive music with beautiful cinematography depicting the rivers of Mexico. It doesn't address the details of the trip but it provided me with real visuals to use while daydreaming at work and staring at my *Girls at Play* bookmark.

The *Whitewater Kayaking Basics for Women* with Anna Levesque couldn't have come at a better time for me. My second season of kayaking has been very challenging, both mentally and physically, and this DVD addresses many of the issues I've experienced—especially the mental aspects. Anna uses her status as a world-class kayaker and instructor to address female paddlers with confidence. She emphasizes the importance of not only trusting yourself, but also pushing yourself to build confidence—invaluable advice from an exceptional instructor. This DVD provided me with the inspiration to paddle in Mexico; now all I need to do is practice, build my confidence, and pray that I win the lottery. As a final, added bonus, 50 cents from the sale of each DVD goes to Soft Power Health to help fight malaria in Uganda.

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American Whitewater River Story and Photo Contest



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American Whitewater's River Story and Photo Contest was born nearly one year ago. Like many good things, it started as an idea—though not my own. When Meg, my longtime girlfriend and recent fiancé, suggested the contest, I wasn't immediately sold on it. I didn't know what kind of interest it would produce among writers and photographers, let alone among sponsors; I wasn't sure if we would be able to reach those writers who had great stories to tell but, for some reason, weren't writing them down and sending them in.

As we lined up sponsors and word of the contest spread, some of my doubts were quieted, but a big one still remained: would anyone enter? As winter gave way to spring and then summer, I grew exceedingly nervous. Entries weren't rolling in the way I had hoped. However, as the August 15th submission deadline drew near, the procrastinators began to weigh in. Even though the contest was open for nearly seven months, we received more than half of the entries in the final two weeks. When the dust finally settled and we set about reading, viewing and judging the entries, it became clear to me that the contest had been an unqualified success.

Not surprisingly, our Story category received the strongest entries. The most common theme in these stories was the near death experience. Two stories appear

in this issue that explore this subject deeply. "Swimming to Durango," by Jeff Sharpe is a nail-biter that begins with the author out of his boat, swimming for the last eddy above a deadly box canyon. Nate Alwine's "Icescape" takes on an appropriately foggy, dream-like tone in a hypothermic tale of snow, ice and kayaking. Our River Story winner, "River Stories" by April Lewandowski, also examines scary, if not lethal, moments in a kayak. What's remarkable about this story is the deeply personal way that the author is able to relate her experiences in a kayak to her relationship with her parents. It's an unusual tale for *American Whitewater*, but perhaps that's part of what makes it so compelling.

We received many impressive photos that captured the spirit of whitewater rivers and the people who appreciate them. Of note was our winning photo of an assembling raft trip, seen through the eyes of a bystander; a couple of impressive and artistically-captured waterfall descents; and a picture of young Danny Dorin cartwheeling with a Care Bear.

What can I say about the entries to our Humor division? They were downright funny—especially the ones presented in this issue. Whit Deschner's, "Going in Seine," tells the story of a hilarious trip down the Seine in Paris under exceptional ...pressure. Miles Townes and Julie

Albrecht also present comical stories about the inevitable conflict between boaters and their non-boating loved ones.

Our Conservation category lacked the depth of the other categories, but I was delighted with the quality of our winning entry, "River Rules," by Peter Stekel. It is a meditation on the sad state of water use in the West, inspired by an open boat trip down the San Juan in Utah. The story is also a great reminder of the importance American Whitewater's work.

But first, a big thank you is in order for our contest sponsors, Jackson Kayak, Wavesport, Pyranha, and Kokatat. Without their help, this contest would never have gotten off the ground. Thanks also to Ben Van Camp for making sure that the important things got done. Kudos to the judges all around for arriving at such an excellent batch of Winners and Honorable Mentions. And last, but certainly not least, a huge thank you to everyone who entered the contest. Even if you waited until the very last minute to enter, you made this possible.

So without further ado, we present to you the winners and some of the most notable entries to the 2005 American Whitewater River Story and Photo Contest.

Story Honorable Mention



Taylor Beavers waits for the train with his overnight gear on a 2-day Upper Animas River trip (Class IV-V) just above the town of Durango, Colorado.

Photo by Dunbar Hardy

Swimming to Durango

By Jeff Sharpe

"So, I'm going to die," I thought to myself. "This is it. This is the beginning of my death by drowning." I was swimming, separated from my kayak, and now hopelessly at the mercy of a river that was about to carry me into a deadly gorge and all I could think was, "How did I get here? How did I let myself get into this situation?"

Expert boaters talk often about mistakes: the close calls, near misses, and errors in judgment that serve as a fateful reminder

of our own mortality. Most of the time we can pinpoint the exact moment a mistake occurred on the river, be it a blown ferry, a missed eddy, or a late paddle stroke. But perhaps the scariest mistakes are the lapses in judgment that can create a domino effect and cause a situation to spiral out of control long after the initial mistake occurred. This June, I had the closest call of my paddling career, but it wasn't a missed move or an underestimated rapid that I attribute my brush with death to.

After a very disappointing spring in the Northeast during which I logged only nine days of paddling, on June 11th I ventured to Colorado for two weeks of boating on some of the biggest water around. Having learned to paddle in Colorado before

moving back East, I was eager to get on some of the runs I had missed during my residence there. The snow pack for the winter was one of the best on recent record and a strong group of boaters from both in-state and back home promised to make for a memorable trip.

The first two days were highlighted with runs down Oh-Be-Joyful in a snowstorm and the First Gorge of Lime Creek, the infamous Adrenaline Falls run. Feeling pretty good after an excellent day on Lime and encouraged by rapidly rising flows and the promise of plentiful sunshine in the days to come, we decided to shift gears away from creeking and do a big water run on the classic Upper Animas. The Upper Animas is a true whitewater treasure: twenty-six miles of continuous

Story Honorable Mention



A river does indeed flow through it...the free-flowing Lower Animas River (Class II-III) cuts through the middle of Downtown Durango, Colorado

Photo by Dunbar Hardy

(and I mean no pools) Class IV-IV+ big water, punctuated by three Class V’s and culminating in the formidable two-and-a-half mile Rockwood Box. Although not too difficult by today’s standards, the Upper Animas is not to be underestimated, as this summer clearly proved. In the three weeks following our trip, the Upper Animas claimed the lives of three people. It could have been four, as I will tell. Any river can be fatal, but on the Upper Animas, where a swim could easily last for miles in frigid water, caution and good judgment are every bit as important as your paddle.

On June 15th, Patrick, Dan, and I put on with overnight gear for a two-day self-support trip. None of us had paddled the Upper Animas before. The flow that morning, according to Watertalk, was 2700 cfs—enough to nudge the difficulty of the river up a notch, according to the guidebook. When we took off, two days later, the river had risen to over 4000 cfs, placing the flow well into the high range. According to the organizers of the Animas River Race, which occurred two days after we took off the river, the Rockwood Box was too high to safely run at this flow. What we found from the first mile to the last was unbelievable boating. Big wave trains, hole dodging on the fly, crashing-waves-in-your-face-trying-to-catch-a-glimpse-of-the-next-move-at-the-crest-of-the-bigger-waves

boating. I’ve paddled the Grand Canyon and I’ve paddled the Gauley. The Upper Animas is the definition of whitewater.

Pulling into an eddy on the afternoon of day one to scout what appeared to be something big lurking just below the horizon line, I was pleasantly surprised to discover we were not alone on this raging river. Evidently the big dogs were out doing some promotion for the race that weekend. Steve Fisher, Tao Berman and about ten guys with cameras had decided to film this churning froth known as No Name Falls.

I approached Steve in the eddy above the drop as he was getting ready to head out into the current. “Hey. How’s it going, man?” “Good mate,” he responded. “Big f---ing rapid, eh?” He and Tao both proceeded to style it with about ten times the power and precision that we did. Watching Steve and Tao execute their lines with such calculation and control in a rapid where I was feeling very much pushed around really made it clear that these guys are, in fact, on another level. I envied their strength and technique, acquired in part from paddling hundreds of days a year, and I wondered how good I could be if I actually spent some serious time in a boat.

With our celebrity sighting over, we decided to retire for the day and set to the task of setting up camp and preparing a fine meal of rehydrated food. Naturally, our conversation shifted to the river and what a great day it had been, but I could

sense a bit of apprehension toward the next day’s challenges—particularly the Rockwood Box. With the river rising and the water already bigger than any of us had anticipated, the idea of dropping into a committing sheer-walled gorge with considerably more intense whitewater than we had already faced was daunting. In particular, we had been cautioned about a massive hole at the entrance of the Box that could not be portaged, alternately called Mandatory or Guardian. The plan for the next day was to hike up to the rim of the Box and peer down inside. If the hole looked good to go, we would run the Box.

Of course, trying to judge the size of a hole from 500 feet above is an inexact science, as we soon realized. Our inspection of the hole confirmed our suspicion: it was big. How big? We couldn’t be sure and there was only one way to find out. But with the navigability of it established, we decided to drop in with the mutual understanding that swimming was not an option.

Guardian is one of the first rapids in the Box and comes upon you very quickly with no real chance to eddy out (at 4000 cfs, at least). This is one of those hits that just swallows you whole. Paddling into the drop, I felt myself enveloped by the massive curtain of water; felt it trying to flip me over and pull me back into its gaping maw. But I dug deep with my paddle blade and, amidst the fury, found a solid paddle stroke to pull me through.

With the “big” drop over, we settled into

a controlled rhythm. Despite the very continuous nature of the boating in the upper part of the river, the Rockwood Box constricted the river, backing it up into deep, swirling pools above gigantic rapids. Most of the rapids were boat-scoutable with a little creative eddy hopping, which was fortunate because the sheer walled gorge afforded little opportunity to hop out of our boats. A typical rapid might require a river-wide ferry into a monstrous wave train, and then a quick move left or right to avoid a massive hole. Most of the rapids were a solid step up from the whitewater of the upper run, and the waves were the biggest I’ve seen anywhere. They absolutely towered overhead and crashed down upon you, seemingly from every direction.

After a couple of miles of paddling we paused for about ten minutes in a relatively calm eddy formed by a grotto-like outcropping of rock to rest and to savor the dramatic beauty of the place. We also talked about the last critical move of the day: the take-out. Below the take-out for

the Rockwood Box, the Animas plunges into the Lower Box, an unrunnable gorge that could be out of Dr. Seuss’ worst nightmare. The river narrows to about 10 feet wide with all of its might slamming 60 feet down into a giant boulder sieve/ logjam that collects lost boats like dirty polypro collects stink (and is as equally reluctant to let them go).

So it was with some trepidation and a great deal of caution that we pulled back into the main flow, ready once again for the river. Up to this point, our experience had been entirely positive. Was it challenging? Yes, but at no point had the fun factor ever really disappeared. As a boater, I have always been somewhat cautious and our group that day had shown excellent decision-making, but sometimes a mistake is so far out of the scope of sight that it is impossible to see coming. Soon, a series of events would be set in motion that would nearly cost me my life, and yet I did not have the least idea I was placing myself in danger or that something I had done (or,

more accurately, failed to do) months ago would ultimately be to blame.

The gorge began to open up and I had the sense that the take-out was near. Rounding a bend, we caught a glimpse of a large rapid downstream and decided to ferry over to river right for a scout. While scouting the rapid, Dan’s boat, which had been perched precariously on a rock at river level, was unfortunately knocked into the river by a rock fall, and we watched in dismay as it soloed the rapid and began to disappear from sight.

This is the point where I believe I lost control of the situation and had this previous event not occurred, I believe the day might have ended very differently for me. Patrick and I scrambled into our boats with the unlikely notion that we would be able to recover the lost boat. I recall saying these very words to Patrick as we pulled our skirts on: “We need to use good judgment here. This is not a place where we can afford to make mistakes.”

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Unfortunately for me, my biggest mistake had already occurred, only I had yet to realize it.

We paddled through the next rapid—perhaps the biggest of the day—and with a demanding ferry to river right I found myself in an eddy above yet another big drop feeling very exhausted. I hopped out of my boat and looked downstream. I saw a huge pourover river left, a massive pillow rock backed up by a hole river right, and a small tongue angling from left to right between the two. Below that, a series of more large holes river right, and a large wave train on the left that continued on down around a bend in the river about 300 feet beyond. Before the bend, a large sign clearly marked the take-out, warning boaters not to go any further.

The move was to thread between the entrance holes, ferry to river left, and then work back right and catch an eddy and take out. I gave it a good look, but really only a cursory glance given the size and placement of the rapid. I remember breathing hard as I was getting back into my boat and dismissing it as nervous anxiety at the prospect of missing the eddy and ending up in the Lower Box. I pulled out and executed the initial move and began to ferry over to river left. At this point, the exhaustion that I had dismissed as a mental symptom began to manifest itself physically. I could feel my whole body begin to cramp up and shut down, but I was committed. I had to finish the rapid. I turned my bow downstream and into the wave train, which could rapidly take me around the bend and into the Lower Box if I did nothing to stop it. Passing the last big hole, I turned upstream and began to ferry back to river right towards the safety of a small eddy above a rock protrusion.

My whole body was racked with fatigue, the onset of which couldn't have come at a worse time. My arms were so exhausted I could barely grip my paddle, but I dug in and used the last of my strength to ferry into that eddy. I entered the eddy low and desperately tried to grab something to hold myself in place, but I lacked the strength to do so. I felt myself wash out of the eddy and bounce off the rock

protrusion. I spun around and realized there was a second eddy below, formed by the rock jutting into the river, but as I slid out of the first eddy, I ended up on the eddy line below, which was surging and squirrely and I soon found myself upside down. I can't remember the last time I missed a roll but, for all it mattered, I might as well have been trying to roll a nuclear sub at that moment. I simply did not have the strength, and the frightening realization came to me that I was going to swim, 200 feet above certain death.

I popped out of my boat and into the last recirculating eddy before the Lower Box. I held onto my boat for a moment or two, trying futilely to swim to shore against the whirling mass of confused water that seemed to want to carry me back into the main flow from which I so desperately had tried to escape. I felt helpless and screamed at the top of my lungs, but no one responded, and the indifferent river just tumbled downstream, toward a certain watery grave. I abandoned my boat, and with what little remaining energy I had, managed to pull myself to shore, where I stood exhausted and defeated for about three minutes while I watched my boat spin around in the whirlpooling eddy before eventually being grabbed by the main flow and swept out of sight, never to be seen again.

The Rockwood Box is Class V, but it is not cutting edge, death-defying whitewater. I have run harder and more dangerous rivers. So how did I get in so deep that it almost cost me my life? In retrospect, the answer is simple: In the three months prior to leaving for Colorado, I spent a total of nine days in a kayak. I arrived in Colorado out of shape and under prepared. I recalled those weekends this spring when I grumbled and complained about nothing running, but instead of going for a hike, I was content to drink beer with my buddies. And then somehow I convinced myself that I would be capable of paddling long, difficult rivers, at high flows and elevation. That was my biggest mistake, an error in judgment that occurred long before I even pulled my skirt on that day.

The following day, the three of us hiked

to the rim of the Lower Box to see if there was any hope for our lost boats. This is beautiful country and worth exploring even if you are not searching for kayaks. I was enjoying a very pleasant and sunny afternoon and the events that had occurred fewer than 24 hours before seemed very far away. Accompanied by the refreshing aroma of pine trees, we were walking along the banks of a clear alpine lake towards the rim of the Lower Box when I was pulled back to reality by the sound of a helicopter. That sound in the backcountry is often the harbinger of bad news. Our suspicions were confirmed by the tell tale red and white colors of the "Flight for Life" helicopter as it passed overhead. Many miles upstream, a raft had flipped, causing a guide and a customer to lose their lives to the Animas.

The paddling community instantly leaped into action, some making accusations and assigning blame, while others, acknowledging the risks of the sport, came to the defense of those involved, and tried to extract a lesson from the tragedy. And then on the 4th of July another paddler death on the Animas had boaters again questioning the judgment of the parties involved. The consensus of the paddling community seemed to be that while the boater was experienced and had run rivers of similar difficulty, she was not prepared for the cold, continuous nature of the Upper Animas and that, had she been more prepared, she might have survived.

The fact is we don't really know why these people died. It is an uncontrolled environment we enter every time we put on the river. I wonder what would have been said of me if my fate had been the same as those less fortunate paddlers. Would people say that I wasn't up to the task or that I underestimated the river? Or would they say that I was a solid Class V paddler with years of experience who exercised good judgment, but that ultimately accidents happen? Well, life is full of "would've, could've, should've's." Will I paddle the Rockwood Box again? Without a doubt. Will I be better prepared? Count on it. 🏞️

Story Honorable Mention

Icescape

By Nate Alwine

Wisps of coffee steam swirl into the crisp winter air from my mug. The soothing aroma surrounds me as I stand on the porch and stare out at a sea of snowdrifts, but see nothing.

The dream I had couldn't have meant anything, just my fears taking shape. Not a real possibility—not for me at least. I stare at the thermometer, 17 degrees. In the past 24 hours the temperature has risen by 34 degrees from the 17 below zero of last week. Cotton-strand clouds line the sky as the sun continues to rise further above the eastern horizon. I take another sip of coffee and push the disturbing images of last night's dream from my mind. Then I start getting my gear together for what is shaping up to be a beautiful mid-February run on Piers Gorge in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

I'll be alone today. That's what is running through my mind as my wife drives me to the put-in. I watch the reddish-brown 300-foot cliffs that line the river slide into the rear view mirror as I consider this thought. I've run the gorge thousands of times. I've always been the one to rescue others, never needing help myself. I shake my head. I'll be fine, no worries.

Pitch black eyes stare back into mine as he circles for another pass. The bald eagle has been swooping and circling me for the last mile. He almost looks as though he wants to tell me something. Whatever it is I'll never know because, as I enter Sand Portage Falls, he soars away toward his icy perch high on the cliffs.

Don Lofholm on Misticot Falls

Photo by Nate Alwine



Mist rises from the horizon line that marks Misticot Falls. As I near that line I see compression waves surging higher than the ten foot drop itself. Their appearance is less intimidating than the throaty rumble that echoes off the sheer cliffs on either side of the river. Snow and ice lace the crevices in the cliffs for 80 feet above the river. My wife is on top of one such cliff waving at me. I wave back and then take a few good strokes as I go over the lip of the falls. The river is flowing at about 2500 cfs. When I hit Superman Wave at the base of the falls, my entire kayak goes airborne. The bow of my boat crashes into Diagonal Wave, which pushes me river left and lines me up with the river left corner of Volkswagen Hole. When I hit the corner of the hole, it pulls me back to the center of the river and away from the ice shelf on the river left shore. A nice series of compression waves send my boat airborne three more times before I plunge into Chicken Ender Hole and enter the Two Sisters.

"I'm too far to the right," I think as my face slams into an ice shelf half way down First Sister. It is a stunning blow, and I feel like a rag doll as my kayak capsizes and I am swept under the ice. My paddle gets caught on something and is pulled from my grasp as I move deeper under the shelf. I feel the bottom of my kayak scraping the bottom of the ice until I wedge on a rock and come to a stop. I reach my hands toward the bottom of the ice and find it soft enough to dig my fingers into. I wiggle and push with my fingers until the current sweeps me off the rock and further downstream.

I feel my kayak bob up as it comes out from under the ice and I execute a quick hand roll. The cold air strikes my face and

my brain aches from sudden unbearable coldness. I realize that I'm still above Second Sister and that there is another ice shelf extending into the river here. My bow dives under the ice and wedges against another rock. Water starts to build up on the stern and I feel something pinching my left leg as my kayak begins to flex under the pressure. The water comes over the stern and pushes my body down stream, holding my face under water. My head starts aching from the ice-cold water flowing over it. Now I have something to worry about.

On dry land above me, my wife looks at her watch and wonders where I am. After watching me come over Misticot Falls she hiked a mile back to the car where she assumed I'd be waiting for her. It's been 10 minutes and still no sign of me. She looks back at the river and decides to wait another 10 minutes.

A haze creeps into my consciousness as my lungs burn for oxygen. I am certain I am going to die. I feel remorse for leaving my wife, but no panic. Very gradually the force of the water holding me down recedes. The surge has ebbed and I can sit upright in my kayak. Looking upstream, I can see the water rising again as another surge approaches. I need to buy some time so I reach under the shelf and hack away at the ice with my fingers. I succeed in making a decent handhold, and as the next surge rises over my stern I am able to use the handhold to pull my body towards the ice so the water pushes me into it rather than under the water. Water flows over my helmet but there is an air pocket around my face so I can breathe.

Story Honorable Mention

“I’m in trouble,” I think to myself as the surge continues to pound away at me. Finally the surge ebbs and I can let go of my handhold. My spray skirt is pinned between the ice and my kayak, so I cannot release it. I have no knife so I can’t cut my way free. I am wearing a dry top; the tunnel of my spray skirt is rolled into that dry top. My only hope for escape is through the tunnel of my skirt, but freeing it from the dry top will be nearly impossible. In between surges I have about 15 seconds to work at freeing the tunnel from my dry top, getting the tunnel down around my hips, and hyper extending my left leg to free it from where the kayak has begun to collapse around it. Finally, I lay on the back deck of my kayak, push with both hands on the rear lip of my cockpit, and push with my right leg to try to free my left leg. I feel a great stretching sensation in my left leg, but my knee finally passes through the collapsing part of the hull. As I slide free, my foot becomes stuck in the outfitting of the kayak. I stare in disbelief and think, “Now I’m in real trouble.”

My eyes grow large as I watch the next surge draw near. I am desperately trying to free my foot while I can still breathe. As the surge arrives Second Sister rises up and slams down on my head, forcing my upper body down, while my lower body is pulled up. More stretching on my poor left leg, and then it comes free. My body does a summersault as Second Sister pounds me against the bottom of the river. When I surface I am being swept into a tree that has fallen into the river. I kick, and am able to narrowly avoid the tree as I am swept into the next rapid. My only chance for escape is to catch a large eddy on river left. If I miss it I will be swept into Terminal Surf and under miles of solid ice where the river has completely frozen over. I swim with everything I have and enter the eddy as early as possible. A strong current is flowing out of the eddy, and soon what is left of my energy is gone. I inhale a mouthful of water and start to gag. I hear someone tell me to roll over on my back, so I do.

A fog seems to cloud my vision as I stare up at the sky. Soon I realize its not fog, but ice forming around my eyelashes. I watch the trees slowly move by as I backstroke

the final 50 yards to shore. I reach shore and cough up all the water I swallowed. Then I start stumbling down the trail.

My wife can’t believe her eyes as she catches sight of me walking toward her. She has waited 25 minutes before coming back to look for me and when she finally sees me there is blood running down my body from cuts caused by the ice. The right side of my face is swollen to the thickness of a baseball, and when I talk I am no longer able to string together coherent syllables. Icicles hang from my helmet and eyelashes, and my lips are very blue. She simply takes me by the hand and heads for home.

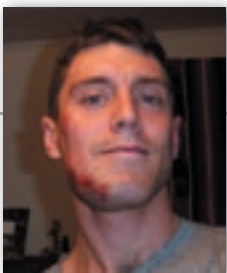
“That’s weird,” I think as we pull into the driveway. I rub my eyes and try to wipe away the remaining chunks of ice to clear my vision. When I look again, I swear I see my kayak leaning against the porch railing. It looks slightly battered, but still usable.

“What are you looking at?” My wife asks.

“Oh nothing, I must be seeing things,” I reply. I must’ve still been speaking gibberish, because she looked at me funny. But then everything simply vanishes and I find myself sitting upright in bed, heart pounding, and head spinning from a very scary dream. I try to shake it off as I head downstairs for a much-needed cup of coffee.

I watch clouds of steam billow from my coffee cup as I stand on the porch and gaze across the drifts of snow. The aroma soothes my nerves frayed by the awful dream. I check the thermometer and see that the temperature has risen to 17 degrees above zero. To the east the sun is casting its early morning light on a sky filled with clouds that look like strands of cotton. “It was only a dream.” I say to myself. With that I grab my wetsuit and get ready for the river.

As we head out the door we hear the phone ring. We don’t pick it up because we’re excited to get to the gorge but if we’d waited the day may have turned out differently. From the answering machine comes the voice of my mother: “Nate, I just had the most terrible dream last night. I dreamed you died and that I should pray



One day after the accident. The swelling had gone down considerably, but was still evident

Photo by Hilarie Alwine

for you right away. I did, and I know it was only a dream, but please be careful today.”

Sometimes I wonder what would have happened if my mother hadn’t prayed. Would I still have had that dream? If I hadn’t I’m sure I would have died. But when my day turned out exactly like my dream it was like I already knew the end of the story before it started. Before heading to the hospital later that day, my father and I even managed to extract my kayak from the ice, so that when I left for the emergency room, there was a battered, but usable kayak leaning against the porch railing. I guess anything is possible.

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Story Honorable Mention

It’s Not Just For The Whitewater

By Raymond Williams

“You don’t go to the Canyon for the whitewater,” said Lisa Birskevich—and she was right.

Although the Colorado contains huge waves and enormous holes, it is mostly flat water with plenty of current and swirling eddies. Just as the Canyon walls overshadow the river, the spirit of the Canyon overshadows the whitewater adventure.

In June of 2000, I returned from a five-day canoe trip to find a message from Lisa on my answering machine. “Call me right away; there may be an opening on the Grand Canyon trip.” Someone had dropped out, so the trip leader was looking for someone who could leave in 10 days for an 18-day trip. Since I met both criteria, Lisa wanted to know if I was interested. I was. I spoke with the trip leader and, after deliberating for 10 or 15 seconds, agreed to go.

Preparing was hectic, but I managed, and on June 30, I was in Flagstaff meeting the rest of the group, ready to embark on one of the great river journeys on this planet. Most of us flew into Flagstaff, but C-1er Whitney Eure had driven several boats cross-country for other group members. In a small Arizona town, he realized the chance of a lifetime and called a friend from a corner payphone. “Guess what,” he said, “I’m standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona.” His friend, alas, did not get the allusion.

Like Whitney’s friend, some people do not get the Canyon and its stories. Condensing the Canyon experience into 3,000 words is like photographing the Colorado from the rim with a disposable camera, but

www.americanwhitewater.org



The boats and gear dry quickly in the dry air. The contrasting colors at Nankoweap are a major part of the Canyon experience.

Photo by Raymond Williams

here goes. What follows is an attempt to offer a sense of the place and how it affects people.

People go to the Canyon for many reasons; sometimes for escape. The Anasazi Indians lived here to avoid pressure from more aggressive tribes. The put in, Lee’s Ferry, is named after a man who fled Utah in the 1880s to avoid prosecution for a massacre. However, the Anasazi eventually vanished, and Lee was taken back to Utah and executed. Today, people who come to Lee’s Ferry to experience the Grand Canyon may be fleeing the pressures of jobs, relationships, civilization, or hectic lives. They discover what their predecessors already knew: the Canyon is no panacea. It will not protect you forever; any escape is temporary, and the price is high. Life is difficult here.

Even with fully supplied rafts, large coolers, and propane stoves, you spend much time setting up and taking down camp. Taking care of basic necessities consumes much of your time. Water is essential, so pumping water and filling water bottles becomes a morning and nightly ritual. There is value in focusing so much time and energy on basics. Distractions are few, allowing you to

observe and reflect. Choices are trivial: do you travel 12 miles down river to the first camp or 16 to the second? You hike up a side canyon, then back down. Do you eat the sardines for lunch or peanut butter and jelly? Except for cooking and running the major rapids, most of the work requires little thought. You spend hours each day floating, letting the current propel you as you contemplate immense walls of rock and light, changing in shape, color, and magnitude. At times you feel more insignificant than the sand grains that blow in your eyes; yet at others, you feel greater than ever as your spirit expands to match the scale of the Canyon. Your daily concerns shrink in size before the beauty and grandeur that overwhelm your senses. The intense colors, the play of light, and the contrasts of rock, water, and sky are sometimes too much to take in, so your brain stops trying to process and just absorbs, altering your perception. When you return home and view the pictures you took, no matter how beautiful or skillfully framed, something is missing. Those who’ve never been to the Canyon may tell you the pictures are wonderful, the colors beautiful and intense, the scenery magnificent. They may be right, but you know that the true Canyon is not in the pictures.

Story Honorable Mention

Because of this, some come to the Canyon for a pilgrimage. Colin Fletcher described one such trip in *The Man Who Walked Through Time*. The Hopi still travel through the Little Colorado Canyon to visit sacred salt mines below the confluence with the Little Colorado. But most choose to journey through the Canyon on the river. “Life’s free and easy on a raft,” said Huck Finn, describing his own pilgrimage down the Mississippi. And so it is. Freed from normal constraints, as you journey deeper into the Canyon, you also journey deeper into your soul. Whether you find something hard and dark like the Vishnu Schist of the inner Canyon or vibrant and expansive, you will have traveled further than the 226 miles you mark on your river map.

Some pilgrims return year after year, often becoming guides. Like medieval friars they travel with few possessions, living off of the generosity of others, but in communion with something greater than themselves (though they probably have more fun than most friars).

You hear stories of one such guide, and hope your group will meet up with her. Your trip leader does and describes meeting Heidi at the Little Colorado confluence thus:

She generously gave Lisa a package of notes and river tips collected from her previous trips. Later, she and a fellow Oars raft guide paddled over to our campsite in their raft, stood up and serenaded us in two-part a cappella harmony with a beautiful rendering of the National Anthem. It brought a lump to my throat.

Some go to the Canyon for the challenges. You’ve never climbed and you lack the tall, wiry build of a mountain climber, but you scramble up slick side canyon walls, gripping minuscule cracks and crevices with your hands and feet. You admire the skill of Welsh climber Phill Thomas who resembles Laurence of Arabia with his blue and white head covering. His mountaineering skills and climbing rope enable you to make climbs and see sights that few groups experience. Sometimes

the experienced climbers have to help, at times guiding your feet to the next step, one you can’t see or feel. But you persevere with good spirit and are rewarded with the polished shining rocks of Silver Grotto and later with the magnificent, cool waterfall and pool of Elves Chasm. You play in the water, ducking behind the waterfall, climbing one last slick wall to poke your head in the spray of miniature fall above the main fall. It’s a welcome escape from the heat and dryness of the canyon air.

Tall, experienced hikers stride easily up steep, narrow trails in 100-plus-degree temperatures. You’re shorter and take twice as many steps, struggling to keep up. But you trudge along Havasu Creek Trail, marveling at the turquoise color of the water until you reach one of the greatest swimming holes of your life at Beaver Falls. You splash and play, reveling in the water’s coolness while watching others leap from an impressively tall rock, plunging into the depths of the pool.

You’ve never paddled anything bigger than the Ocoee, and you’ve only done that once or twice. Now you’re on the biggest water of your life, waves that make Tablesaw and Double Trouble look like little wave trains between rapids on the Nantahala. Even worse, many rapids have huge curlers, diagonals and reactionary waves that smack your boat this way and that. Wearing a straw hat reinforced with duct tape under your helmet, you look like Don Quixote and at times, in the midst of a big rapid, you feel like Don Quixote. You flip and roll more than usual; sometimes you swim. You’re grateful to see one of the three Class V kayakers paddle up to rescue you and wish there was something better to say than “Thank you.” Eventually, you learn to anticipate and lean into the curlers and you realize that the rapids you ran back East will never seem the same.

You learn that the rafting chart that rates the rapids on a scale of 1 to 10 doesn’t always tell you how truly difficult the rapid will be. You easily run House Creek, rated 8, then flip at Indian Dick, rated 5.

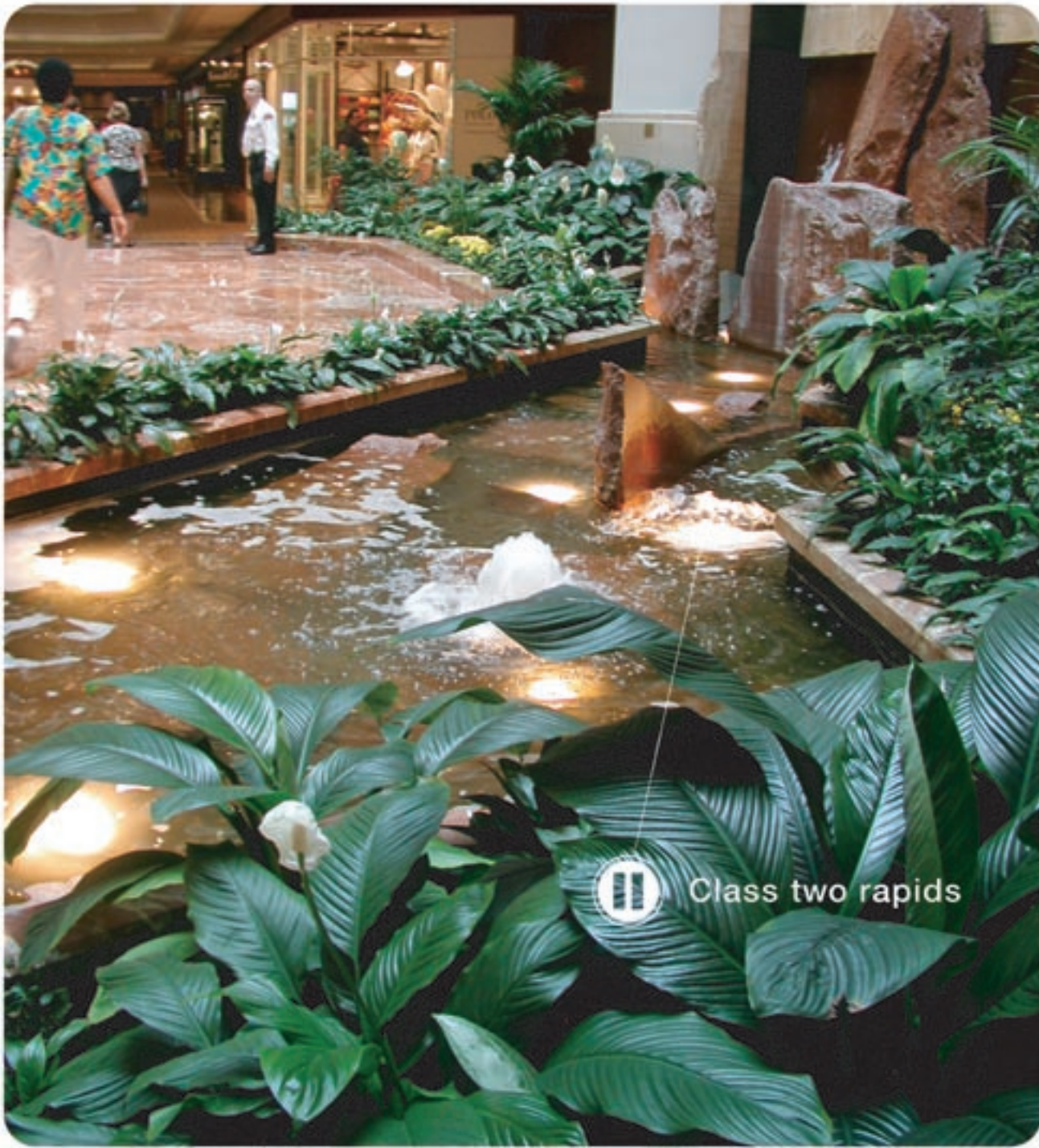
You see a rapid from a distance and think that it doesn’t look so big, but when

scouting it up close, you are amazed at the size and power of the waves and the length of the rapid. Approaching a no name rapid, someone asks, “What’s this like?” A Canyon veteran says, “It’s just a rock garden; nothing too big.” After a short rock garden, you start to relax, but then see the kayak in front of you lift high into the air, before disappearing behind a wave. You sit up and put on your nose plugs. One of the Class V paddlers flips and rolls; in the Canyon everyone flips eventually.

As the only C-1er, you have a different view from the rafters and kayakers. You flip in a big wave and start to set up for a roll, but the river flips you upright almost immediately. When someone tells you it was the fastest roll he’s ever seen, you tell the truth.

Some return again and again. You don’t want to leave your regular life permanently to live and work in the Canyon, but enjoy the renewal you experience below the rim. Whether returning to a favorite site or exploring a side canyon you’ve never hiked before, you know that you will never experience everything the Canyon has to offer. But there are always surprises. At Phantom Ranch, the ranger tells the group to camp on the beach for the night because a commercial raft is stuck at Horn Rapid, and the rescue crew doesn’t want any interference. You’ve dreamed of camping there, but you know that almost no private groups ever do, so you’re ecstatic. In the early morning light, you enjoy the sight of a mule train crossing the bridge to begin its journey to the rim, and you reflect on the combination of modern and old-fashioned technology that gives a Canyon journey its special quality.

John Wesley Powell began his epic first descent of the Canyon on May 24, 1869, with 10 months worth of supplies. His party lost one boat and most of its food in June. Thanks to modern outfitting, coolers, and ammo cans, you easily carry enough food for just over 3 weeks. There are a few minor glitches. You have no onions (outfitter’s mistake), a year’s supply of limes, two months worth of cheese, and 50 cans of Schlitz that no one drinks. You plan to trade the Schlitz for ice



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Story Honorable Mention

with the river guides. The large motorized commercial rafts still have ice beyond mile 170, whereas most human-powered raft trips do not. Most commercial guides will trade ice for beer or cigarettes by that point. However, when you make an offer to one supply raft guide, he says, “Have you got anything else to smoke?” When Paul says, “No, we don’t do that,” the guide backs the raft quickly replying, “Neither do we. I was just joking.” The speed with which he vanishes suggests otherwise.

Near mile 200, John Wesley Powell’s party stole some squash from an Indian garden. By then, most of their food had been eaten or spoiled. You’re not that desperate but as the delicious fresh vegetables and meat give way to canned food you begin to crave variety. At one stop, two young recently married commercial guides share candy bars left over from their group’s mid-morning snack. You devour the chocolate, and unlike Powell’s group, you don’t have to paddle miles downstream before enjoying the treat. After learning where you plan to camp, the guides ask if

you would mind them stopping there for lunch. “Just leave us some more candy,” someone in your group jokes. The guides laugh, but when you arrive at the site, you find a box of cookies cached in the crook of a tree. Although you’ve heard stories of tension between private and commercial trips, the majority of encounters are like this one—a chance to meet new people who love the Canyon and to share something, whether it be food, stories, or just brief hellos.

Whatever your reason in coming, you have to adapt. While sleeping on the raft, you awake one night to defend the food supplies from the incursion of a ring-

tailed cat. You learn to use the bathroom in stages: pee in the river, then sit on the groover (the modified ammo can that serves as the toilet). Because the Park Service requires groups to carry everything out, your raft carries the groovers once they’re full, so you adjust to the odor. Actually, no one could adjust to the odor, but you don’t let it ruin your trip. You learn to adjust to sitting on the groover and waving to several boatloads of commercial trip customers. Known as baloney boats, the commercial rafts always seem to pass by at inopportune times. You shower around the bend from camp, but in full view of the baloney boat that you see half a mile upstream as you rinse the

On the hot narrow beaches, relaxing near the water was a popular choice after a long day of paddling.

Those without cockpit covers had to remember to check for scorpions.


Photo by Raymond Williams



soap from your eyes. “No problem,” you think, “I’ll be toweling off by the time they’re close enough to see.” But when the boat is several hundred yards away, the guide cuts the engine and you hear the clients yell, “Show us your buns,” so you do. That night at dinner, your group tells you that Bass camp is being renamed “Camp Full Monty” in your honor.

Some of the men wear sarongs at night. “It’s a good way to get some fresh air around your goolies,” says one with a Welsh accent. It is, but you discover that sitting in a chair, especially in a strong wind, takes more concentration than usual. Other men let the women paint their toenails. Almost everyone allows amateur tattoo artists to draw on them. Near the end of the trip, you hear stories that some kayakers recently ran the last few miles naked except for sprayskirt, PFD, and helmet. Several flipped in an easy rapid, and there was one swimmer, thus leading

to the first coed-naked kayak rescue in the history of the Canyon. However, without seeing pictures, you file the story under the category of Western Tall Tale.

You learn to enjoy warm beer and fruit cocktails. Cheese seems like the perfect late afternoon snack on a 110-degree day. Checking for scorpions is as natural as brushing your teeth before bedtime. When you finally return to Flagstaff, you take a long shower without having to create a shower stand with raft oars. You use lots of ice and eat a big meal that you don’t have to cook or clean up after. But that night when you wake up in your hotel room, you miss the sound of the river, the play of moonlight on the canyon walls, and the simple, but magnificent beauty of the stars overhead. 



We make the most of a narrow beach baked by the heat radiating from the nearby walls that contained numerous rattle snakes.

Photo by Raymond Williams

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Story Contest Winner

River Stories

by April Lewandowski

Sister River, the Lord has made you strong and beautiful. Please treat us with your kindness.

—St. Francis of Assisi.

Today, the river is blue and beautiful and she runs high along her banks. The river is tricky sometimes, but the routine is familiar. I don my second skin, thick, rubbery cells of neoprene and woven threads of polyester. It is a vain attempt at staying warm in the 45-degree air, not to mention the water, which feels like it comes straight from the Arctic Circle. We stretch and crawl into our boats, sealing ourselves as if we were travelling in pieces of Tupperware. I am nervous today because it has been a month since I was in my boat, a month since I leaned into an eddy turn, a month since I surfed a wave, and too long since I rolled. And today, it is cold. Adrenaline eats my stomach as I coach myself to complete the ritual.

Hoke and Ben are my friends from Georgia, two eighteen year old boys who are more like brothers to me and to each other than just paddling partners. They have known the river awhile now, especially this river, the Tellico.

I run two rapids before Sister River plows me through a hole, upside down, of course. The cold water gnaws at my confidence and my sanity. The water thrashes against me, and I seem to scrape over rocks. I try my roll twice and ended up (or down) the

same way. I slide my hand to the front of my boat, grab the loop and pop myself from the oversized Tupperware container for a ride through the rocky water. My lifejacket holds my nose above the surface and my feet float downstream pushing me away from the obstacles. That evening, I discover six bruises on my body, two small ones on my face, and four that look like dark pockets of blood resting below my olive green skin.

I have spent two summers working on the river, having my own adventures with spirits who live in the water, the spirits who sometimes play, the spirits who sometimes hurt. I have plenty of stories to tell about spilling guests (and sometimes me) from

my raft, and swimming the notorious Nantahala Falls, not to mention rapids on several other rivers where I guide. The past seven summers of my life I have spent outside, walking over mountaintops; just recently, I have embraced the outdoors in a new way, traveling downstream.

If the river is my world, then golf is my dad's world. Golf. It is his manna, his bliss, his passion—and his psychotherapy. He imagines names on each ball he hits, names of his board members, names of his bosses, names of his clients. Then he hauls off and drives them into oblivion. What a powerful metaphor. I can't remember my dad not playing golf. In the colds of December, the heat of July, the rains of

Six Years Later: The parents on their second river trip, an overnighter on the Colorado River near Kremmling, CO.

Photo by Tyson Long

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April, if I were looking for my father after work, I didn't have to guess where he'd be. This love of the game is something I completely understand. The love that makes you want to perfect your craft; the love of the sport that makes you do it when the weather is sunny and beautiful, or when the wind howls and the cold snaps against your skin, and when any person in his right mind would be doing something else—something inside. Oh, I know because it is the same love that makes me paddle my kayak in January, when the moisture on my lifejacket is frozen. It is the love that impels me to paddle two rivers in one day. It is tough love that, even after the river re-circulates me in a hydraulic, I chose to go back for more. To most outsiders, my love for the river, like my dad's love for golf doesn't make much sense.

I don't play golf with my dad very often. He taught me the rules of the game when I was ten and put me in a golf clinic at the country club when I was a young teenager. I even played on the Junior High golf team. I quit because I hated playing with the snobby, preppy boys who were better than me. Of course, now I am a stranger to the tees and green fees. Yet the times I do play with him go something like this: We drive to the country club on a Sunday afternoon in a grand, oversized SUV that sparkles in the summer sun. We putt for a while on the practice green. Sometimes we buy a wire-meshed bucket of balls and head to the driving range. Often, we'll play three holes—three because it will get dark soon, three because my attention level drops off after that. Each shot is a "good shot"—so good that when we get back to the Lincoln Navigator, my dad says, "April, you really missed your calling in life." I smile and try to take it as a compliment.

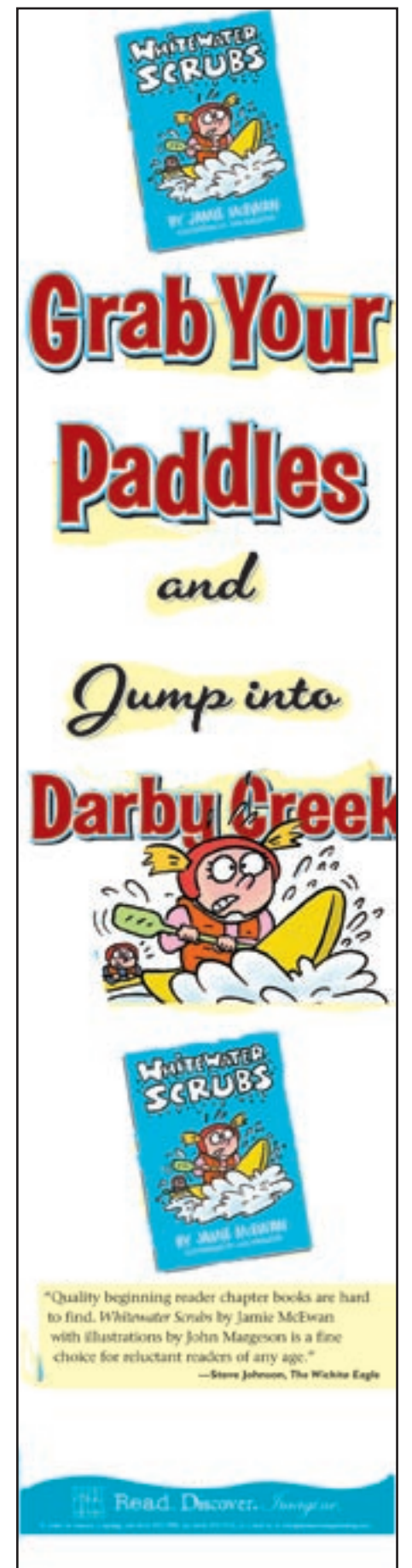
Dad believes that, had I played golf in high school, I would have gone to college on a golf scholarship. And right now, instead

of teaching English at a small university in North Carolina, I would be on the Women's PGA tour. He says that because he is impressed with my dormant skill that comes to life when I haven't hit a ball in four to five months. He says that because I can, at any time, step behind a ball, snap my hips, and make that crisp "whopping" sound when I hit the ball. Although my dad compliments my skills, I find it strange that he doesn't invite me along. Usually, I have to ask.

It is February now and I am on the river again with Hoke and Ben. I am a little more practiced than the last time and find that my body sits tall, and my mind is firm with confidence. Although my mind sometimes crosses over to that place of fear, it is just visiting today. My stomach growls and I burp combinations of cinnamon-raisin bagel and adrenaline. The river churns but she runs clearer and warmer than she did a few weeks ago. My new red boat glistens in the water. I sigh as I click the buckle of my black helmet and take comfort in the fact that I am paddling with two boys who will watch out for me. I take my first stroke pulling against the blue-green water and tell myself, "You really do like this."

I really do like this, this fear, this testing of my skills and skirting death, although at times my fear of the river paralyzes me. My dad used to be paralyzed by his fear of water. Once my dad left his journal on the breakfast table at home. I looked at it. He was discussing his greatest fears in life. At the top of the list in his scratchy half-cursive, half-print writing it read: "I have a fear of water. A fear of drowning."

Just recently, though, my dad asked to enter my world. He wanted to go with me on a rafting trip down the Nantahala, to see how I made my money as a river guide. Both of my parents insisted that I take them down the river. Of all the things that parents can insist on—wearing skirts



Story CONTEST WINNER!

or make-up, dating nice boys who open car doors, being home by twelve—this was definitely not the worst, but perhaps the most surprising because neither of my parents swim.

I put my dad in the front of the raft, where he would get wet, but also the place he would appear in control and in the lead. I situated mom on the back left side, next to me, the place where I could steady her balance if need be. Dad paddled strongly and in rhythm when I called, “All forward.” He gave laborious backstrokes as he leaned his whole body into the reverse movements. We approached the end of the river and ran the Falls effortlessly. As we dodged our way through Celebration Rocks, and as the sun set behind the mountains, throwing a golden glow to the sky, he turned to me and said, “April, I see why you do this.”

I was happy that my dad wanted to go with me, that he endeavored to make a connection with my world. It scared me though. For days beforehand, I imagined the horrors of my dad falling from the boat and floundering helplessly in the water. Even though I told him he might swim, that I had swam plenty of times, that I was not by any means a perfect guide, he still wanted to go; my words—and my thoughts—couldn’t stop him. I am sure that it took my dad days to convince himself to go with me. I imagine that he came close to backing out. I know this because I could see the fear in his stiff stance, his face wincing as water splashed the boat. He didn’t exactly smile until the trip was over. The Lower Tellico begins with a Class III rapid. There is only a short space for warm-up and then you must go. With each rapid, Ben and Hoke holler and yell, the way boys

do, congratulating me for making it down the river. I make it through the Ledges, the rapid that swamped me last time—no problem. Intuition had told me earlier that my run would be golden.

Gold, I think, must be the color you see as your life flashes before your eyes. Hoke paddles fiercely toward a rock in the middle of the river. His solid yellow Fisher-Price-looking boat hits the rock purposefully, and splats down into the eddy below. I follow. I see gold as I miss the rock and the water pushes my body against the river bottom. Gold must be the color of disorientation as well. I miss my roll. I miss my roll again as I hear the water tumbling and swooshing about my head; it crunches my helmet against the rocks. I try patiently to roll, but the distance between my body and the river bottom decreases. I decide to shove any

remaining air to the bottom of my lungs, to slide my hands around the spray-skirt and pull the loop. However, what seems like a mechanical action, trying to get air, becomes a desperate attempt to finagle my body to the surface. I search for an exit and find none. Finally my knee bursts from the thigh brace and punches the seal of the skirt from the rim of the cockpit. Gravity slips me away from my boat. Hoke paddles at my side as I swim to shore. These are the golden moments of paddling I don’t tell my parents about.

There are some stories my parents know and some I haven’t told them. Told stories replace reality; untold stories make things mysterious. My dad’s life has been mysterious to me because his stories are speckled with tragic events, most of which are puzzling to me perhaps because I have had it easy. Maybe the events of my dad’s life are mysterious because I’ve never heard him talk about any of them. I realized one day that my mom had always told me the stories:

“Debbie, your dad’s girlfriend before me died in a plane accident.”

“Your dad’s father died when he was ten. Your dad had a rough life growing up.”

“Your father almost died in a car wreck when you were three.”

Sometimes I believe mom told me these stories to make me a sympathetic party to my dad’s sufferings; sometimes they seemed to excuse or explain why Dad did things the way he did—why he didn’t relate well to us girls, why he cleaned his car meticulously, or why he golfed so much. On a few rare occasions, Dad has told me some of the less tragic stories, although most of them involved a punishment of sorts. There was the time he flushed his vegetables down the toilet, or the time he lied to his mother about going to see Superman instead of doing his chores.

There is one story that I know very well. It is the story of their first date, a story that both my mom and dad have told me:

“You’re going to have to show me your license.”

“Really, that’s my real name.”

“I don’t believe you.”

The slender fellow flipped through his wallet and pulled out his North Carolina ID. It read: “Edward E. Lewandowski.”

“I guess you’re right,” the young woman said as she opened the door wider and invited him in.

Had I been my mother, a girl of eighteen from a North Carolina Piedmont farm, a girl whose most exotic adventure in life was driving to Lake Michigan once with the family on summer vacation, a girl whose most rebellious act was dating a boy whose family was Republican and Methodist, and whose father drove a Chevy, I, too, wouldn’t have believed there was such a name as “Lewandowski” unless I had seen it on something official, like a driver’s license.

The name is somewhat of a trademark. It has been what has separated us from the Joneses and the Smiths. On occasion I have to show my driver’s license to prove that no, my name is not Lewinsky but Lewandowski—one extra syllable. This is the name that took up all but one box on the Iowa Basic Skills test. The same name that my fifth grade teacher gave as a bonus on a spelling exam. The name I spelled wrong to see if she would notice. (She didn’t.) And, so, yes, had I been my mother, I would have asked for his license, too.

My parents have told this story of their first encounter enough so that my sister and I have learned to fill in the blanks and tell the Cliffs Notes version: My parents met on a blind date. They went to see Camelot. It was love at first sight. They were engaged six weeks after they met, and they married six months later.

I have heard and watched my mother tell the story so many times that her tear-filled eyes and the dreamy expression on her long, slender Princess Dianna face no longer holds the charm or enchantment that it used to. To her, though, my father was the man who treated her better than she had ever been treated before. After thirty years, he still opens the car doors for

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Story CONTEST WINNER!


her, both getting in and out, so I imagine that on this first date his politeness was even more impressive. His responsive “yes m’ams” and “no sirs” to my grandparents probably made it seem as if he had arrived from a planet ruled by Emily Post. My dad loves my mother with a fervency and vigor that is almost embarrassing. My father’s blessings before a meal say little about the food. Instead, he prays, “God I am so thankful that you gave me a loving and beautiful woman like my wife. I love her so much. Bless this food.”

My sister and I are still very much single. The story of our parents’ meeting has haunted us our entire lives. My parents have led us to believe that some enchanted evening we might meet a stranger who would sweep us off our feet, the way our father did our mother. So far, no one has even come close. Love has stayed far away,

or if it has been near, it has disguised itself rather well.

I survive the hellish swim. Hoke had been beside me the entire time, ready to yank me from my boat. We finish and thank the river for her kindness. Over dinner we share the stories of the day: Ben’s scary pin on a rock and my golden swimming incident. After I relive these stories with the boys for a while, I decide to drive home, not to North Carolina, but to Georgia, where my parents live. I stop at a phone, hesitant to call because unplanned phone calls usually signal an emergency. “I’m up by the Ocoee. I’ll be home in an hour.”

My mother greets me with a warm hug, and as I hug her slender body she is not quick to let go. My dad’s footsteps race through the house and he reaches firmly,

taking my mother away, showing me and her that it is his turn for a hug now. “I’m so glad you’re home. How was paddling?” he asks. I nod and lift my eyes. “Good,” I say, knowing that he doesn’t need to hear about me having trouble getting out of my boat. Something in me senses that he’s about to cry, maybe it’s because his hug seems extra-long, or because his voice cracks, or because I tried to pull away and he didn’t let me go, but I know, he’s about to cry. I don’t feel like crying. I feel like going to bed, maybe eating a snack. But I hug my father and know that we both have our own stories, that for some good reason, we have chosen not to tell. 

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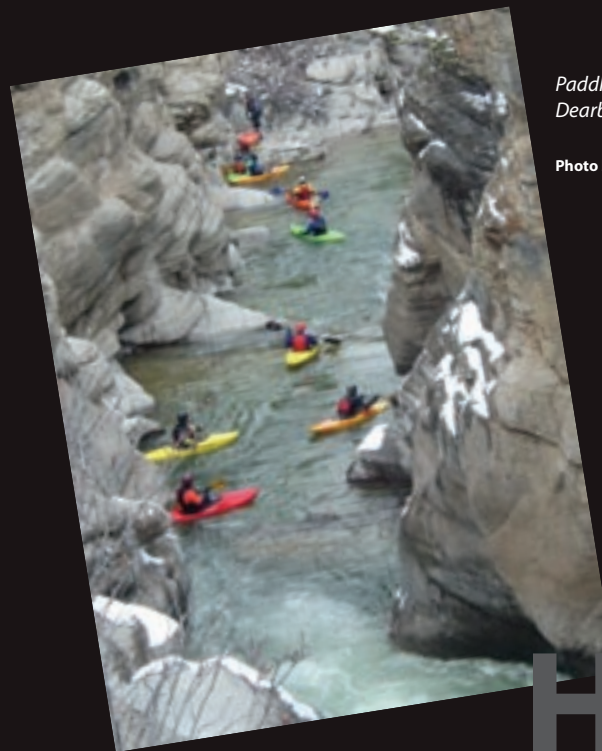
WAVE SPORT



Elena checking out the scene at the put-in.

Photo by John McDermott

PHOTO Contest Winner



Paddlers on the Upper Dearborn River, Montana.

Photo by Steve Rodgers

Marty (Craw) Cronin on the first drop below Andle Breaker, Oh-Be-Joyful Creek, Crested Butte, Colorado.

Photo by Darren Livingston



Honorable Mention

Chuck Lees on every local's favorite : Slate Creek, California.

Photo by Trevor Haagensohn



Boris Startsev (left) and Bryan Cunitz (right) admire the falls of a tributary just below Monster on the Cascade River, Washington.

Photo by Kennet Belenky

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Kaiser creaking in her Diesel on the
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Paddler frozen in fast-forward on Georgia's Stekoa Creek.

Photo by Matt Hale



Cartwheelin' with Care Bear. Danny Dorin (and good luck charm) in action at the 1st Annual Lockapalooza Freestyle Event.

Photo by Bill Dorin

Honorable Ment



"So this is why they call it a hole..." Plenty of time for deep reflections in Rainbow Rapid on California's Upper South Yuba.

Photo by Cathy Howard



A competitor in the Teva Mountain Games Paddler X Event bellies-up to a rock in the Dowd Chutes portion of the Eagle River in Minturn, Colorado.

Photo by Bryan Kelsen

Humor Contest Winner

Passing the world's
largest cell phone tower.
In 1912 "Bird Man" believing
he could fly jumped from the top.
And he did fly. Straight down.



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**Story and Photos
by Whit Deschner**

In this soft morning of September, a certain effervescence started to gain the Garden Tino Rossi. It should be said that cars and trucks charged with canoes and kayaks took possession of the quay gradually. A man of the roadway system, busy to empty the many dustbins of the park using his small green vehicle, challenged me in order to appease his curiosity: "That you today it occurs?" A perplexed air launched me. It was the crossing of Paris and of the hundreds of kayakists of all levels and all horizons prepared to embark for the starting zone.

*- French boater Frank B...
and a belfish translation*

Wholesale mayhem is what it was. Paddlers rushing about half undressed, carrying boats, tweaking fitting adjustments, locking cars and chatting—nothing I understood since it was all French. I did, however, understand the universal language of paddling: the mayhem spoke for that. Only this was multiplied by over a thousand paddlers in the middle of downtown Paris.

I had been in the country a week but hadn't even expanded my vocabulary to that of a

moron. Patrice, my paddling partner, had long ago abandoned trying to teach me. When I ventured into French, the scene was one of Patrice grimacing while I freely assassinated solitary words and conducted all-out genocide on sentences.

We had arrived at seven only to be greeted by a cluster of frantic police who were already enjoying a rotten day sorting the curious through-traffic from the impatient boater-traffic trying to reach the Quai Saint Bernard, the put-in. At the quay, every form of paddle craft was appearing. There were C-1s, C-2s, K-1s, K-2s, open canoes, sea kayaks, touring kayaks, play boats, sit-on-tops and even a gondola. There were also downriver kayaks and slalom boats, some models that I hadn't seen in 25 years. With the exception of sealskin and birch bark every boat-building material known to man was well represented: plastic, fiberglass, canvas, and wood—like Patrice's 1956 wood lath canoe that we began busily soaking so that we might float on the Seine, not in it.

The sunrise hitting the colors of this growing Armada looked like pieces of a

rainbow attacked by a tornado. In a city that is already overflowing with color, the collection of boats gathering would have been excessive even to the excess-loving Louis XVI. The newer the boats the more vivid the colors but these boats hardly had the panache (that's French) of Patrice's canoe, the oldest boat present. Boaters were slipping out of their clothes and into their paddling gear with feigned discreteness. The Quai Saint Bernard was certainly fitting for boaters undressing; during the 17th century the quay was a famous place for nude bathing until the puritanical kill-joys shut it down. As the boaters put on, all skill levels became evident. There were wobbling rank beginners and, somewhere amongst the crowd was Olympic slalom gold medalist Benoit Peschier. Again, Frank B:

The loading was as with accustomed folk not saying chaotic. Eye for eye, teeth for teeth, the access to the pontoon of loading answered the soft rules of the law of the strongest.

The Traversee de Paris is not a race but a confederacy of paddlers out to float the

Seine. It has transpired annually for 37 years. Otherwise, the Seine is off-limits to floating. For the traversee, boaters can only occupy the right side due to tightly controlled navigation. Even an early start is forbidden. As we waited, yet more boats clustered into the holding pattern. I began wondering my chances of leaping across them to the bank. I had primed myself for this event with a half a gallon of coffee and now I could use a place to get rid of it. If Paris lacks anything it is restrooms. Soon, half the pack began banging on their boats waiting for the say-so to go—another French Revolution about to begin. Perhaps they, too, had drunk too much coffee.

Tourist-laden barges began plying the river. The barges that once carried freight up and down the Seine are now mostly piled with tourists or have been rebuilt into affluent houseboats stagnating along the quays. Sirens of impatient police trying to get to either a restaurant or a restroom disharmoniously mingled with tour boat loud speakers blaring off about the numerous sights (horns are refreshingly outlawed in Paris). To accommodate the foreign tourists, almost



*Navigational right-of-way at its best.
Looking around I discovered where all
the used boats in the world end up.
Some should have been in museums.*

going in Seine

Humor Contest Winner

every language pierces from the tour boat speakers. Patrice laughed explaining that German is usually last. The French, as it turns out, do remember—and with humor: it’s a customary joke that only after visibly passing beyond each described site do the tour guides speak in German. Instead, I had Patrice, who happened to have his own sense of wry humor, busily introducing me as a kayaker from Oregon who ne parled pas Français, expounding—as he later told me—that I thought Bush had the consciousness of an escargot and merde for brains.

When it seemed impossible to fit another boat on the river we were allowed to start. The impatience factored into one massive collision. Patrice’s idea of survival was to keep the boat headed firmly downstream despite what obstacles we encountered—like other boats—only it was my end colliding into them. As a non-French speaker I left it to Patrice to explain why the semi-deaf mute in the bow wasn’t able to apologize. In an English-speaking country Patrice could exist if he had to, in a French speaking country I could not exist without Patrice—at least not in the bow of a canoe implicated in a chain reaction pile up on the Seine in downtown Paris.

In high school, the one class I got consistent grades in was French. F and French were synonymous. I was suspended for climbing out the window. Thirty years later, at the expense of much laughter, I had already learned that:

Al a mode does not mean with ice cream but rather, “As is the custom.”

French’s mustard has nothing to do with France but Dijon does.

There is no such thing as French toast in France.

Detroit is pronounced des twaa.

A day in Paris costs roughly the equivalent of a small ranch in Montana.

Next time I take French, I promise not to climb out the nearest window.

Instead I would learn practical phrases such as “Sorry we just smashed your boat. Don’t look at me. Look at Patrice in the stern laughing. He’s the one steering.” But most important I would learn, “Where the heck in tarnation is a damned toilet?”

I wasn’t completely illiterate and did know some French words such as Gérard Depardieu, Brigitte Bardot, Raquel Welch, menage a trios, vis-à-vis, femme fatale, French kiss and I could tell the difference between a Citroen, a Renault, and a Peugeot. I learned also that French words like bibliophile carry duel citizenship in English and that Patrice, like myself, is a kayak bibliophile, which is how we met—an irony because the book-rich Left Bank was coming up soon and we had to stay right.

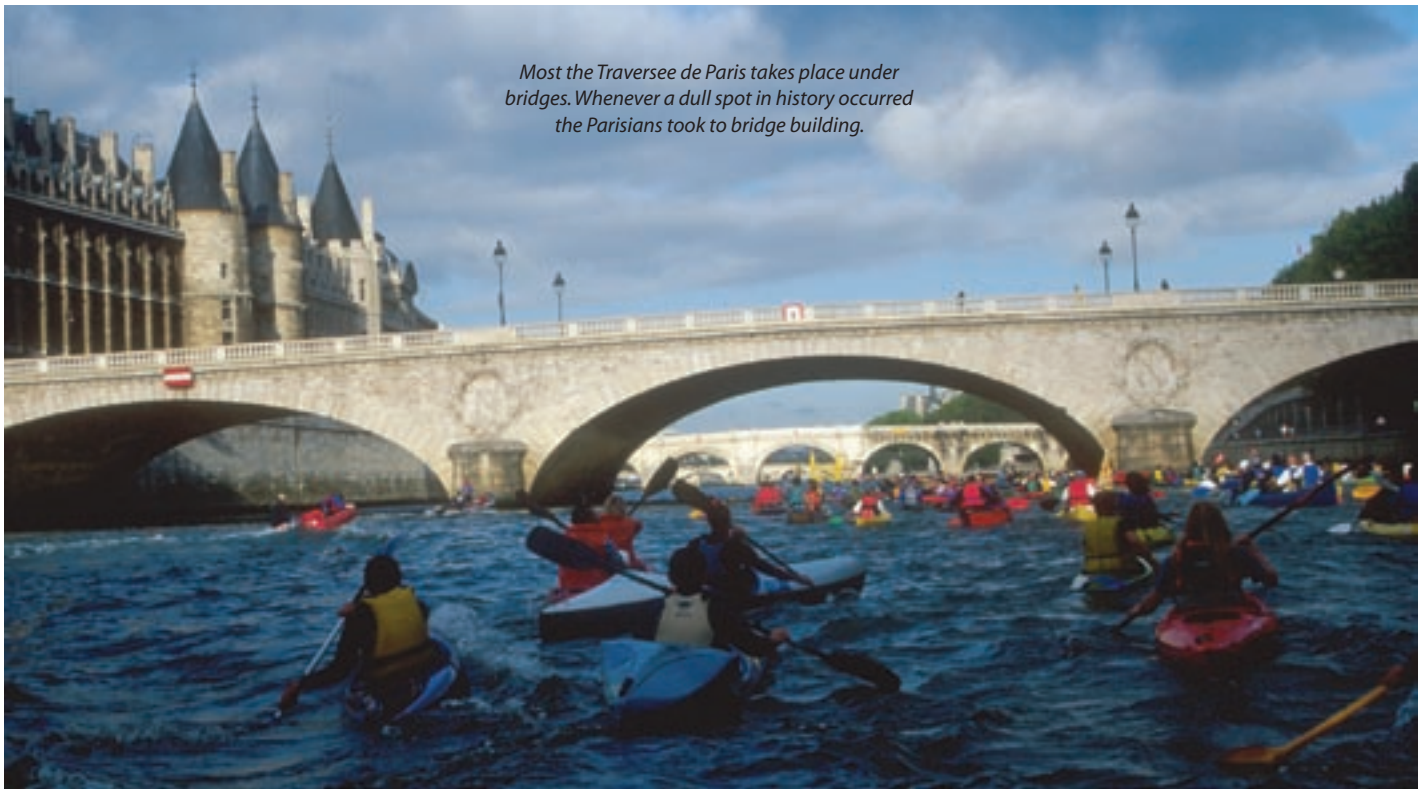
First, though, came the Ile Saint Louis and the Ile de la Cite. These two islands are the original seed of Paris, watered by the Seine. Paris is the Seine and if it wasn’t for these islands that happen to be in the middle of it, Paris would not exist today. Nearby excavations have unearthed canoes dating back to 4500 B.C.—we were not the first to run this river. Nor do I imagine the ancient canoeists had to run it on the right and only one day a year. The islands were central to forests and rich tillable land and were easily defendable. Well, at least until the Romans showed up and spoiled the party. Nor did it stop the Franks, Goths, Vandals, Visigoths, Van Goghs, Picassos, Germans, Gertrude Stein,

Japanese tourists or a bunch of marauding paddlers. Face it: Paris has always been a fun place to sack.

Crammed with famous sites and buildings, the Ile de la Cite is the heart and soul—and Gothic Disneyland—of Paris. There is the Conciergerie, the infamous building-turned-prison of the French Revolution, housing such scoundrels as the cake-loving Marie Antoinette and later the even more annoying Robespierre; Sainte-Chapelle, a stained-glass monstrosity and tempting target for a kid with a slingshot; Point Zero, an arbitrary point as meaningless as a dateline from which all distances in France are measured, however, it is an extremely important spot for Japanese tourists to stand on and have their picture taken; Notre Dame Cathedral, the hunchback’s old stomping grounds and finally, Henry Miller’s mailbox. A roller coaster would make this amusement park complete. We could only see the very top of Notre Dame, but if the Hunchback had been there he could have seen us. I had already climbed the South Tower and gazed at the Emmanuelle Bell, a 28,000-pound lump of bronze. It took eight monks to peel, which made me wonder: just how big was the Hunchback? No one could answer my question. I began singing to myself, *The bigger they come the harder they fall*.

The last point on the Ile de Cite is Henry Miller’s mailbox, something I would never have noticed if Patrice hadn’t pointed it out. Of course this illustrious historical site is not on the standard Paris tour—or on any tour, I don’t imagine—unless Patrice is conducting it. Actually, it isn’t really a mailbox per se but rather a bush where Henry Miller slept and where the postman left his mail. Patrice wasn’t even sure if he was pointing to the right bush, but, as a bibliophile, he considered it close enough.

By the time we came to the Louvre (on the right) collisions had become minimal. We couldn’t see any paintings from the river, but later, visiting the museum, I went to see the Mona Lisa. Unfortunately, since its return after the Da Vinci Code debacle, it seems to have shrunk. But, my sense of distance may have been distorted since I was standing behind approximately 5000 Japanese tourists. I am still not sure how close I got to it. I did get an adequate glimpse of her to realize the long-questioned mysterious expression on her face is the heroic gaze of a person who can’t find a bathroom in Paris—resolved



Most the Traversee de Paris takes place under bridges. Whenever a dull spot in history occurred the Parisians took to bridge building.

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that they are not going to find one, either. Overall the Louvre was disappointing. Subject matter of the paintings varied little. Dead rabbits, breasts and Jesus were major themes. Of course, I might’ve been walking in circles, seeing the same items repeatedly. Happily, no one stays lost in the museum for more than a day. You can bet your bottom euro the guards will find you at five minutes to closing time. The Musee d’Orsay, an Impressionist museum, just downstream on the left bank, is far livelier—at least that was my impression. Since it is an old converted train station it is hard to get lost in—unless you are tying to make a quick connection with a restroom.

As the spectacular buildings per square inch ratio began to drop, there was no shortage of bridges. Although the length of our run was about 15 miles, I swear most of that time was spent under one bridge or another. Not that I minded, as

most were far more ornate underneath than any bridge top in America. A glance up from Henry Miller’s mailbox shows the oldest bridge in Paris, Pont Neuf. Translated it means new bridge—new when it was started in 1578. Although packed with far more history, it is hardly as spectacular as the art nouveau (that’s French too) Pont Alexander III, Paris’s most ornate bridge named after Alexander III, of course, father of Nicholas II who didn’t get a bridge but got Alexandria. He would have been better off with a bridge. Pont Alexander III was built between 1896 and 1900 and garnished with gold lamps, happy nymphs, winged horses and chubby cherubs. Obviously spray-painting bridges with graffiti is not a tradition here. Two more bridges downstream is the Zouave, a multitasking soldier-statue on one of buttresses of the Pont de l’Alma who gauges Paris’ floods. Instead of a normal numerical gauge, Parisian floods are measured by water rising up the soldier’s

legs. I’m not sure what the Parisians say when the water reaches his crotch but I know what the soldier would say if he could talk.

Continuing on, we began catching glimpses of Paris’ looming signature, the Eiffel Tower or, as Patrice referred to it, “the world’s largest cell phone tower.” There is not a lot to say about the tower other than it contains 2,500,000 rivets and that in 1912 “Bird Man” Franz Reichelt, wearing a winged overcoat and believing he could fly, jumped from the top. And he did fly—straight down for five seconds. Unfortunately, he could have used more practice in his landings. His impact left a divot over a foot deep. Before I knew it, I was humming that song again. What is it with these tall French architectural structures that people feel they must leap from?

It was while passing the Eiffel Tower that I noticed the first tipovers. The water was

not rough, the current almost imaginary. There was no visible reason to tip over. The sun rolled in and out of the clouds and a slight breeze chopped the water making it a perfect paddling temperature but one too chilly to go swimming. Then I realized: this must be a bathroom break. Still I stoically held onto my coffee. Paris is synonymous with romantic and my idea of romance was not swimming in front of the Eiffel Tower in order to pee in the Seine. Besides, swimming is definitely not recommended—especially when I thought about what those people were doing in the water. Patrice said that the river is less polluted than it used to be. Twenty years ago it stank. That was when Jacques Chirac ran for, and became, mayor of Paris planking his platform with a promise to clean up the Seine and even go swimming in it. The cleanup never transpired nor did Jacques ever jump in. However, the prevailing sentiment in France today indicates that people wouldn’t mind if he recommitted to his pledge took a tandem dive with George Bush into the river—wearing cement overshoes.

Sorry. I digresses. We drifted. Frank B.: The landscape marched as the Paris monuments offered themselves to the contemplations of all.

The Eiffel Tower shrank on the horizon. We drifted some more. Slowly the spectacular structures gave way to a metropolitan mundaneness. We passed a mini-me Statue of Liberty that had something to do with peace and goodwill between America and France in 1885, when it was built. The two nations could afford peace and goodwill to each other since they had no idea what the camels were trodding in in Iraq. More and more barges lined the river and the afternoon would have been a pleasant paddle if it weren’t for my about-to-explode bladder. According to Patrice, the take-out was “just around the corner.”


But, of course, this far down on the Seine, the whole river is corner. In time we came to a large island and paddled down the canal-like passage on its left side. In turn this opened up and we began to pass a large abandoned factory that went on forever. There were broken windows and graffiti and loose tin slowly flapping in the breeze and doors ajar but there was something

haunting and sinister about it. Patrice said it was a Renault factory and it was here in the spring of ‘68 where the unrest began that ignited the entire nation. Of all the photos of 1960s turbulence, I remember the French ones well: Protesters engulfed in tear gas heroically lobbing rocks at gas-masked police. If you want to see where the riots took place in Paris just look for the streets missing their cobblestones.

“What started it?” I asked.

Patrice smiled and shrugged. “I don’t know, maybe no bathrooms.”

The factory never did reopen. It was hard to imagine thousands of people there working one day, gone the next.

Just downstream near the bridge of Weans, we took out at a railroad station. There was the usual river take-out mayhem. Paddlers rushing about half undressed, carrying boats, unlocking cars and chatting. We lugged our canoe up to the station and there, absolute pandemonium surrounding it, was the most magnificent building I had seen all day: a restroom. 

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Humor Honorable Mention

One Shore Rule

By Miles Townes

He starts talking to you in a bar, or park, or in a friend’s backyard. He asks, “Do you work out?” You blush and shift your weight. “Not really, but I kayak a lot.” You call it “kayaking,” because in his world boating means motoring, and paddling is something naughty. Still, he noticed your body—the bare midriff flat and firm, the lean arms, the legs muscled from carrying your boat.

When he asks you about kayaking, you have to explain the difference between whitewater and sea. He asks about the SUV commercials, or maybe the ad for herpes medicine, and all you can do is shrug, “That’s me but—you know—without the oozing, burning sores.” He seems impressed that a girl would be into

the risky stuff. Mostly, he talks to talk, until he asks for your number. He is attractive, athletic, and outgoing; he could be a fun date, maybe even approximating Mister Right. You give him your number.

He calls and it starts—the after-work happy hours, the dinners, the movies. Sometimes you tell him he can’t stay, because you have to get up early for the river, but the relationship is still young and growing. You discover channels on your TV devoted to something other than weather. He learns to call that smell “boaterfunk,” instead of “poop.” Things hum along. Then comes the big decision, the day you have to choose between his plans—another barbecue, maybe—or that solid Class IV run, the one you’ve been meaning to do, flowing at a perfect, juicy level. And you choose the river, and he says he understands, which comforts you even if it’s a lie. You feel less bad the next time,

and the time after that.

After weeks of this, you can no longer ignore the tension between your life with him and your life in water. He will no longer drive you on your trips—not after someone called him “shuttle bunny” to his face. You compromise: you cut back on your park-and-play, don’t rush out after a hard rain, offer excuses to your boating buddies. Still he resents the time apart, and begins dropping snide hints about “what you’re really doing with all those guys.” You say you nailed a blunt, and he moans, “Now you’re a pot head, too.” You no longer use the words “fuzzy rubber” in his presence.

Finally, you are overwhelmed and decide for the best of both worlds. You will teach him to paddle and everything will be right. You sell it like the keys to your pants, “Honey, I’d love it if you’d let me teach

He learns to hate your paddling buddies, especially the boys. These boys, who could not care less about jump shots or RBIs, skinny boys with shaggy hair, goofy smiles, all of them eons ahead of him in their skill on the water, doing things with boats and paddles that he cannot fathom—they drive him nuts.

you to paddle. You could come with us on all these trips, and we’d have more time together and you wouldn’t have to worry so much.” He agrees, and you borrow gear for a man his size: bigger boat, PFD, skirt and so on.

At first you are flattered; *he wants to do this for me—how lovely!* You convince yourself that, as a woman, you possess the nurturing instinct necessary to shepherd him through those first few times in a kayak. He may panic and bail and swim, but you will be there to calm him and get him back into the boat. He does and he gets back in, tries a roll, misses, carps, carps, carps, carps, carps, carps, then bails again into the cold water. Your heart warms at how hard he is trying. Somehow that is not quite right, but you push on anyway. You make the mistake of showing him your offside hand roll—“Honey, it’s soooo easy once you get the hang of it!”—and don’t notice the flush of shame in his face. It burns him that you are better, and telling him that this is something he cannot muscle through, that it is form and technique and hip snap, insults his masculinity. Especially the last—putting the core of the sport in the hips, the pelvis, you accidentally brush against centuries of myth and misogyny. Hips make it a woman thing, and woman things are beneath him. He could not say this himself, but it is there, buried deep in his ego. You might as well be teaching him figure skating, or midwifery.

You realize that when it comes to boating you are not so much the love of his life as a competitor to be defeated. This is a sport for him and he wants to win, which means being better than you. And when he is not, after a day filled with swims, of pushing his boat to shore and chasing down his paddle, he seethes because he has lost. You do your best to soothe his wounded machismo, “Don’t worry, this happens to everyone; we’ll try again next week,” but still his anger festers.

He learns to hate your paddling buddies, especially the boys. These boys, who could not care less about jump shots or RBIs, skinny boys with shaggy hair, goofy smiles, and all of them eons ahead of him in their skill on the water, doing things with boats and paddles that he cannot fathom—they drive him nuts. He hates that they are always there to rescue him when he misses his roll, so much that he would rather

carp, carp, carp and swim than accept a bow rescue. They tell him to walk this rapid or that, while they run it with no paddle, or backwards, or doing flips and cartwheels and stunts, and he feels like the last kid picked for kickball.

Then it all comes together on one river trip. He insists on running that rapid, and he gets stuffed in the hole. The carnage is horrendous, but he surfaces downstream, sputtering and flailing. The rope bag hits him on the head, but he grabs it and swings to shore while you chase down his gear. Your buddies laugh—“heinous, dude”—and he thinks they beaned him on purpose. He swings at the rope thrower, who ducks, and his fist connects with a carbon-fiber helmet. He curses and swings again, and it takes the whole party to keep him from hitting your buddy. You arrive on the scene with his paddle—not his, anyway, but the one he borrowed—and he starts yelling at you, telling you that your friends are making fun of him. You throw down the paddle and call him “a testosterone-poisoned jerk.” That word, that phrase—the notion that one could ever be too manly—ignites him like a magnesium flare. All that pent up insecurity, the aggression that you missed when he was eyeballing your trim belly and lean calves, explodes. Your buddies stand aghast while he trashes you, your friends, your sport, your entire lifestyle. The devastation is complete, and even when the argument ends, you still have to get him back in the boat, down the river, and then endure a car ride so tedious it makes you suspect time is moving backwards.

At last you get home, more thoroughly broken-up with a man than you have ever been. There is no “time apart,” no “let’s be friends,” no “it’s not you...,” just separation, Splitsville, the end of the road. You know he will never call again—nor will you. You can’t help but wonder whether you were warned, whether you should have seen this coming. You heard your buddies say it, you heard their sad stories, but you thought you were different, spared because you were a girl. It always sounded a little selfish, even creepy, like a Nazi eugenics program, but now you are a convert to the obvious and enduring truth:

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Humor Honorable Mention

Whitewater Deprogrammers, Inc.: A Paid Commercial Exposé of a Growing Threat

By Julie Albrecht

Attention, John Q. Public! Have you lost a loved one to Whitewater Mania? Is your spouse neglecting his/her conjugal/housekeeping duties? Is your son/daughter skipping family functions in favor of flirting with death on the river? Does your fiancé keep you awake at night practicing braces in his/her sleep? Then YOU need to call Whitewater Deprogrammers, Inc.

The following is a testimonial from Mr. James White, age 49, a successful carpenter from Green Bay, Wisconsin, and one of our recent success stories:

“The little woman and I were supportive of Todd’s new sport at first. Heaven forgive us, we just didn’t know what he was getting in to. I don’t think he did either. At first, he said he was going canoeing and I thought, fine. I mean, every young man has smashed up the family Grumman shooting the rapids once, or poled into the swamp to hunt ducks, and maybe gotten a little lost. But this so-called whitewater stuff ... it isn’t a sport, it’s a habit. I mean, the boy became addicted.”

[Here Mrs. White chimes in]

“Yes, he was such a good boy. Graduated high school, went to work, started saving his money [she smiles wistfully]. But after this whitewater thing got hold of him, he stopped listening to us. One Saturday morning he was tying a new blue kayak on top of his old red car. I reminded him to visit poor old Grandma Ruth on his way out of town. But instead he just went boating, and later he claimed he hadn’t

heard me that morning. He blamed it on an ear blockage he called “exotosis of the ears” from being upside down in cold water too much. About that same time, we learned that he abused his Internet

access at work, and he’d ditch work early if ‘the river gauges were up.’ He’d skip work Fridays for out-of-state river trips. His boss thought he’d taken to drinking or drugs. I tell you, it was just as bad [a

little snuffle]. He dropped out of his city league softball team—and they were the defending champions! When fall came, he refused to join our traditional Wednesday night Bowling League. He was on some river called the Golly or Gosh-awful or something—in West Virginia, of all places—during Thanksgiving and ... and then ...” [she breaks off, sobbing]

[Mr. White again]

“Forgive her—it’s ok, Mary, I’ll take it from here. She can’t talk about it. The final blow ... it was too much for her. The truth is, Todd didn’t show up for Christmas dinner. He went on some kayaking expedition in some country in South America! They don’t even speak English down there, but in his demented mind their rivers were better than our relatives! Hell, you can’t even drink the stuff! We were so humiliated! Our family ... they sympathized, sure, but we knew what they were thinking. That we were fools, losing control of our son like that, letting him ignore his own family on Christmas! A 23-year old should be settling down, getting married, carrying on the family line.

We were at the breaking point when we saw this ad on television. Whitewater Deprogrammers, Inc. Confidential, discrete, effective, they claimed. We figured, what do we have to lose? So we called.”

“A nice man named Dory Dry visited us. To spare us embarrassment in the neighborhood, he came for a consultation dressed as an insurance salesman. He was very thorough. At first he wasn’t sure his organization should take us. We had to convince him our case was worthy. We showed him pictures of our son before and after his whitewater addiction. Mr. Dry examined them thoroughly. He started to get interested. God, we had one

picture of the boy sneaking back well after midnight one Sunday, after a weekend of whitewater wickedness. In this picture, our son—our SON—was unkempt, soggy, and you could practically see that he reeked of ... I can’t really describe how badly he stunk. He had said it was the poly-poop-aline, or something like that. Well, Mr. Dry stared at that snapshot speechless. Then he agreed to take on our case.”

“Anyway, Whitewater Deprogrammers, Inc. took it from there. At my lawyer’s advice, I won’t describe what we went thru during the deprogramming. And it may not have been totally successful. His whitewater friends still try to lure him back to the rivers. Clandestine e-mail messages, urgent phone calls late on Friday nights. It’s hard for him to resist—really difficult. We have to remind him constantly to keep his nose to the grindstone, keep his job, mow the lawn, take out the garbage, plan for the future. Lawsuits are a possibility—I guess as the deprogrammers are becoming more active, some whitewater nuts are banding together in some sort of defense league. I’ve found slips of paper referring to AW or AWA. I think that stands for Anonymous Whitewater Addicts or something. But we keep hoping he’ll stay clean. At any rate, we know our son realizes we are really concerned about him, so it’s worth all the trouble and expense. He’s even occasionally rational. Talks about finding a steady girl, a nice girl who wants to knit and crochet and raise kids. Joining the Bowling League again. And like I said, we can live with ourselves, because we did something to try to get our son back from the grip of that awful addiction. I do urge others deprived of their loved ones to call Whitewater Deprogrammers, Inc. today.”

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Conservation Contest Winner



The spare San Juan landscape.

Photo by Peter Stekel

The River Rules

By Peter Stekel

The San Juan River starts high in the Rocky Mountains of south-central Colorado. At first it rushes, falls and runs, bouncing with happy energy. Then it slow dances like your prom date dream, oozing and eddying hundreds of miles before one last fling, finally crawling into bed behind Glen Canyon Dam. It's that last piece in Utah, the fifty or so miles below Mexican Hat to the takeout at Clay Hills Crossing, that people love to run in open boats. Once you've been there and felt that last bit of excitement the San Juan has to offer, you'll know why.

Like the Colorado River, into which it should flow, the San Juan is brown. Like chocolate milk. Like a baby's diaper. Like many rivers beyond the hundredth

meridian. The rocks it flows through are red, burnt umber and terra-cotta. Those rocks are made of mud and silt contributed to ancient oceans by primordial Colorado and San Juan rivers.

An untrained eye doesn't see much growing along the San Juan. What little vegetation is poking out of the ground is a faded green, like Levis worn one season too many. The chlorophyll has been blanched out, scalded by the sun until it no longer possesses any botanic hue. All that is left is emotion. To either desert lovers or haters, that green is as refreshing as blue sky on a smoggy afternoon in southern California.

Of course, there's plenty of blue sky in the desert but a bright sun and summer heat do a good job of washing away any interest in it. Shade, dark, cool shade is sought when leaving the river for the canyons. Umbrellas and tarps are needed on shore, substituting for trees. Portable

sun shelters—hats with bigger duckbills than a duckbilled platypus—are needed on the river once flat water has obviated the need for helmets.

Desert sky is benign to those who pay attention and unforgiving to those who forget the importance of escaping the sun. That's the rule to follow on the San Juan and every other river too. When the river rule isn't followed someone always ends up with the worst sunburn seen since the last time denial (or fashion—"I can't wear a hat because it makes my hair look funny") got in the way of good sense.

Humans are a funny lot. Experience and conditioning mean we obey what the sky commands though obedience doesn't come easily. Whoever first came up with, "Rules are meant to be broken," never paddled a river or stood in the desert. To that foolishness can be added the current philosophy that not only are rules meant

to be broken, they're meant to be ignored and not known.

In the San Juan country, the sky above and the earth and river below are good metaphors for knowing and not knowing. Granted, a lot in this world is not known. Some of it because it can't be known and the rest of it because it's just too plain difficult to understand. But a small piece, the lazy piece owned by those who are proud of their ignorance, is purposely unknown because knowing would mean paying attention and being aware. Laziness breeds indolence and makes breaking rules a natural affair.

Rivers continually provide metaphors for how life is to be lived. Rivers have rules and while on the river we choose to obey those rules because we know how important they are. We know the health and safety rules and follow them without question. It doesn't matter if you are novice or expert, everyone respects the rules because everyone knows they are right and good. Make camp in the proper place. Use your fire pan. The river is not a toilet. Wear helmets and PFDs since they protect heads from concussions and keep air in a swimmer's lungs. Always travel the river as if you are the first in a long line. Be invisible and leave no trace of your passing. Pack it in. Pack it out.

Further downstream the rules don't change but everything else sure does. The further from the source, the further from knowledge and awareness. The problem is, not abiding by the rules creates mischief for rivers.

Consider the San Juan's curious reversal of fate. During most of its life, the San Juan River runs brown under a blue sky. As time marches on, the river is captured by the water seekers. The San Juan joins larger and smaller rivers and runs through pipes to fill reservoirs and other impoundments. In the end, it sits blue under a brown sky. Resting in a shady eddy on the lower San Juan, below the rapid at Government Canyon, engulfed by rock, warmth and rule, it is difficult to believe that this water will one day flow from faucets to feed factories and businesses or water homes,

gardens, people and dogs in such places as Los Angeles, Tucson and Phoenix. Because they choose to not know or respect the rules of rivers, the people who use this water will not know where this water came from, or how long and how far it traveled to meet their needs.

These water users will not know that the San Juan is one of the siltiest rivers in the world. One third of the River's volume can be silt during the summer when afternoon thunderstorms pound what passes for rock around here.

Urban water users won't know that egrets, beaver, mule deer, Canada geese, hawks and sparrows and other animal species rely on the river and its basin for life. Even cattle grazing on the public lands around the San Juan for less than \$2.00/animal/month need its water. And don't forget the insects and all the plants.

The lower Colorado River basin states of Nevada, Arizona and southern California will take the San Juan's water without knowing about the 12,000 people who run this stretch of 50 miles every year. That successive waves of people were born here, died here and were supplanted by conflict with different cultures. Or that the wave here now, us, shall some day also pass.

Water takers will not know about the human impacts here on the San Juan and how severe they have been. For instance, Tamarisk, the "scourge of the desert southwest," is an ecological disaster along riparian zones. Introduced from the Middle East to control erosion, it provides scant habitat or resources for native animals. Not only do Tamarisk infections disrupt wildlife, the tree displaces native plants and affects river recreation by creating impenetrable thickets sealing off shore access.

Tamarisk roots draw up water from deep in the ground—water often contaminated with salts. These salts are concentrated in the tree's leaves, which when dropped onto the ground make the soil too salty for any other plant except ... you got it! Tamarisk. Since it uses more water than native plants, an established grove of Tamarisk can

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actually lower the water table, drying up springs and wells.

For people resistant to reason, Tamarisk is the perfect desert plant. It's green. It binds the sandy bottoms and shores of rivers, reducing sediment transport so the dams—river plugs—don't silt up. Tourists love Tamarisk because of the tree's springtime display of small, pinkish flowers. They think the hundreds of thousands of tiny feathery seeds, blowing about in the breeze or floating downstream, are pretty. What they don't know is that those seeds, falling on a sandbar, create a carpet of one inch seedlings with twelve inch roots.

Tamarisk also reproduces vegetatively, new shoots sprouting from stumps. They appear



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Conservation Contest Winner

easily following fire, drought, grazing or mowing. Like a relative who comes to dinner and then won't leave, once you have Tamarisk you have it for good. Or evil.

Nor will the water takers know that water backed up in the Glen Canyon reservoir has caused silt to fill the canyon of the lower San Juan and that navigation at Slickrock Canyon is impeded. The river channel here is some 40 feet below the current river bottom. The Slickrock Rapid is little more than riffles now, its power and glory smothered by silt, which, incidently, the Tamarisk love. They'll wave at you as you float by.

And the water takers will not know about the people past, present and into the future who's life, employment and recreation is a part of these waters. In the cities of the desert southwest it suffices to know that when the faucet handle is turned, out comes water.

Volumes have been written, and not read, about water in the West—who owns it,

who uses it, how they use it and how who controls water controls wealth and power. Life begins and ends in water. We are, as they say, "ninety-something percent water." Maybe that explains the yin and yang attraction of river runners to the rivers they run. One needs the other as much as the other needs the one in order to survive. For water is spiritual power and, like God, does not advocate for itself. That is for the preachers to do. And the river preachers use their boats, their brains, their pens and politician's addresses along with their hard-earned cash to spread the river gospel and reinforce the river's rules. There is wisdom here and we all know it.

Consider wisdom. It's supposed to come with the ages. From where do rivers come?

Wisdom enables the wise to approach and sustain life. As do the waters of rivers.

Wisdom comes from history and is part of a long chain of events we only pretend to control. Can it not be said that a river is wise

in much the same manner?

As Huck Finn knew so well, a river is history, moving water from the past into the present and through the present into the future.

Wisdom is also drawn from pragmatic channels of knowledge and experience. Rivers come from streams that flow from side channels, cutting through geologic time and exposing past lives and experience.

Wisdom draws itself from the nebulous "aether," that mysterious fifth element which Aristotle believed filled all of space. Water fills all of space on earth, working itself into the cracks between grains of soil or between molecules of air. It flows from the sky as rain. It flows on and in the ground as rivers.

Hiding from the sun is a necessity both on the river and off.

Photo by Peter Stekel

From wisdom flows knowledge and without knowledge we are nothing but particles of protoplasm bumping into each other, unaware of making the same mistakes over and over.

Now, consider the river runners. An odd and motley crew. Judged by their appearance, as they would be in their non-native haunts in the side channels of urban knowledge and experience, they are not much to look at. Therefore, rules of impression dictate that the river runner must be of no consequence.

Ah! But here is a group of people! Doctors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, bankers, engineers, bureaucrats, soldiers, carpenters, scientists, weavers, philosophers and photographers, horse lovers, book lovers,

music lovers and lovers of life. They are, as e.e. cummings once wrote so beautifully, not like, "mostpeople."

Mostpeople curse the rain and find fault with the sun. Mostpeople live their lives like water spilled from a glass. Mostpeople would like to see our nation's wealth funneled into "public-private partnerships" where the public ends up paying for everything while the private reaps the rewards. Everywhere you look, mostpeople are starving public program budgets in preparation for shutting down, outsourcing or privatizing our public lands.

The river runner has become the river's preacher, advocating for a just and good

cause. And having fun while doing it too! Perhaps that is what the temple destroyers, "mostpeople," find so abhorrent about river runners. That they know their will, know their goal, know their desire. And they know how to enjoy themselves while doing it. Nothing can be worse for those living in "quiet desperation" than to see those who are not.

And so, back to wisdom. Isn't wisdom also knowing what you know and knowing when to use it, following the river's rules? With great satisfaction, the San Juan River should be happy to know such wonders exist. And, with this peace, the river flows to the sea. ☞



Stewardship

Save Our Wild Salmon

Court Ruling Renews Hope of a Free-flowing Snake River and Recovery of Healthy Runs of Wild Salmon and Steelhead in the Pacific Northwest

by Joseph Bogaard, Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition

There is fire in water. There is an invisible flame, hidden in water, that creates not heat but life. And in this bewildering age, no matter how dark or glib some humans make it, wild salmon still climb rivers and mountain ranges in absolute earnest, solely to make contact with that flame.

—David James Duncan “A Prayer for the Salmon Second Coming” from *My Story as Told by Water*.

Though wild salmon and steelhead may be struggling to sustain their populations in the rivers and streams of the Columbia & Snake River Basin in America’s Pacific Northwest, they have had little trouble recently swimming into newspaper headlines across the country. Events in the first half of 2005 have set off a cascade of reactions, intensifying the debate over the fate of four salmon-killing dams on the Snake River. In the “real world” of actual rivers and migrating salmon, fish populations are low, and the Northwest’s iconic fish remain threatened with extinction. But in that “other world” of policy-making, public opinion, and the courts, salmon are making headway. And that latter world, as we all know, can have a huge impact on the former.

In the last decade, Pacific Northwest citizens have been embroiled in debate about how to best restore endangered populations of wild salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake River Basin, a drainage the same size as France. At the crux of the debate lie four dams on the lower Snake River. Scientists have consistently concluded that protecting and restoring its wild salmon to abundant, self-sustaining levels depends on removing these low-value dams. More

recent evidence indicates that removing these dams can actually strengthen the economy, create new jobs, and save taxpayer dollars.

Snake River salmon and steelhead face extinction for one central reason: the river-artery that connects them to the ocean has been dammed almost beyond all recognition. Juvenile salmon and steelhead have evolved to ride to the ocean on a wave of spring snowmelt. The trip used to take one to three weeks. The Columbia and Snake rivers now have a series of warm, stagnant, predator-filled reservoirs that can slow that journey to three months. This sequence of eight reservoirs and dams kills up to 90% of the juvenile salmon and steelhead even before they arrive at the ocean.

These dams were built in the ‘60s and ‘70s, and soon afterward salmon populations plummeted by 90%. Since the 1990s, in response to increasing listings under the Endangered Species Act, a growing chorus of fishing and outfitter businesses, outdoor retail companies, conservation organizations, and taxpayer and clean energy advocates are calling for the removal of these dams and the replacement of their minimal economic benefits with alternatives.

Wild Rivers Mean Wild Salmon: Even more so than paddlers(!), wild salmon and steelhead depend on healthy, free-flowing rivers in order to thrive. Not long ago, the Columbia and Snake River Basin was the most productive salmon ecosystem on the planet. Every year, between ten and sixteen million adult salmon and steelhead would emerge from the Pacific Ocean, flooding into every river, stream, and tributary they could swim to. Returning to the very river-gravels where they themselves were born, these fish would spawn the next generation and then die. The decomposing bodies of the fish would fill the streams with rich nutrients that fuel a rich, diverse foodweb.

Idaho’s salmon and steelhead are among the most tenacious and inspiring. They journey further inland than almost any other salmon, to rivers like the Salmon,



Payette, Clearwater, and Lochsa. Fish born in the Rocky Mountains’ Sawtooth Range, for example, swim up to 1,000 miles through the eight dams and reservoirs to the Pacific Ocean where they grow to upwards of 40 lbs and four feet long. After one to three years in the ocean, they use their acute sense of smell and the earth’s magnetic fields to find the mouth of the Columbia River and make the astonishing 1,000-mile-long journey back to the place they were hatched.

And Wild Salmon Mean Business: Like the wild rivers that support them, abundant runs of wild salmon also mean good jobs and business in the Pacific Northwest. In 2001, a very limited salmon fishing season in Idaho generated more than \$90 million dollars for nearby rural towns. A 2005 study concluded that a recovered salmon fishery in Idaho would generate \$544 million annually – much of it in small rural towns in need of new economic development opportunities. Other economic reports reflect that salmon and steelhead fishing in 2001, for example, generated more than a billion dollars in economic activity and more than 30,000 jobs in the commercial and sportfishing sectors. And salmon-reliant businesses and outdoor retailers whose livelihoods depend upon healthy rivers, fisheries, and outdoor places are playing a critical role advocating for leadership in Congress to restore a free-flowing Snake River.

This spring, for example, 1,100 businesses signed a letter to Congress urging legislators to recognize the economic importance of restoring healthy salmon and protecting habitat. The Salmon

Fishing and Recreation Business Letter calls for Congressional leadership to pass the Salmon Planning Act (HR 1615). This bill would generate credible information by exploring the costs and benefits of removing these four dams and replacing their minimal benefits with alternatives. Businesses joining the letter are diverse and include Patagonia, Sage Manufacturing, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations, Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association, Osprey Packs, River Odysseys West, ECHO: the Wilderness Company, and many others.

The “Redden Decision” Renews Calls for a free-flowing Snake River: Since 1991, when the first salmon runs were listed under the Endangered Species Act, the federal government has created a series of so-called “recovery” plans in order to manage the federal dams and protect salmon. Cynics rightly complain that these plans are designed more to save dams - not fish. They have been consistently ineffective, expensive, and unscientific. And, it turns out, illegal.

The federal government’s most recent version was produced under court order by the Bush Administration in late 2004. The \$6 billion plan was immediately challenged by salmon advocates and fishing businesses, and last May, Judge James Redden in the U.S. District Court in Portland rejected the Bush Administration’s harmful plan as inadequate and illegal. The plan sought to redefine dams as an “immutable” part of the natural environment, abandon recovery of healthy stocks as a goal, and actually allow stocks to continue to decline toward extinction over the next ten years. In his ruling, the judge described the federal plan as a document written “more in cynicism than in sincerity.”

The landmark ruling set off a renewed discussion about salmon recovery and dam removal. While several major newspapers in Idaho have long supported the removal of the four lower Snake River dams as the best recovery alternative for Idaho’s salmon and it’s fishing communities, two major papers in Washington, the Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer, are



now suggesting that the region explore this option, and how we might replace these four dams’ modest benefits with alternatives.

From the Seattle PI editorial on May 29: “For years, politicians opposed to dam removal have paraded themselves as protectors of the economic well-being of communities along the Columbia and Snake rivers. The most recent studies done for environmental groups seem to point toward powerful overall economic advantages from dam removal. Economic assistance and transportation investment measures might well be much cheaper than the \$6 billion cost of the wholly inadequate salmon recovery plan rejected by Redden.”

Meanwhile, Redden’s rulings have drawn attention in Congress, where rumors of riders and other backdoor maneuvers are running rampant. Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) has been leading the charge to undermine salmon recovery efforts and has even threatened to overturn the recent court decision that benefit salmon and steelhead, and the communities that rely on them.

Shooting the Messenger: Senator Craig has already successfully included language in an energy spending bill that would eliminate funding for the Fish Passage Center (FPC), a small scientific agency that is responsible for monitoring and analyzing salmon population trends in the Columbia Basin. FPC has been an essential tool to understand how our salmon are impacted by the hydro system. Silencing the agency that delivers this information is the wrong way to produce good policies to restore wild salmon and steelhead to healthy populations. At press time, salmon and fishing advocates are still working with members of Congress to erase this language.

Overturning the Federal Salmon Plan? Though nothing has yet been introduced,

Senator Craig has also publicly stated his opposition to the judge’s ruling that rejected the Bush Administration’s cynical salmon plan. The Idaho Senator has threatened to attach an anti-salmon rider to a spending bill that would overturn this court decision and allow the extinction plan to stand.

The recent Redden decision has rekindled a debate about how our region will recover endangered salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Removing the four lower Snake river dams is getting a new look by past skeptics. Judge Redden has asked the parties to the litigation—federal and state governments, the tribes, and salmon and fishing advocates—to reassemble in early fall to begin the collaborative dialogue to craft a new plan and a solution. ■

Please send a message to your Congressmember today at <http://ga0.org/campaign/salmonheritage>

To learn more or get more involved, contact Joseph Bogaard at joseph@wildsalmon.org and visit www.wildsalmon.org

Groups like Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition and Idaho Rivers United are doing an excellent job of fighting for the recovery of wild salmon, and AW is proud to help them out however we can. AW shares their vision of restoring healthy self-sustaining salmon runs to the Snake River and its awesome Idaho tributaries. Paddlers have a lot in common with salmon after all: we love free-flowing wild clean cold healthy mountain streams. More than that though, we recognize that the salmon are an integral part of those places that we treasure. No matter how remote, beautiful and fun the Middle Fork of the Salmon is, it is ecologically incomplete. It is haunted by the ghosts of the millions of salmon that should be there, and the thousands longing to taste its waters as they die in a reservoir far downstream. We hope that paddlers will participate in the salmon recovery efforts by learning more about this issue and speaking for the salmon at every opportunity.

For a great book on salmon issues, check out *Salmon Without Rivers*, by Jim Lichatowich.

—Kevin Colburn
American Whitewater

Stewardship North Feather

By Lila Marie Thomas

*Paddler enjoying a classic North Feather rapid
and classic California scenery.*

over the next 1.2 miles, through a large boulder field replete with undercuts and sieves. Below Storrie Bridge, the gradient eases and the difficulty level drops back to Class III-IV.

The outstanding aspect of Cresta and Rock Creek is they offer a diversity of difficulty levels. Whether you are a beginner or a pro you are bound to have an exciting time on the Feather. And, best yet, the options for boaters are about to expand.

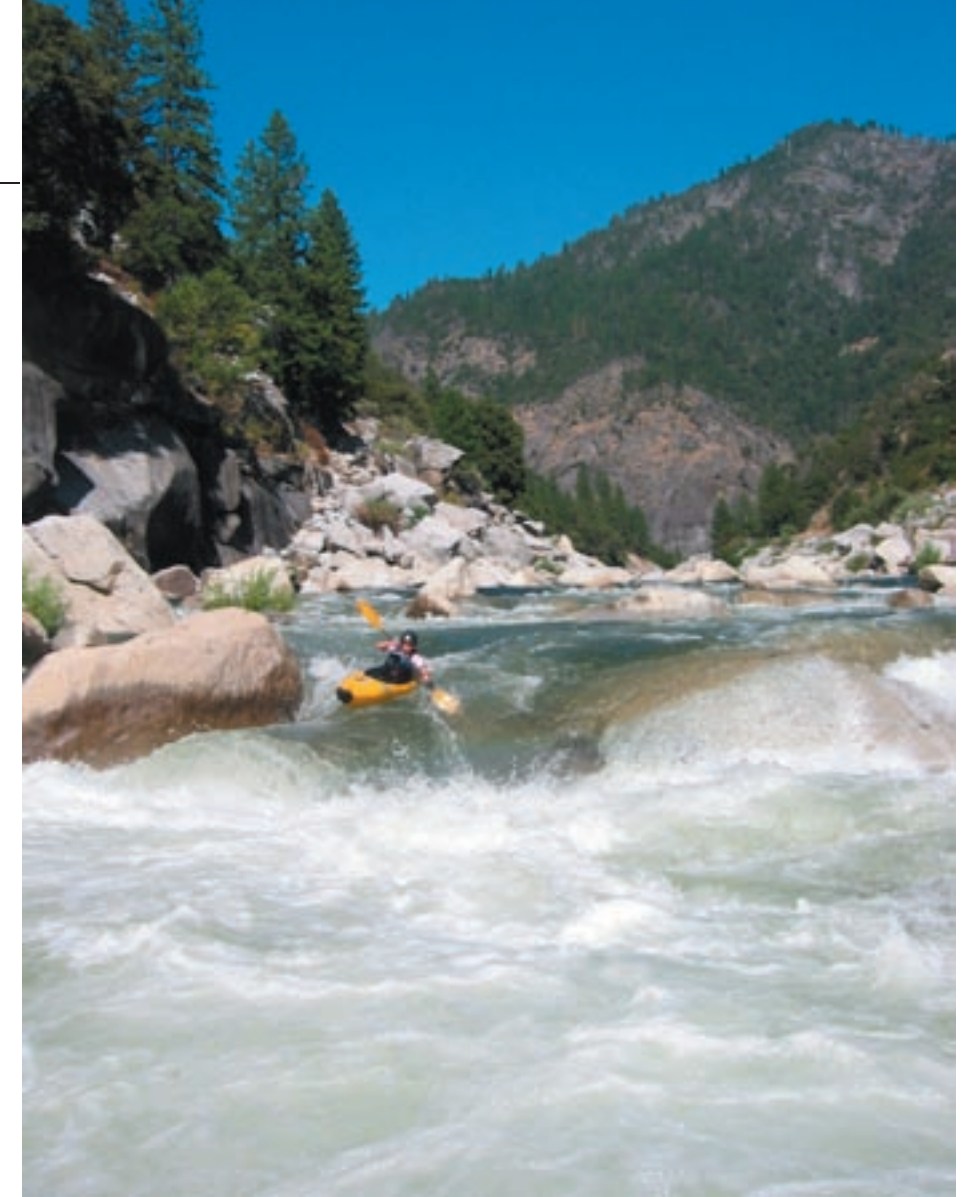
AW has reached a settlement on project # 2105, promising additional releases on the Rock Creek and Cresta sections and new whitewater releases on the Belden and Seneca sections. The Seneca is an eight-mile Class V run with one release each spring. The Belden reach is an eight-mile section of Class III-III+ that will have a scheduled whitewater flow release once a month through the season.

Dave Steindorf, AW California Stewardship Director, is working hard to negotiate a schedule that will include two weekends a month combining Belden, Rock Creek, Cresta and Poe sections. The goal is to have a normal flow schedule that boaters can depend on.

Flows on the Poe section, which is below Cresta dam, are currently in negotiations. It offers five miles of Class V and a lower sub-section offering four miles of Class III, III+ with the option of continuing down to Lake Oroville.

AW is also working to develop a whitewater course in nearby Oroville. There are several site locations, some of which would allow for the development of the longest whitewater park on the planet.

“Putting all these opportunities together will create a regional whitewater opportunity on the Feather and revitalize this region’s recreational resources,” says Steindorf. It was the tireless commitment from



Good Times and a Great Future on the North Feather

Four years have passed since the first scheduled whitewater releases on the North Fork of the Feather River. Since then, it’s become a mainstay for California boaters of all levels—especially in the late summer, when nearly everything else in the state is dry. But, it’s about to get better; boaters have showed up in sufficient numbers to meet the triggers negotiated by American Whitewater to add additional boating days on the Feather.

The North Fork of the Feather, nicknamed “The Stairway of Power” because of its ubiquitous hydroelectric facilities, is situated 100 miles from Sacramento. The

river promises whitewater ranging from Class III to V. But for over 50 years there was only a trickle of water meandering between house-sized granite boulders in the barren riverbed. In June, 2002, 1,600 cfs of clear turquoise water roared into the gorge, turning the river into a fantastic playground for more than 200 boaters each month. Without AW, these monthly releases never would have happened. The hard work of AW staff and volunteers Dave Steindorf, John Gangemi and Kevin Lewis has ensured regularly-scheduled releases.

The Rock Creek and Cresta sections of the North Feather River have proven to be a magnificent resource for paddlers around the world. Typically, on Saturday water is released into the Class III-IV Cresta reach. The section has a gradient of 50 feet per mile with a traditional “pool-drop” feel. The run features big rock pour-overs,

Kevin’s Gate: Gateway to the Tobin run, named for Kevin Lewis, who helped make North Feather releases a reality.

rooster tails jetting up over horizon lines and some fabulous play for paddlers of all levels. One of the most impressive aspects is the scenery; huge granite domes slope to the river’s edge.


The Rock Creek release, typically on Sundays, provides flows to a nine-mile Class III-V section. The run is broken into two sub-sections, Rogers Flat and Tobin. Rogers Flat is a Class III run, beginning below the Rock Creek diversion dam and ending at the “Tobin Vista” river access. The run is approximately five miles with 50 feet per mile gradient. The Class V Tobin run begins shortly after the “Tobin Visa” access site. The river drops 150 feet

Steindorf, Gangemi, Lewis and other individuals from local paddling clubs that made all this a reality. They acted as constant vigilantes for whitewater by attending hundreds of meetings and reviewing many hundreds of pages of studies over the past eight years.

“There were a lot of concerns about boating flows impacting aquatic ecosystems and after four years of study costing over 1 million dollars we’ve found no significant impacts on fish, frogs or insects. We believe that whitewater flows have had a beneficial impact,” says Steindorf. “Fluctuating flows are not the problem,” he adds. “Constant low base flows are truly the enemy of diverse aquatic ecosystems.”

Steindorf has been involved in the North Fork of the Feather River negotiations for the past eight years, “The best thing,” he

says “is the revitalization of the canyon.” And not just from the whitewater releases, but also from the increased base flows (the amount of water that is released in the river on the non-white water release weekends), which has gone up from 50 cfs to 200 cfs. The increased water in the canyon has brought a huge improvement to the North Feather fisheries and has also made the Class V Tobin section runnable year round.

To schedule your future paddling weekends at the North Fork Feather River or to check releases, visit the American Whitewater website: www.americanwhitewater.org. Release schedules and additional information regarding AW’s ongoing work to restore dewatered rivers are available there. 

Stewardship Updates

by Kevin Colburn

Catawba Process Delayed (NC/SC)

The stakeholder negotiation process that is being used to determine the fate of the Catawba River has been delayed for four additional months—for the best of reasons. The group decided that more time would yield a better final agreement. More time was needed in particular for the negotiation of aquatic restoration flows and land conservation. While more meetings mean more expense for AW, we are excited by the possibilities that this extra time will allow. We now plan to sign a settlement agreement next spring.

New Upper Yough Opportunities (MD)


This fall the state of Maryland is reconsidering how to regulate Deep Creek Reservoir, which provides recreational releases into the famous Upper Youghiogheny. American Whitewater has set up meetings with regional and local paddlers to determine a set of interests and proposals for improvements on the Yough. Potential outcomes include additional releases and/or better flow information.

Boaters Score on Vermont's Class II+ Little River

The state of Vermont strongly recommended that the Waterbury Dam on the Little River be managed in a manner that would eliminate flood control, radically reduce power generation, and severely limit whitewater boating. They made this recommendation because they wanted to introduce an exotic species of game fish into the river from the Pacific Northwest for angling purposes. In August the FERC rejected this proposal outright. Thanks in part to the work of New England Flow and American Whitewater, the FERC have instead proposed a robust schedule of weekly recreational releases be supported, new access areas be built, trails be hardened to reduce erosion, and that flood control capacity be retained. Their proposal will also have ecological benefits over the State's proposal while still supporting angling. As the FERC put it, "...the potential for a marginal recreational fishery should not take precedence over the existence of a prized whitewater boating opportunity."



Paddlers Volunteer to Help Restore Cheoah River (NC)

This past fall, dozens of paddlers donned gloves and clippers and headed to North Carolina's Cheoah River to take part in a collaborative river stewardship project. The Cheoah has long suffered from a problem typical of rivers dewatered by hydro diversions: encroachment of trees and shrubs into the river channel. As part of restoring both ecological and recreational functions to the Cheoah, the shrubs needed to come out—and paddlers were up to the challenge. Organized by the US Forest Service and NOC's Bob Hathcock, with some help from AW, paddlers successfully removed vast numbers of shrubs from the river channel. The Cheoah now has a new base flow and series of higher flows. These will keep the shrubs from returning, and keep the Cheoah looking and functioning like a much healthier river! 



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A large poster for the National Paddling Filmfest 2006. The background is a black and white photograph of a person in a yellow kayak navigating a turbulent white-water rapids. The text 'NATIONAL PADDLING FILMFEST 2006' is written in a large, white, hand-drawn style font in the top left corner. On the left side, vertical text reads '2005 BEST PADDLING IMAGE WINNER BY JOHN MICHAEL COX'. In the bottom right corner, there is a cartoon illustration of a person's head with a mohawk and sunglasses. At the bottom, text reads '23 YEARS OF PRESENTING THE BEST IN PADDLESport FILM, VIDEO AND IMAGE COMPETITION', 'ENTRY FORMS-TICKETS-Information:', 'WWW.SURFBWA.ORG/NPFF', and 'PRESENTED BY THE BLUEGRASS WILDWATER ASSOCIATION'. In the middle right, text indicates 'ENTRY DEADLINE: JAN. 18, 2006' and 'SCREENING + AWARDS: FEB. 25, 2006'.

Safety

Accident Summary

by Charlie Walbridge

Accident Summary: January through July Shows Mixed Safety Record

Editor's Note: Summary conclusions are based on the six-month period, January through June. However, due to the timing of this issue, data from July have been added to keep our readers up to date. This explains any disparity between the number of accidents cited in the introduction and those described below.

It's been an uneven year for whitewater safety. Seven kayaking deaths were reported in the first six months of 2005, and only three involved experienced paddlers. This is about half of the usual number. But the thirteen reported rafting fatalities are more than double the recent average. Many involved inexperienced paddlers unable to cope with this spring's high water conditions in the Rocky Mountain States and California. Four deaths occurred on commercial raft tours and two guides were listed among the victims. Conversations with outfitters and state agencies suggest that there were other unreported rafting accidents. The three reported canoeing fatalities represent an average number.

Most of these accounts came from Internet bulletin boards and chat rooms serving the whitewater community. Postings frequently include links to newspaper articles covering these incidents. Since I can't personally check all of these sites I depend on AW members to forward useful material as they find it. I'm especially indebted to our regular correspondents: Slim Ray, Tim Bromelkamp, Dave Cernik, Tim Delaney, Aida Parkinson, and Joe Greiner. Without their support there would be a lot less information to share with you.

Kayaking Accidents

On May 6th Dr. Erich Fleischman, 50, died after his kayak pinned in what rescuers called a "small rapid" on Oregon's remote

Illinois River. According to an article in the *Jackson County Mail-Tribune*, his group was able to free his boat and get him to shore, but he died 90 minutes later. Few details are available, and anyone who can give a full account of what happened is encouraged to contact the AW Safety Committee.

Moist Slot on Colorado's South Boulder Creek is a solid Class IV drop with a hole at the bottom and a sieve just below. On June 3rd James McFarland, 34, scouted the drop and set safety for his friends. Then, according to Mountainbuzz.com, he handed his rope to a friend and went upstream to make his run. He got stuck in the hole, flipped, and was pushed downstream into the sieve. Here he was pinned with his head more than a foot underwater. As two members of his group attempted to help him, a third paddler climbed up to a riverside bike path and told a passing biker to get help. Ten minutes later another group of kayakers arrived. Together they set up a Z-drag and pulled Mr. McFarland free. His estimated time under water was between 18 and 30 minutes. They pulled him ashore and performed CPR for 30 minutes. Paramedics took over, but could not revive him.

There was a bad pinning at Dinosaur Rock, located just below Clavey Falls on California's Tuolumne River. According to posts on csonline.com, Brent Bradley's group ran the Class V+ Lower Clavey River on June 16th. After they reached the confluence with the "T," most of the kayakers decided to sneak Clavey Falls on the right, but Mr. Bradley chose to run a familiar line more toward the center. His group saw him hit a hole and disappear; they think that he became pinned on Dinosaur Rock because other kayaks have become stuck there. Bradley's paddle floated free, but there was no other sign of him. The group searched the area

thoroughly. They found Mr. Bradley's PFD, still buckled, and spotted his elbow pad and water bottle. When nothing more could be done they finished the run and notified authorities. Several days later the body had still not been found.

The Valley Falls section of West Virginia's Tygart River is famous for a succession of runnable waterfalls. John Mullen, 37, was a strong kayaker and serious slalom racer who worked as copy editor for the *Washington Post*. He trained seriously for paddling, and planned to use Valley Falls to prepare for a run on Great Falls of the Potomac later in the year. He and a friend arrived at the Tygart on July 24th. Angus Phillips, in an excellent piece for the *Washington Post*, said that the river was running 6.75 feet that day. This is well above the suggested level of 4.7 feet and this extra water made the drops significantly more difficult. Mr. Mullen's friend ran first, then set safety. Mullen landed the drop cleanly, but was pulled back into the waterfall after flipping on the boil. His roll attempt failed, then the falling water hit him, pushing his kayak down deep. After a very long wait Mr. Mullen appeared 30 yards downstream. His friend followed him over the next falls and into the pool below, but by then it was too late.

On February 19th David Pennell, 53, washed into a strainer on a sharp bend on California's Carmel River. This small Class III creek runs only a few days per year. It's very fast and tricky, with many sharp bends and strainers. According to the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, Mr. Pennell's boat flipped, trapping him inside. Minutes later the boat broke loose with Mr. Pennell still caught inside his boat. Friends caught up with the boat, pulled him ashore, and performed CPR without success. Later a friend noted that Mr. Pennell had been experiencing some health problems,

which may have affected his balance.

Three other inexperienced paddlers died after becoming pinned on strainers. On April 4th James McCann, 48, launched a kayak on Cobbossee Stream in Maine while the river was in flood. His kayak hit a clump of trees and flipped, trapping the man inside. His partner, working with friends on shore, tried to help Mr. McCann but he died before they got him free. On May 26th Miles Hubbard, a first-time paddler, launched his new fiberglass kayak on Oregon's St. Joe River. The 21 year-old man was found, still in his kayak, lodged in a debris pile. On July 31st Renee Wyser-Pratte, 34, was pinned under a submerged log at the junction of Oregon's McKenzie and Mohawk Rivers. She had a PFD in her boat, but she wasn't wearing it.

Another kayaker drowned on April 17th at a low-head dam on Minnesota's Snake River. An Associated Press article said that the four friends who portaged the dam found Jason Ray, 30, floating facedown in the river. He had presumably been recirculated in the hydraulic until he lost consciousness. Rescue workers took him to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Mark Sundin, a respected local fire chief, was killed while kayaking with his son on Oregon's Willamette River. The incident occurred on July 15th in an area containing Class III rapids. After a passing motorist reported an empty kayak floating downstream, rescue squads turned out. They found the 48 year-old Sundin floating facedown. They also located his 10 year-old son along the riverbank. The boy reported seeing his father capsize and swim. According to the Salem, *Oregon Register-Guard*, Chief Sundin was not wearing a helmet. This unfortunate lapse in safety precautions has lead to speculation that a blow to the head might have left him stunned and unable to self-rescue.

Canoeing Accidents

Canoeing accidents typically involve inexperienced people running whitewater

without life jackets. In these cases, some of the victims who were wearing PFDs survived. On December 29th of 2004 Brian Gianella, 24, and Luke Agosta, 21, tried to take an open canoe down a flooded Granite Creek near Prescott, Arizona. According to an article in the *Arizona Republic*, witnesses watched as the pair, who were not wearing life vests, got "swallowed" by a powerful eddy. A third paddler swam ashore and called for help.

In an eerily similar case, two college students flipped a canoe on the powerful Yellowstone River in Montana. According to the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, no one actually saw Mark Mitzel, 24, and Andrew Smith, 22, capsize in the river's Class III rapids on May 23rd. Unfortunately, neither man was wearing a PFD. A jogger on a nearby path saw one man get pulled underwater and contacted authorities. A lengthy search was needed to find the bodies.

This tragic scenario was repeated again when Robert Godfrey's canoe broached on a rock and capsized in Big Black Rapids, a long big water Class III on a river forming the boundary between Maine and Canada. A story in Foster'sOnline.com, a newslines covering Northern Maine, stated that the 58 year-old was not wearing a life vest and didn't even know how to swim. He slipped underwater after a brief struggle. His daughter, who was wearing a PFD, swam ashore safely.

On July 8th, a canoe carrying three people flipped in "Little Gore Canyon" of the Colorado River. *The Summit County News* reported that the accident happened in Class II Needle Eye Rapid. William Trippe, 31, the only person in the boat who was not wearing a PFD, did not survive.

A final accident was also caused by of inexperience and poor judgment. On April 9th three men paddled a canoe over Williams Dam on Virginia's James River at high water. This low-head dam has claimed several lives over the past decade and warning signs were in place when the accident occurred. According to the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Arthur Suarez,

40, became caught in a powerful hydraulic and recirculated until he drowned. Two other men in the canoe survived.

Rafting Accidents

High flows on western rivers caused a significant increase in rafting fatalities during the summer of 2005. Thirteen deaths were reported to us, but we're pretty certain that a number of others were not. Many of these deaths were "flush-drowning" incidents in which someone wearing a life vest drowns while swimming through whitewater. It's important to remember that swimmers spend a lot of time underwater in big rapids, even when they're wearing high flotation life vests. If a big-water swim goes on too long the swimmer will eventually



Safety Accident Summary

become exhausted and helpless.

Although this type of accident is most often linked to one or two boat trips, larger parties are not immune. The Upper Animas River in Southern Colorado is notorious for icy, relentless Class IV-V whitewater that becomes even more intense at high flows. The river was running high on June 19th when a five-boat commercial trip entered “Ten Mile Rapids,” the most relentless part of the run. A raft flipped in the second drop, dumping five people into the water. Three rafters swam ashore safely, but guide Darrel Bogenreif, 25, and guest Scott Liacona, 30, were carried away with shocking speed. Two rafts set off in pursuit, but the pair was lifeless when picked up downstream. After CPR was attempted unsuccessfully they flagged down a railroad car and loaded the bodies on it.

This accident was discussed extensively on Mountainbuzz.com and two interesting threads emerged. The first discussed the challenge of conveying the risks of whitewater to rafting guests. Several trip participants told newspapers after the accident that they “didn’t know what they were getting into,” despite an extensive briefing the day before. That talk-up included a no-nonsense discussion of the risks of a whitewater swim on the Lower Animas in Durango. The presentation is frank enough that some guests decide that they don’t want to go! But while many people want exciting adventures, few would start a trip if they knew that someone would be hurt or killed. The same is true for experienced river runners. But as Oliver Grau wrote in a recent issue of *Kayak Session*, “conscious risk taking is one of the greatest expressions of freedom we have.” Our normal regrets after an accident do not make the impulse wrong.

The second thread discussed whether a safety kayaker is more useful than a safety raft. Both have advantages and disadvantages. A kayak is faster, but can only assist one person at a time and can’t pull them out of the water. This is a disadvantage when a raft flip puts a group of people in the water or

when the swimmer is in a weakened or unconscious state. The truth is that both types of backup work well, but individual circumstances may favor one or the other.

Flush-drownings also occurred on the Yampa in Colorado, the Green River in Utah, and the Tuolumne in California. Victims’ ages ranged from 30s to 60s. In each case a person fell out of their raft and was recovered dead a few minutes later. There were two more flush-drownings on the Rio Grande during a period of exceptionally high water. From late May through early June, the river ran between 5,000 and 6,000 cfs. One death involved a 61 year-old commercial passenger on the “racecourse” section; the second fatality was a 23 year-old man participating in a recreation program run by Kirtland Air Force Base. In each case the boat flipped in the rapids, and five or six other people survived the swim. In the East, a man drowned on the French Broad River on July 9th. The river was running high following heavy rains when four men got on the river in a small raft. The boat flipped in the vicinity of Stackhouse and one person was washed downstream to his death.

Swimming whitewater without life vests is extremely dangerous. On May 23rd Delia Chaffin, 65, and Ellory McCauley, 59, were running the North Platte River in Wyoming with a friend. None of the three wore life vests. According to the Associated Press, their raft was punctured when it hit a bridge pier. Chaffin and McCauley quickly disappeared underwater. The third paddler reached shore and called for help. The man was legally drunk and authorities cited him for operating a boat while intoxicated. On May 29th, Marcos Medina drowned after his raft flipped on California’s Mokelumne River. According to an article on Lodinews.com, most of the group was not wearing life jackets. Several members of the group swam toward shore and grabbed the limbs of overhanging trees. Mr. Medina could not hold on and was swept away. His body was found lodged beneath a strainer.

Finally, on June 20th, 14 year-old Andrew

McDaniel fell off an air mattress in the Arkansas River in Pueblo, CO and drowned. According to the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, two other boys were rescued by nearby kayakers. None were wearing PFDs. The incident occurred in the town’s new whitewater park and people interviewed suggested that the underprivileged youngster had been “lured” into the water by the facility. This comment came despite the presence of warning signs and his mother’s statement that she had warned the boy to stay off the river. This unfortunate tragedy should not obscure the fact that these young people made a very bad decision. Indeed, without the assistance of kayakers, all three boys might have perished.

Strainers caused several rafting deaths this year. Jeremiah Ramsey, 29, was rafting with three friends on March 28th when his raft collided with a strainer at a sharp bend on Arkansas’ Indian Creek. His legs apparently got caught in the pinned raft, holding him underwater. Alison Roberge, 17, a junior leader in the Girl Guides of Canada, drowned on a commercial raft trip down the Elaho River in British Columbia on May 14th. At Devil’s Elbow rapid their 9-person raft hit a rock and flipped, putting her and the five other girls into the water. She was helping two other girls when a safety kayaker picked them up and took them to safety. When he returned to look for Ms. Roberge, she was gone. Although her guides thought that she was headed toward a “safe” area, she was, in fact, swept into a logjam and killed.

On June 30th, two rafts containing Boy Scouts washed over a low-head dam on the Lower Animas River near Farmington, NM. The Scouts had not intended to run the drop, but were carried there by fast-moving high water. According to the *Farmington Daily Times*, the first raft ran the drop successfully, but the second got caught in the hydraulic at the base. Four boys fell out of their boat; three were able to grab hold of protruding rocks in the backwash, but Chase Hathbrook, 15, was caught by the hydraulic and recirculated.

Then his life jacket was pulled off and he disappeared. Rescue squads pulled the three marooned boys from the backwash along with a scout leader who needed help after making an unsuccessful rescue attempt. They also began an intense search for the missing boy. His body was eventually spotted five miles downstream by a rescue helicopter.

This past summer the commercial outfitting community on the Ocoee River was rocked by the death of a veteran guide. Stan Guy, 24, was the head guide at Sunburst Adventures and the son of the company founder. He was leading a trip down the Upper Ocoee on July 7th when the group elected to run “Alien Ledge,” a side chute used to sneak the main chute of “Mikey.” A raft got hung up at the lip of the ledge, and Mr. Guy swam down to it from upstream to assist. An initial report posted to Boatertalk said that Mr. Guy washed under the raft. But according to Patrick Morgan, an experienced local guide, Mr. Guy was pulled underwater just above the raft. Guides searched the area without success. Then, after the water was turned off, rescue squads found him in an underwater cave nine feet back and 10 feet underwater. The area is apparently riddled with sieves; a rafting guest died near here in a similar incident some years ago. There is no visible warning of the danger.

Some accidents are truly impossible to prevent. Rick Huffman, 61 and Cathy Huffman, 58, were killed by a grizzly bear on Alaska’s Hulahula River sometime in the last week of June. According to the National Park Service Morning Report, the pair were using inflatable kayaks to travel down this remote river in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge when the attack occurred. The pair was experienced in wilderness travel and set camp carefully, storing food in bear-proof containers far from their tents. Another paddler saw the battered camp and tried to approach it, but he was chased away by the bear. He notified authorities who later came out to the site and shot the animal.

On July 14th, 32 year-old Pnina Gazfried was floating the Upper Delaware River with some friends. The National Park Service Morning Report said that the accident occurred near Pond Eddy, NY, about a mile below the Roebling Bridge. Ms. Gazfried suffered some sort of seizure and fell backwards into the river, which was only a foot deep, still wearing her PFD. But by the time her friends had pulled her back into the raft, she was dead.

Rescues of Note

There were several rescues that paddlers should know about. Last January, Heather Rau rescued a man and his son after their recreational kayak tipped over on the Monongahela River near Morgantown, WV. The pair was paddling behind a bridge abutment. When they paddled out of the eddy and into the current they flipped instantly. Ms. Rau, who was just finishing a wildwater workout, saw the pair splashing in the water and gave chase. She pulled the pair ashore, then recovered their boat.

According to the *San Louis Obispo Tribune*, area firefighters made eight swiftwater rescues in the first three months of this year. On March 6th, rescuers searched for a “missing kayaker” after a loose boat was spotted on the Big River at very high levels. The kayaker had long since been pulled to safety by a friend and had gone home. Unfortunately for us all, a \$15,000 Jet Ski was lost in the “rescue” operation. The Mendocino Fire Company is now debating whether or not to bill him for the rescue, including the cost of the damaged Jet Ski. Paddlers may want to consider notifying authorities when they lose a boat in a populated area.

Swinging Bridge Rapid on the Narrows of Colorado’s Poudre River was the scene of a well-executed rescue on May 14th. Posts to Mountainbuzz.com describe what happened: a kayaker attempted to roll before hitting a square rock upside down and pinning hard. Paddlers from two groups mobilized immediately, attaching a rope to his boat and pulling him free. His estimated

time under water was 5-7 minutes. The group rushed him ashore and started CPR. His breathing came back, but it was slow and ragged. They cut open his dry top and continued rescue breathing as they carried him to the road. Earlier someone had run up to the road, flagged a car, and instructed the driver to go down-canyon and call 911. Emergency workers arrived and took the man to a nearby hospital. He is expected to make a full recovery.

On June 5th, a seven-year-old boy was pinned underwater for 20 minutes after a canoe carrying four people pinned on a bridge abutment on the Spokane River in Washington. According to the Spokane, Washington *Spokesman-Review* three other paddlers, two men and another small boy were thrown from the boat and swam to safety. Firefighters, aided by a local man who lived by the river, lowered rescuers down from the bridge. They released the canoe and retrieved the boy. Weeks later Benjamin Morin was still in a coma at a local hospital.

Noted whitewater competitor Eric Jackson was injured in the finals of the Great Falls Race on the Potomac River. Running the center chutes with five other paddlers, he was stopped by a hole long enough for another competitor to ram him in the abdomen. The pain was excruciating according to the Jackson Kayaks’ web site and Eric initially thought that he had a broken pelvis. But a visit to the hospital revealed “only” a bruised hip and pelvis and badly torn abdominal muscles. He was out of action for a month.

American Whitewater thanks its members and friends for sending the information contained in this summary. Please forward any accident descriptions, newspaper articles, personal accounts, and any other material of note to ccwalbridge@cs.com (Rt. 1, Box A43B, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525). Please cut and paste any text rather than sending web links; the links are often inactive by the time we follow up on them. This information will also be added to AW’s Safety Database to provide a real-world basis for our safety program. 🏞️

Board Bios



Charlie Walbridge

I've been reporting on river accidents in *American Whitewater* for the past 30 years and often serve as an AW spokesman to government and media. In addition to safety committee work, I have also been involved on several access issues since moving to Bruceton Mills, West Virginia six years ago. My wife and I maintain the Sang Run (put-in) access on the Upper Yough and are involved in the current re-licensing process. This past year I coordinated an effort involving AW, Friends of the Cheat, a state agency, and a local outfitter, which resulted in substantial improvements and upgrades to the much-abused Jenkinsburg access on the Cheat and Big Sandy rivers. This effort included \$15,000 in private fundraising and a matching state grant. I also assisted Friends of Gauley River this fall in their effort to reopen the Woods Ferry Access.

My position as a board member is helpful in everything I do. People in river management or government might not listen to "Charlie Walbridge from Bruceton Mills," but they will listen to me as an AW board member. If elected, I plan to use this leverage to make whitewater paddling safer and more accessible. I'd encourage anyone with questions or suggestions to email me at ccwalbridge@cs.com.



Don Kinser

My interest in whitewater boating started in the early 1970s when I was a teenager growing up in the Washington DC area. However, it was not until Nanci gave me a whitewater canoe for Christmas in 1991 (I figured this was a green light to spend more time on the river) that my whitewater addiction became serious.

Joe Griener convinced me to join American Whitewater in 1995 during a trip to West Virginia and I have been an active AW supporter and volunteer ever since. Like many, my volunteer efforts with AW began during the first Tallulah Gorge releases in 1997. It was during these early Tallulah releases that I became aware of the hard work AW and many others had invested in bringing this long dead river back to life. I learned that our ability to enjoy our river resources requires a great deal of work from many dedicated volunteers and the tireless efforts of the AW staff.

Since these early volunteer days at Tallulah Gorge, my commitment to AW's mission has grown steadily. Since 2000 much of my effort on behalf of AW has been invested in my role as regional coordinator focused on the Chattooga watershed. In addition to this role, I have served as an AW Director for the last three years, and also held the Vice President position this past year.

AW's recent achievements all around the country are nothing short of spectacular. I am amazed by the accomplishments of AW volunteers and staff and the miles of river they have opened or helped protect. I am glad to have been a small part of these amazing efforts and honored to have had the opportunity to help guide AW toward continued success in its river stewardship efforts.

I am committed to AW's mission and would be honored to have the continued opportunity to serve AW as a director and officer for the next three years.



Joe Greiner

I have been paddling since 1976. I have boated in 13 different countries on all six of the boatable continents. Because I've been paddling for so long, I have a sense of the history of the sport and I know many of the people who helped bring whitewater paddlesports to where they are today. My broad paddling experiences give me first-hand knowledge of many of the problems facing whitewater throughout the world. I have a special interest in safety and education. I teach and am especially interested in helping boaters acquire a good fundamental knowledge of the sport.

As a board member, I want:

1. To support those who are working on FERC relicensing and the other important access and conservation issues of America's whitewater streams and rivers. I have tremendous respect and admiration for those who have the skill and the desire and who spend the time and effort that they do working on these issues. I hope to help take care of some of the "peripheral" issues so they can concentrate their energies on these critical matters.

2. To be an ambassador of goodwill and good cheer for the sport on all the rivers and all the river trips that I do.

3. To help spread the AW message and increase membership through my personal contacts and efforts.



Rich Bowers

My relationship with American Whitewater started 13 years ago when I realized the importance of doing something I loved, and that would make a difference in areas I cared about. At that time, as today, rivers and water fill that special niche.

I have acted as American Whitewater's first ever full time employee, as conservation and executive director, consultant, and honorary board member. Throughout my tenure, I have learned about conservation, access and safety issues on rivers across the country, as well as managing, financing, fundraising and planning for nonprofits. American Whitewater provided me an opportunity to paddle on many diverse rivers, and, from day one, I have always been extremely proud to represent and work with paddlers.

Now living in the shadow of Mt. Baker with my wife Stephanie and daughter Danna (now driving), I use the experience gained with American Whitewater to provide consultative services to other nonprofits and sit on the board of the Whatcom Land Trust. While my whitewater paddling activity has dropped dramatically, I have stepped up my involvement with other forms of precipitation. I ski every chance I can, and spend more and more time in a sea kayak. Regardless of the transportation, I remain a boater at heart and hope this never changes. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to continue working on behalf of this great organization.




Sutton Bacon

I am currently President of American Whitewater and have served for three years on its Board of Directors. I have led major stewardship efforts on the Tallulah, Green, and Ocoee rivers, chaired several board committees, served as interim-director of AW's StreamKeeper program, and am the proud co-conspirator of the annual "Thing at the Tallulah" river and film festival.

When not volunteering for American Whitewater or creeking on the Southern steeps, I am an entrepreneur in Atlanta. I manage (r)evolution new ventures, a business incubator and holding company. I also helped start (r)evolution partners and have worked on numerous marketing strategy and innovation projects at

some of the world's most recognizable corporations including The Coca-Cola Company, Georgia-Pacific, Hasbro Toys, InterContinental Hotels Group, and Merck. Additionally, I am founder of The CROSS, a small, faith-based outdoor adventure and rafting outfitter on the Ocoee River.

I attended Emory University, where I studied Music, Comparative Religion, and Business. I am a classically-trained musician, and sing with the Atlanta Symphony-Orchestra Chorus where I have appeared on four GRAMMY Award-winning recordings. I currently live in Atlanta, Georgia and am a member of the Atlanta Whitewater Club. 

Safety First! Winter Studies

Cited Resources

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Ray, Slim. *Swiftwater rescue Field Guide.* CFS Press, Ashville NC 2002

Editor's Note: Andrew Jillings is on the AW Safety Committee and therefore easily qualifies as a safety geek. He is an American Canoe Association Swiftwater Rescue Instructor, Whitewater Kayak Instructor Trainer, Wilderness EMT and library cardholder. When not keeping his certifications up to date, he works as Director of Adventure Programming at Hamilton College in Clinton NY.

One thing you won't see a lot of in any of these resources is First Aid. Techniques and curriculum are constantly changing, so most authors choose to leave it to the professionals.

Competency in First Aid is as essential as wearing a helmet. Regular street First Aid from the American Red Cross or Heart Association is of little use to anyone who may be called on to care for a patient who is more than an hour away from an ambulance or hospital, which is true for most river accidents. Instead, look for Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder courses. The big three providers are listed below. Courses can also include instruction on using epi-pens for anaphylactic shock, long-term treatment of patients and managing hypothermia, all of which are of more use to the average paddler than anything street First Aid can offer. Wilderness First Aid is usually a two-day class, while First Responder is more like five to eight days, and covers all the best bits of the EMT course without all the tedious mucking about with birth complications, rectal thermometers or hazardous material training.

Here are the big three providers of Wilderness Medicine in the US. Search their websites for courses near you.

East Coast:
Solo Wilderness Medicine
<http://www.soloschools.com>

Wilderness Medical Associates
<http://www.wildmed.com>

Everywhere else:
NOLS Wilderness Medicine Institute
<http://www.nols.edu/wmi>



Make your tax-deductible 2005 contribution... Today!

Why:

As 2005 winds down, the American Whitewater staff has a growing list of completed projects to consider "done." And, another list that continues to grow and falls under "needs to get done." It is great to have this growing list, that's why we are here.

However, only your continued support and a growing membership base allow us to take on more work. We hope you feel good about the work we have completed in 2005. We do, and we must, ask you to support our river stewardship work to take us into 2006 and beyond.

How:

You can donate on-line at www.americanwhitewater.org/donate or by calling Carla at 866-262-8429.

Who Made 2005 a Success:

We've enjoyed 2005 and thank all of our members, major donors, Affiliate Clubs, volunteers and various other agencies and organizations we've worked with over the year.

and, Who Didn't contribute to our Success:

If you are not an AW member, call Carla at 866-262-8429, fill out and mail the membership form in this Journal, or visit us on-line at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership. For as little as \$35 a year, American Whitewater represents you!



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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 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://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, 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



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Membership Application

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Club Affiliation _____

Individual Membership Levels

- ____ \$25 Junior/Senior (under the age of 18 and over the age of 65)
- ____ \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club)
- ____ \$35 Individual One Year
- ____ \$45 Family (immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18)
- ____ \$65 Two Year Membership
- ____ \$100 Ender Club* (Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-shirt FREE)
- ____ \$150 Five Year Membership
- ____ \$250 Platinum Paddler* (Receive AW's exclusive Patagonia Platinum Paddler Polo Shirt FREE)
- ____ \$750 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership Stained Glass FREE)
- ____ \$1,000 Legacy Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Paddling Wet/Dry Gear Bag FREE)

* A portion of your contribution may be tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution please speak with an AW Staff Member.

Organizational Membership Types

- ____ \$75.00 Affiliate Club (Join our growing network of paddling organizations across North America)

Additional Donation

____ \$5.00 ____ \$10.00 ____ \$25.00 \$ ____ Other

____ \$24.99 Kayak Session subscription (Add Kayak Session to your membership at a 40% discount)

Amount

Membership subtotal \$ ____

____ Do NOT Mail me the AW Journal. I will read it on-line.

Donation subtotal \$ ____

____ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups.

Total \$ ____

Indicate Ender Club or Platinum Paddler shirt size (S M L XL XXL)

Transaction Type

____ Cash ____ Charge ____ Check# (payable to American Whitewater)

Card Type: MC Visa Discover AMEX

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____

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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 1957 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 100 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.

For 2005, AW is excited to announce several programs for AW Affiliate Clubs.

2nd River Stewardship Institute: A week-long conservation and access training program designed to prepare river activists with the tools necessary to successfully save their rivers.

2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program, sponsored by Clif Bar

BRAND NEW Affiliate Club section of the AW Journal dedicated to promoting your club and its events with the whitewater community at large. If your Affiliate Club would like to be one of the first to begin listing your club's major events in the Journal, please email ben@amwhitewater.org for more details.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

Alaska
Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama
Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas
Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

Arizona
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assoc, Flagstaff

California
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter
Sierra Club, Los Angeles
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor
Shasta Paddlers, Redding
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose

Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

Colorado
Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood
FiBark Boat Races, Englewood
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Englewood
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Florida
Project Challenge Inc., Miami
North Florida Wihtewater Assoc., Ocala

Georgia
Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay
Peachtree City Paddlers, Peachtree City

Illinois
Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Evergreen Park

Indiana
Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis
Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville

Iowa
Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas
Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky
Bluegrass Whitewater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maryland
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Smithsburg

Massachusetts
AMC Boston Chapter, Lunenburg

Minnesota
Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

Missouri
Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana
Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada
Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire
Mitchell Paddles, Canaan

New Jersey
The Paddling Bares, Milltown

New Mexico
Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York
FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia
Whitewater Challengers, Old Forge
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk

N. Carolina
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Dixie Division of ACA, Tuxedo
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
Nantahala Racing Club, Gastonia
Triad River Runners, Winston Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

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

Oregon
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Pacific Outback, Forest Grove
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
KCCNY, Philadelphia
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Pine Creek Valley Wilswater Association, Jersey Shore

S. Carolina
Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
=Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas
Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

Utah
University of Utah, Salt Lake City
USU Kayak Club, Logan
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont
Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Virginia
Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station
Blue Ridge Voyageurs, McLean
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
Richmond Whitewater Club, Mechanicsville

Washington
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Outdoor Adventure Club, Redmond
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whitewater Club, Walla Walla

West Virginia
West VA Wildwater Assoc., S. Charleston

Wisconsin
Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
Pure Water Paddlers, Eau Claire
River Alliance of Wisconsin, Madison
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, LaCrosse

Wyoming
Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson Hole

Canada, British Columbia
Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Canada, Ontario
Madawaska Kanu Camp Inc., Ottawa

Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner
Membership Coordinator

In the recent past, AW has been offering discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also members of one of AW's Affiliate Clubs.

We now have the ability to offer this discounted membership online! For each club, AW will create a unique URL that will automatically offer the discounted membership and/or we will provide a coupon code that is specific to your club that will allow individuals to receive the discount on the normal AW Membership Page.

Both options work equally well and help make life easier for members of your club.

Several clubs have already set up the program and their members are enjoying the benefits of joining AW for only \$25!

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact me and I would be happy to help your club set up this program. I can be reached at: 866-BOAT-4AW or membership@amwhitewater.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 a spot in the AW 2005 River Stewardship Institute.

For more information,
contact Carla Miner at
membership@amwhitewater.org
or sign-up on-line at:
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.

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