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March/April 2003

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A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

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Purpose

American Whitewater

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

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

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

RIVER ACCESS: To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines published in its official Access Policy, 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, resists unjustified restrictions on government managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bimonthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

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 AW Whitewater Safety Code.

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

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1424 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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On occasion, **American Whitewater** publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

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Forum

Fear and Loathing

My childhood in a kayak

by *Ambrose Tuscano*

It's hard for me to admit when I'm wrong. I don't think of myself as a stubborn person, but I suspect if I had ever bought any Enron stock, I'd still be sitting on it, waiting for the price to go back up. Though I usually hate to admit defeat in a struggle of wills, I remember one battle that I'm glad I lost.

From my earliest recollections, I was scared to death of water. Specifically, I hated being forced to get in a kayak and roll over—on purpose! Even after I learned to roll in a pool (around the tender age of 8), I simply refused to do it on a river. Instead, I'd bomb downstream, praying that a tricky eddy line or powerful wave wouldn't flip me over. If it did, I knew exactly what would happen. First, I'd panic, and before I knew it, I'd be floating alongside my capsized boat in the water. Then I'd swim to the edge of the river and cry and complain about how unfair it was that I had to go kayaking. I hated it.

If you haven't gotten that whiff of irony yet, just wait. The real problem, as I perceived it, was that my stupid parents wouldn't let me get out of this stupid sport they called whitewater. Actually, I think my mom was so put off by my on-river fits that she might just as gladly have seen me take on a career of professional couch potato. But my dad was relentless. In the winter it was pool sessions, where I dreaded my hour upside down. In the summer it was even worse. Although western Pennsylvania isn't blessed with the planet's most spectacular whitewater, I remember being dragged off to the river frequently after the age of 9 or 10.

Because I never allowed myself to attempt a roll when I flipped over, I eventually got pretty good at staying upright. Of all the rivers I did in those years, only two paddling days stand out in my mind as overwhelmingly "bad." I won't go into great detail, but I will say that the worse of these featured about five swims, the last of which, prompted me to drag my boat along a riverside railroad track most of the way to the takeout. The point here isn't that I got really

beat up (they were all fairly harmless swims on class II-III), but that my dad would routinely swim twice as often when he was learning to boat, and come away thinking of the day as a grand success.

This conflict, you see, was really all about perspective. My dad thought boating was generally fun and exciting, and I thought it was scary and dumb. I suppose it shouldn't come as a great surprise that I didn't dig kayaking right from the start. I mean, I was just a kid. None of my friends had any use for whitewater. If I came back from the Lower Yough with battle wounds, it was nothing to them. They all had really important things to worry about, like going to sleepovers where we would stay up late, trying to catch R-rated movies on cable. Yeah, kayaking just wasn't cool enough for me.

And then one day, as I was paddling a small tributary of the Upper Yough in Maryland, I flipped over and didn't panic. I didn't roll, either—but I tried. Maybe if I hadn't been so shocked by my response to the situation, I could have nailed my first whitewater roll. I was so used to my expertly executed wet exit, that trying a roll threw me off balance. I didn't have a clue where it came from.

But some part of me knew what was going on. Maybe the day before that part of me hadn't existed, but from the moment of my first whitewater roll attempt I started to become someone different. You see, I'm convinced that, like many people in this world, I was on the track of becoming a misguided soul.

If I hadn't ever learned to roll a kayak, I could very well have become the kind of person that I can't stand. This sort of human never learns to place value in anything they do, and so places it instead in everything they have. "If it can't be bought, it's not worth having," is their credo. This type of person could have more money than the Count of Monte Cristo and it wouldn't be enough. No matter what we have, it's not nearly as fulfilling as a single great experience.

Of course, when I was 13, I didn't have a clue about any of this. The only difference I noticed in my life was that I suddenly didn't mind boating. Of course, I actually started loving it that day I missed my first roll...but I couldn't let on to my dad so soon. I stayed indifferent about kayaking for awhile, but I was definitely aware that it was different, it was fun. I suddenly recognized that the sport was pretty easy once I got away from the one-to-one flip to swim ratio.

Before long, I was testing out the local class IV runs, and willingly spending my free time boating. The summer I was 16 I drove an hour to and from work, making only \$35 per day as a whitewater videographer (unfortunately my truck ate so much gas that about 85% of my paycheck went directly into the tank). At this time, I still didn't know anyone my own age who boated, but I was starting to pity my friends who didn't...instead of the other way around. So one thing led to another, and eventually I got roped into editing this magazine. Go figure.

But perhaps the biggest irony here happened years ago. In the spirit of blackmail, my dad had me write a personal statement

in the midst of my kayak-hating days. It's been nearly fifteen years since I submitted it to the AW Journal. That first piece was written by an 11-year old that I don't really remember being. But in his magazine debut, he indisputably and succinctly asserted that kayaking was no fun—especially compared to ice hockey (I still think that if I were born in Canada, I might be bouncing around the minor leagues of Saskatchewan today).

Many boaters I know would give up their own set of teeth (hey, don't need them for ramen or beer!) for the opportunity to start boating at such a young age. But as whitewater continues to surge toward the mainstream, those of you who feel that way have a chance to do something about it. Even if you don't intend to have a direct hand in populating our world, you can still have an impact on some kid's life. Take your favorite niece or nephew out to the river, or volunteer at your local paddling club's roll session. Becoming a mentor to some child can be rewarding for you and life-changing for that future paddler. Because not all parents feel comfortable steering their children's interests the way mine did, some kids might try to walk away from one of the



Ambrose Tuscano
Journal Editor - American Whitewater

most fulfilling activities in the world. But a cool Uncle Joe or Aunt Jen could make whitewater seem like a worthwhile pursuit.

And parents, if you're trying to decide when and how to get your kids into boating, my advice is to let them figure out how fun it is for themselves. But if they seem ready to quit the sport, maybe a bit of pushing on your part is called for. Judging from my experience, they're likely to forgive you. Thanks mom and dad!

You'd have a big head too...

Ken Whiting: World Champion kayaker, author, producer, instructor and coach.

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Charc



Risa Shimoda
Executive Director - American Whitewater

If you are a member: do you believe that American Whitewater cares about your paddling interests, your local rivers and your fellow paddlers?

If you are reading this because you have picked this American Whitewater journal up at a friend's place or from a newsstand rack (and are not a member): do you know why rivers will benefit by your contribution to AW of joining and volunteering?

If you have friends who are not members or belong to a club whose members by-and-large are not also members of American Whitewater: do you know why they have chosen not to join AW?

We sometimes think we know the answers to these questions, but don't, really. We know what we do for paddlers. Based on feedback like that received from our online survey last summer, many members are extraordinarily knowledgeable about our programming, which is awesome. We also receive wonderfully rich feedback from those who vehemently inform us of our missteps. This, perhaps painful, is truly helpful. What we don't hear is feedback from many, many other river enthusiasts who say nothing, may join or may not, and may or may not think we are serving the whitewater community. In order to grow our membership and to be a more effective partner with our many great affiliate clubs, we must have a handle on the answers to these questions, even as the answers evolve with time.

We will be eagerly asking for feedback on these issues during the course of 2003 at regional "Affiliates' Focus Group" sessions. We hope to have you tell us what we can do to help you on your rivers, as members of AW and our wonderfully networked whitewater community.

We also hope to meet with paddlers who represent those who 1) are not aware of what we do, 2) may not approve of all of our

programs, and 3) may have discontinued their membership - because of an offensive article, a rumor that I am being bankrolled to vacation in Tahiti, a poorly worded renewal solicitation or because...they dislike correspondence printed in blue ink.

We are also hoping that paddlers *who don't join clubs* will also attend. Feedback from 'non-joiners' will help us identify how we can better communicate the benefits of being a member of AW, and may assist our club attendees identify new initiatives they could consider for serving a broader audience in their area(s).


We hope to meet with representatives from AW Affiliates via focus groups in

the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Midwest, Rockies, Pacific Northwest and California/Nevada. Some focus groups will coincide with other AW events, some held independently. We will then utilize the feedback as we update our strategic plan this year.

Look for more information on our 2003 AW Affiliates' Focus Groups schedule (we'll add them as their scheduling is completed) on the AW website at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/affiliates/>. I know we will learn a lot and I hope you will be able to take away valuable insights and feedback that will be helpful to you and to your club in these changin' times.



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American Whitewater Seeks Interns

If you love rivers and boating and are seeking internship opportunities, American Whitewater would love to utilize your skills at one of our regional offices in Silver Spring, MD (DC area), Asheville, NC, Portland, OR or Bigfork, MT. Placement depends upon coordination of your background with available projects. The following describes 2003 internship projects:

1. Design and implementation of a web-based paddlers' water quality monitoring program (MD, MT, or NC).

2. Assist with the development of a paddlers' caucus in the Washington, DC paddling community to better educate our members about how river issues are being addressed (MD).

3. Develop an archive for *American Whitewater*, the journal: complete the scanning of historical journals to post on the AW website, complete historical (physical) journal sets and locate libraries to maintain them, and recommend selections for inclusions in the 50th anniversary year of historical references (articles, advertisements, letters, editorials, paddler profiles, etc.) (MD).

4. Assist with the development of an economic survey of paddlers who have attended the Tallulah Gorge releases and conduct site interviews with businesses in Rabun and Habersham Counties, GA (NC or MD).

5. Assist with the production planning for publication of the AW Volunteer Toolbox—this would include the Access Toolbox, Flow Study Participation, Event Planning Handbook, Risk Management Plan, and perhaps others (MD).

6. Assist with the remodeling of americanwhitewater.org, including graphic design, programming, online market research capabilities and database management (OR).

7. Assist the AW editorial and layout with written skills, organizational management and production assistance on this virtually-managed publication.

In addition, you will have the opportunity to assist in the ongoing administration of our Membership Services. Please contact nick@amwhitewater.org or phone our office at 301-589-9453.



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Letters

Dear American Whitewater,

You will be seeing my membership for AW in the mail soon! I've also gotten commitment from the rest of the Lotus staff to be members. I inquired with Jessie today about the different levels of membership costs in order to pass this info on to the rest of the staff. Poor bastards that we are, most can only afford the 1 year membership and I definitely cannot afford the \$750 lifetime membership fee. I will need to settle somewhere in between. After balancing my checkbook, I'm hoping I will pay for a 5 year membership! We'll see.

We all agreed to this because first and foremost the work that AW does is so important, and such high quality. We all have a personal stake in your success! Without you, rivers, paddlers, businesses and mother earth would all be in a much poorer state of affairs. For that...you can call us whatever you want!

Thanks,

Mojo

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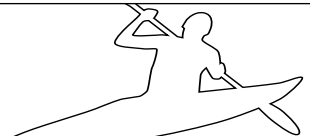
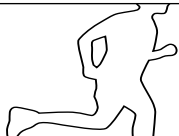
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David H. Knight

1938-2002

On October 27, David Knight's friends and family, including wife Krystyna, former wife Carol, and sons Eric and Christopher, gathered at the Philadelphia Canoe Club to celebrate his life. Dave died on July 15, 2002, suddenly and unexpectedly, at age 64.

Dr. Knight, as he was known professionally, retired in 2001 from his faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine. His specialty was veterinary cardiology, and he was an authority on heartworm.

Dave Knight was a consummate water sports athlete. As a student, he began rowing with the crew team at Cornell University, and served as an alternate on the 1964 U.S. Olympic rowing team. When he later moved to Philadelphia, he rowed for the Vesper and Bachelor's Barge Boat Clubs, and also took up whitewater paddling. Dave and Carol Knight were National C2-Mixed Wildwater Champions in 1972 and 1973, and National C2-Mixed Slalom Champions in 1972. They were World Champions in 1973, when they won their event in Muotathal, Switzerland, on a river that had reached flood stage. Dave and Al Harris were National C-2 Champions in 1974.

In 1973 Dave, Carol and other whitewater boaters paddled the Blue, Poudre, Arkansas, Crystal, Colorado, Wenatchee, Garibaldi, Rouge and Fraser Rivers. Dave returned in later years to paddle some of these rivers again in his C-1, and added the Colorado/Grand Canyon and Salmon Rivers to his river log.

Dave was always studiously aerobic. He used a rowing machine nearly every morning and either ran, biked or rode his motor scooter to work for years in every kind of weather. After retiring from whitewater competition, Dave became a marathon run-



ner, roller blader, cross country and downhill ski racer, and was the oldest member of the first Dragonboat teams in 1983-84. He was on the first heavyweight boat that sank at the finish line in Hong Kong! In his later years, he went back to rowing in world championships and earned Masters Class wins at Henley, in Amsterdam, in Bled, Yugoslavia and in Canada. David was a U.S. National Amateur Champion, and a Masters National and World Champion many times over in both sweep oared and sculling events.

David never boasted about these accomplishments, but explained, "In athletic competition, performance can be measured in more finite terms than in almost everything else we are judged by. For me it has always been enough to know what I have achieved, not whether anyone else knows it."

David's achievements were remembered on October 27, but more important, family and friends reminisced about his quiet strength of will, his compassion for the ailing pets he cared for and the passion with which he pursued an active life.

- Paul Liebman and Susan Chamberlin

Paul Liebman is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. A member of World Championship C2 Mixed teams from 1969-1975, Paul won the first ever USA team medals in both slalom and down river. Paul was Commodore of the powerhouse Philadelphia Canoe Club, the USA representative to the International Canoe Federation that planned the Moscow and Los Angeles Olympic events, and Chief Judge at the 1977 Slalom World Championships in Spittal, Austria.

Susan Chamberlin is a past Commodore of the Philadelphia Canoe Club and of the American Canoe Association. She competed nationally in whitewater slalom and wildwater for ten years, and served on the International Canoe Federation Slalom and Wildwater Committee. Retired from architecture and real estate, she and husband Steve live in California, where they sail, row and bike.

Winning the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes, AW Style

by Jim Sausville

This adventure started last winter when I got a phone message from American Whitewater's Executive Director, Risa Shimoda. "Jim," it began, "I don't know how to say this. I feel like the guy from the Publishers Clearing House. You've won a free trip to Ecuador." Larry Vermeeren, Small World Adventures owner, had donated a trip to help American Whitewater in its membership drive and I was the lucky winner.

I should have known that this trip was going to be one hell of an adventure when my first flight to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, was cancelled due to volcanic eruption in the area. Naturally, the airline didn't bother to put this information on their automated phone, so I ended up doing a practice run to the airport, a seven hour roundtrip. I had used the travel agent recommended by Small World, and I called to tell him what had happened. He couldn't believe it. He thought everyone in the world knew that the Quito airport was closed. Worse yet, all the flights were booked because it was during the Thanksgiving holiday. He must have read them the riot act, because an hour later he called me back with the flights I wanted.

When I arrived in Quito at one in the morning, two hours late, there was Larry holding up the paddle to greet me. Thank goodness, because in that big Third World city I felt like bait. So off we go to the safety of a plush hotel. Well...maybe not so safe. Peter, another member of the paddling group, had arrived the night before at this hotel. After a few minutes buzzing on the doorbell, some man yelled out the window to go around the corner. Finding no access, Peter went back to the door and continued buzzing; some minutes later the door finally opened. He went in to find the receptionist bound with duct tape around

the head and mouth, and her arms taped behind her back. He undid her arms, and she went across the street and woke up the guard. Peter had interrupted a robbery. I was told they had beefed up security since then. Luckily, the guard on the corner with the sawed off shotgun and big black dog was not sleeping.

The next morning, after meeting the rest of the group, which included the "lost boy," Seth, and our head guide Don Beveridge, we headed for the river base camp. Small World has its own vans and Ecuadorian drivers. That was good because the main roads were rarely paved. Often the drivers were worse than the roads; they passed on the right, left, on the outside of turns, it didn't matter. Ecuadorian roads are in a constant state of disrepair. We often saw work crews moving piles of stones with nothing more than a shovel and a rusted old wheelbarrow.



We traveled in comfort (only six people in the van) compared with the 16 that the locals could fit in the same van—not to mention the chickens. Many Ecuadorians survive on a minimum wage of five dollars a day. You could tell the economic success of a family by whether their 10 X 10 hut had a dirt floor and plank siding with a plastic, thatch, or rusty tin roof; or if it had a wooden floor, windows and a painted tin roof. These huts often perched on the steep rain-forested canyon walls with water running everywhere. Waterfalls up to five and six hundred feet tall cascaded down through jungle vegetation so thick that a machete is the only way though. We were often watched by a whole mess of kids playing in the dirt yard with chickens (if they were lucky). With our brightly colored kayaks we were the excitement of the day. At put-ins and take-outs we often drew a crowd of curious children.



The base camp is beautiful, situated in the Quijos Valley, near the confluence of the Cosanga, Borja and Quijos Rivers. The Cabanas Tres Rios are new cabins with hot and cold running water, designed and built for paddlers. The unbelievable meals, many traditional, are prepared by Lilly, who is the van driver's wife. The location is beautiful and practical (the paddling right out the front door is fantastic). There is a large selection of up-to-date boats to choose from and covered space to work on them.

We paddled the Quijos for the first couple of days. It had been raining and the water was high. Great big water paddling, you just didn't want to miss the lines. Don did a great job of making sure we knew where to go and what we'd find when we got there. At one spot, the river narrowed to only thirty feet wide with vertical jungle walls lined with orchids and flowering trees on both sides. This twisty little blind canyon of slow water set off the significant rapids on either side. There were so many rivers in the Quijos Valley that paddlers of all skill levels can certainly find plenty to keep them smiling. Hanging out at the horseshoe pit with a cerveza and friends after paddling is when I knew for sure that I'd won the sweepstakes.

On day four we drove three hours up and over the cloud forest on Guacamayo Pass in a downpour, to the Napo Valley and the Amazon Basin. Now the trip was really starting to look like a National Geographic Special. We put in on the upper Misahualli; hot and sunny, azure blue water, class IV creeking, boof and slot, boof and slot. Before long it was raining real hard, so we took refuge in an overhanging cave. Chad shot video from inside where it was dry, while the rest of us squirted on the eddy line at the mouth of the cave. Around the next bend, we found the tributaries and canyon walls gushing brown water. The river was rising fast, I mean real fast. The whole river took on a brown, muddy tint and things began moving a lot faster. The river quickly changed character and Peter

found himself in a series of holes and “squirreliques.” He came out of his boat and swam hard for shore. We manage to corral his boat and paddle just below the footbridge to a native settlement of thatch roof huts and lots of kids. These are the kids who don’t get to go school; they usually grow up to tend cattle, or harvest bananas or wood from the jungle. As we regrouped the water was still rising, but the rain had stopped. It was time to get off this river. We headed for Tena, the biggest town in the jungle, with good food and first class accommodations.

By the next day the river had dropped to a good level, and we headed for the Lower Misahualli. We were in some of the most remote jungles of the Amazon, and driving down a single-track jungle road, to our put-in, when a black panther crossed right in front of the van. I asked our driver what it was, and he replied, “No domestico !” That morning while taking a break on a sandbar, we saw more big cat tracks alongside the green and red feathery remains of one of the parrots we’d seen flying from the canyon walls. We could hear the National Geographic theme loud and clear, as we portaged up and down vertical jungle walls, hauling our boats and bodies with ropes. Below the falls we still need to navigate the rapid named “The Land of the Giants” with its Grand Canyon-sized holes. Seth’s helmet failed the crash test when its strap unthreaded in one of those holes. Once we cleared this obstacle, it was fun surfing down to the Port of Misahualli, where it’s twelve hundred miles and twelve hundred feet down the Amazon River to the Atlantic.



Yes, we’re talking adventure here. Hum the National Geographic tune and think natives in dug-out canoes, thatch roofed villages in rain forest, parrots, monkeys, great whitewater (don’t forget the jungle cats), and now you’ve got the picture. And you could be the lucky winner! Stay tuned to AW because yes, there is another free trip out there and it might have your name on it for the adventure of a lifetime.



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What Are You Doing This Winter?

If You Make a Rapid Safe, Is It Still a Rapid?

by Chattooga Guide J.A. Hinton

The glistening water banks off the rock wall and disappears through the narrow horizon line. I focus on a small flake of rock, which juts out from the left wall. Paddling hard, I lean forward to finish with a sweeping stroke on the right. The bow of my kayak glances off the rock and lifts into the air. I re-center my weight over the boat and land in a pool seven feet below the lip of the drop.

I take a deep breath of relief. The move is not that difficult, but knowing that four people have died in that slot always makes me tense. But there are those who would like to alter this rapid, and others like it, so that future paddlers will not perish as their loved ones have. Although the idea of making a rapid safer by slightly changing a known hazard may seem simple and well intentioned, the legality, the consequences, and the ethics, of this issue are controversial. To understand why this idea is so unpopular, we must examine the waterway it will affect.

***"There has never been a greater loss in my life than my son, Ken Phinney, and I believe no matter how long I live and how much work it will take on my part, I will see changes made to the Chattooga River. For my government to have decided that rocks in the river are more important than the lives of 35 young people is beyond comprehension and ludicrous."* - Jennifer Lyle in a 1998 letter to the USFS pleading for the alteration of Left Crack, a rapid that has claimed the lives of four people, including her son.**

The Chattooga River flows out of the mountains of North Carolina to form the Northern border of South Carolina and Georgia. Neatly nestled between the sprawl of Atlanta, GA, Greenville, SC, and Asheville NC, the Chattooga Watershed stands out as a fragile island of wilderness. In 1974, the Chattooga was designated a National Wild and Scenic River by an act of Congress. This protection prevents development along a quarter mile corridor on both banks of the river. On either side of this corridor are several more miles of National Forest. Thus, access to the river is remote except for a few areas.

According to Forest Service records, 37 people have perished along this enchanted waterway since 1970. Many of the deaths could have happened anywhere, a non-swimmer slipping off a rock and into the current, or a group of friends misjudging the length of a river trip and being caught out on a cool night. But other tragedies have occurred because the victims did not understand how powerful the water can be as it forces its way through spaces too narrow for a human body.

If the victims are unaware of the area where they recreate, the incomprehension of loved ones left at home is often compounded, and the hatred for that which they do not understand multiplies. The cries of mothers and fathers are nearly as powerful as the river, especially if the shouts of sorrow are echoed through the hallowed halls of political houses. Thus, every few years the question is asked, or the issue is forced - what steps can be taken to prevent future deaths in these areas? Unfortunately, most of the solutions proposed concentrate on conquering the river rather than overcoming the ignorance that clouded the victims' judgment.

***"There is nothing scenic in my mind or the parent of any other victim about a river that kills; only the wild part applies here."* - Jennifer Lyle from a 1998 letter to the USFS.**

A great example of the complexities surrounding the altering rapids controversy is Crack-in-the-Rock on Section IV of the Chattooga River. This is a small but deadly rapid where the river is segregated into three main slots. Two boulders divide the river, forming Left Crack, Middle Crack, and Right Crack. When the water is high, there is also a small channel running down the Georgia bank known as Far Right Crack. The slots are so narrow that the water piles up behind them like a dam, and there is a seven-foot difference in height between the upstream and downstream pools of this obstruction. And all the rocks are undercut and filled with debris, making this rapid particularly fatal. At lower water levels, there is usually more water running beneath the boulders than above them. At higher water, so much of the river is flowing over the rocks that deadly hydraulics are formed.

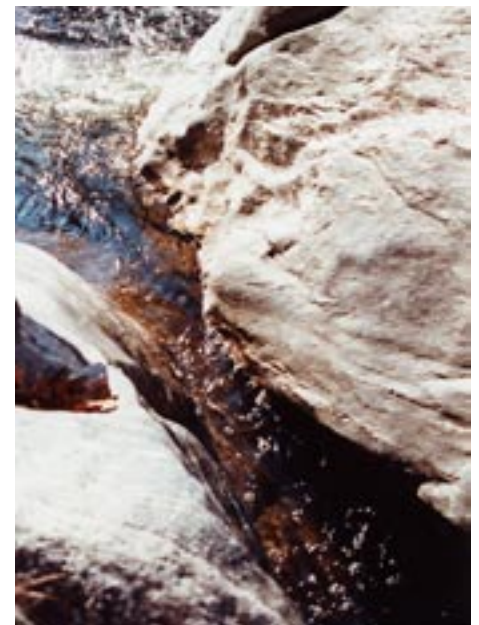
There have been numerous deaths, most of which were preventable, in the slot known

as Left Crack. The water in this channel banks off the wall of the South Carolina shore and turns ninety degrees into the rock, which forms its right side. The top of the slot is close to six feet wide, the bottom only six inches. It is a natural funnel.

Because this section of the river is so constricted, minute changes in water level alter the personality of the rapid. At extremely low water, there is only a small trickle pouring into the left slot. As the river rises, the danger becomes more prominent, and Left Crack transforms into a death trap for anyone who passively floats into its snare. Human bodies tend to plug up the bottom portion of the funnel, while the falling water locks them in place. When the river rises, the channel is wide enough that a kayaker can bank off the left wall and land downstream of the deadly funnel. It is a tight line, but at that water level, it is no more risky than any other route in this class V rapid.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Left Crack is that no one has ever died from attempting to paddle it. All four fatalities in this area involve people out of their boats, usually exercising poor judgment.

The first push to change this rapid came with the death of Kevin Bright in August of 1989. Kevin was rafting with a group of friends from college. They had little whitewater experience and were going on one of the most advanced sections of the Chattooga, despite warnings from a USFS



Looking into the sieve known as Left Crack at extremely low water.

ranger. When his raft flipped in Corkscrew Rapid, Kevin was flushed downstream into Left Crack.

Immediately after Kevin's death, there came a strong push from the family and politicians to make Left Crack "safer." Buzz Williams, director of the Chattooga Conservancy, was the river manager at that time for the USFS. Before the momentum could get too strong, Buzz decided to have a talk with the victim's family. "I said, 'look, this is something which I need to explain.... [T]his is a National Wild and Scenic River, and the real question is once we start altering rapids for safety, it is a matter of where do we draw the line...? [T]here are some places left in this country that are vestiges of wild America that we want to preserve, where people go there and they take the risk and the challenge and the wildness just like they would have if they were the first explorers in this country. And that in itself has a value.'"

This argument satisfied Kevin's parents, and the issue was not discussed again until 1996, when another family suffered a similar loss. An experienced kayaker was leading his friends down the river. He in-

structed the two young men to run Right Crack while he waited below to help them if trouble arose.

But one of the paddlers, Ken Phinney, decided to swim out to the rock that separated the left and middle slots, for better observation. Once he got to the rock, he discovered that it was slick and lacking in hand holds. If he had pulled himself into Middle Crack, he might have flushed on through, but he let himself drift backward into Left Crack, reportedly with a carefree glance at his friend Michael Lammers.

***"He wanted to conquer everything. He knew the hole was dangerous, but I don't think he knew how dangerous."* - Michael Lammers describing his friend and boating partner, Ken Phinney, in a letter to the USFS.**

Sub surface currents tend to be mysterious and powerful as they are diverted by rock. Under such conditions, the cells of human tissue become heavily saturated, and their integrity weakens. When the rescue crews came to extract the body, no one realized

how badly he was pinned in the narrow slot. As a result, the removal turned into a long and difficult process, pulling the young paddler out of his grave, a piece at a time.

***"I am sure everyone involved would agree that one human life is infinitely more valuable than one rock under the water of the Chattooga. Indeed, if value could be placed on a person's life, all of the rocks in the Sumter National Forest could not compare with one life, with the lives that person touches or the impact one person can have in the world."* - David Lyle, Ken's father, in a 1998 letter to the USFS regarding Left Crack.**

The parents of that young man began a movement to have Left Crack altered so that no other sons or daughters would perish in its grip. But there are deeper motives behind this issue. The death of child is a difficult hardship for any parent to endure.

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Perhaps they want justice for their son's death, an eye for an eye, the death of a rapid for the death of their boy. Or maybe they want their son's tragic accident to have meaning, to have honor. By making Left Crack safer, Ken's death would save the lives of future paddlers. Admirable motives, but unfortunately, their actions are misguided.

***"This is a wild section of a wild river, and people need to understand when they go there, they are...accepting a risk. And we are...going to have to stick to that, or we will never be able to draw a true line."* – Buzz Williams, Director of the Chattooga Conservancy in a 2002 interview.**

The victim's parents are pushing the Forest Service, who has regulatory powers over the river, to consider three options for changing the rapid: filling in the crack with rocks or concrete, widening the crack with chisels or explosives, or placing a warning sign along this protected corridor, perhaps encouraging or requiring a portage. To someone without knowledge of whitewater or the rapid in question, these may seem like feasible options. However, they could prove detrimental to other paddlers and a liability for the governing agency.

Encouraging the Forest Service to change or restrict Left Crack will establish a dangerous precedent. The reason the Chattooga is designated as a Wild and Scenic River is to protect it from the intrusions of man, which not only includes signage but also alteration of the river itself.

Furthermore, there are liability issues the Forest Service will face once they have altered a rapid or designated it with special signs. Does that mean that all the other rapids on the river are safe? In the late 1980s, a rafting guest was seriously injured when a tree fell onto his raft as it was going through a rapid. He tried to sue the commercial outfitter on the basis that they should be responsible for the removal of all dangerous trees along the river. Although the lawsuit was settled out of court, it demonstrates the risk the Forest Service places upon themselves by trying to make the river "safer."

The judgment call on what is safe is also controversial. When the river is at certain water levels, many paddlers feel more comfortable running Left Crack than Middle, Right, or Far Right. Altering the characteristics of this slot in any way would change

the amount of water flow which enters it, thereby increasing or decreasing the quantity of water pouring into the other slots. Trying to make one part of the rapid safer could make another part more dangerous.

***"If they alter one thing, it may change something else on the river....The water has to go somewhere."* – Henry Gordon, head of Emergency Preparedness for Oconee County, South Carolina, comments on altering rapids in a 2002 interview.**

In regard to a sign along the river, there are information boards at each launch area branding this area as dangerous domain, and every paddling group has to stop at these warning boards in order to fill out a permit. Apparently, these notifications had no influence on Ken's decision.

The destruction of this rapid will not bring back their son. Not only did Ken fail to follow basic safety measures, he put himself at a risk that was beyond the protocols of normal kayaking. If he had followed the precautions observed by every commercial rafting company and many private boaters on the river, then someone could have thrown him a rope and prevented the whole incident.

Would a young man who enjoyed and loved the sport of whitewater want his death to cause the destruction of his object of passion? Would this be the meaning he would want his mistake to have?

***"[A]lteration of the stream bed or modification of the bedrock will not be permitted."* – 1976 Chattooga River Wild and Scenic River Classification, Boundaries, and Development Plan.**

Other threats to the river have come from efforts to extract bodies. Only ten years ago, body recovery posses would flock to the river, cutting down trees and pushing them into the current to "sweep" the channel, using and abandoning metal grappling hooks in the rapids, and threatening to blow the body out with dynamite. But recovery operations are more structured now, thanks to better-educated and more organized rescue services in both states that border the Chattooga River. Many of the volunteers are trained in diving, rope systems, and swift water rescue techniques that enable



A commercial raft trip eddies out above the Left and Center slots of Crack-in-the-Rock Rapid. Ken Phinney died when he tried to swim out to the rock separating these two slots and was swept into Left Crack

them to approach the river in a much more professional manner. Rather than working against each other, the rescue squads and the local outfitters work together, combining the river guides' logistical support and knowledge of the area with the rescue squads' organization and rescue skills. But in emotional and highly publicized recovery efforts, family members of the victims and political pressure can force the rescue operations to take extreme measures that may bleed into gray areas of safety and river preservation.

***"I can't finish it until I know it's done. I want her home"* – David Trois, Rachel's dad, commenting on the recovery operation in a 1999 Associated Press news release.**

On Memorial Day weekend 1999, 16 year-old Rachael Trois hiked into the Chattooga with some friends and was crossing the river directly above the class IV rapid, Raven Chute. Rachel and her boyfriend were swept into the falls. He immediately popped up just downstream of the drop. She never resurfaced. Her body was not visible, and her exact location remained somewhat of a mystery during much of the rescue and recovery efforts.

The recovery operations involved the USFS, local outfitters, and both Rabun and Oconee County Rescue squads. After

several failed attempts and two exhausting weekends on the river, the recovery team announced to the family that nothing more could be done, and the best they could do was wait until the river washed her remains downstream or the river level dropped. But the recovery team found themselves at odds with the victim's father and his political allies. At his insistence, a portable dam was installed on two of the attempts to recover his daughter's remains.

"I understand he's [David Trois] frustrated, but the reality is that the river dictates its own terms and conditions. No man is going to dictate to the river what it's going to do."
- Jay Dresser, spokesman for the Emergency Management Agency in Rabun County, Ga., responding to the recovery operation in a 1999 AP release.

On the first effort to use this structure, holes were drilled into sub surface bedrock to support the mechanism. Although the holes were not damaging from an environmental or aesthetic perspective, they did

stress the integrity of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act because the USFS permitted the drilling and opened the protection of bedrock modification to interpretation. The design of the first structure failed to adequately divert water from the entrapment area, and a rain from the night before caused the river to swell, making the construction and dismantling of the structure a risky endeavor.

When conditions were right for a second attempt, a local environmental group, the Chattooga Watershed Coalition (now the Chattooga Conservancy), was involved with the recovery effort. With more time to study the plan, a better strategy was used which incorporated the natural features of the river and used sandbags as anchors. The design of the second dam diverted water to another channel rather than working against the current, thus a more effective structure was built without the use of drilled holes. Shortly before the final pieces of the dam were installed, a group of divers working below the rapid found where Rachel's skull and other skeletal remains had washed into a small eddy. After these body parts were recovered, the dam was completed to reveal Rachel's deathbed, a



Rachel Trois was swept into this crevice and trapped on a log wedged between the falls and the overhang slide. This photo was taken at extremely low water.

small piece of wood wedged horizontally against the current with a tattered bathing suit wrapped around it.

Continued ▶

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Two months after Rachel had lost her footing on a late afternoon hike, her remains were extracted from the river. According to the Oconee County Emergency Preparedness Agency, the recovery operation cost the government agencies, the search and rescue organizations, and the outfitters \$226,251, and over 10,000 man hours were enlisted, mostly from volunteers. And despite all this effort, the body was eventually found when it decomposed and washed downstream, as was predicted early in the operation.

With these figures, it is easy to see how sound minds can be carried away by emotional and political pressure just as Rachel was swept into a deadly rapid. Now that a small precedent was set by the Forest Service allowing the operation to drill holes, it will be harder to fight off those who want to alter the river in the name of safety or resolution. And it is questionable if the next proposal will be so benign.

“al·ter *vb* 1 : to make different without changing into something else 2 : CASTRATE, SPAY ~ *vi*: to become different” – Webster’s Dictionary

Within the debate of altering rapids, there are other topics, which remain controversial even among the most hardcore opponents. One such issue is trees, logs, and natural debris in the river, and whether or not they should be removed. Unlike the argument with Left Crack, strainers are temporary features, whereas bedrock is a permanent and significant characteristic of the river thus subject to certain laws and regulations. But as a recent article in the American Whitewater Journal pointed out, there are still the environmental, ethical, and liability concerns with removing wood from a rapid. So before steps are taken to cut logs out, the parties must consider the amount of danger the strainer actually poses and how much it impedes navigability. Because strainers are movable objects that are temporary residents, rather than a characteristic of the riverbed, they are open to subjectivity and discretion. Unlike adding concrete to an undercut rock, or chiseling at a sieve, removing a tree is not necessarily synonymous with the alteration of a rapid.

When play parks and slalom courses are created, the removal or addition of bedrock and concrete comes into play. But with this scenario, it typically involves a segment of river, which runs next to a road or even through a large city, not a wilderness water-

way. Thus, this issue is not as susceptible to the aesthetic arguments that the Chattooga scenario poses because humans already have a dramatic effect on urban rivers through bridges, piers, and erosion control efforts. And unlike alterations made for safety concerns, they are admitting an increased risk due to their actions instead of claiming to reduce the danger. The main concern is the environmental effect on the river’s riparian areas, but these are issues, that must be addressed on an individual basis and beyond the scope of blanket generalizations.

“Altering the river is not going to bring anybody back. It’s not an emergency anymore. But preserving these wild places frankly is an emergency. We are about to lose them all and once you do that, you start off a chain reaction of events that cause them to alter everything in the name of liability, and risk management and lose the whole country. Lose that whole experience. It’s frankly more about the experience than anything else.” – Buzz Williams in a 2002 interview.

The controversy on altering rapids is not just an isolated problem on the Chattooga River, nor is it unique to the Wild and Scenic River System; rather it is an issue that threatens all wilderness areas with public access. On the Nantahala River in North Carolina, the Forest Service used concrete to fill in a small foot entrapment spot after it contributed to two fatalities. In a 1998 memo to the USFS, American Whitewater



Josh Bruckner descends into one of many canyons along Section 00 of the Chattooga. Eight of the drownings on the Chattooga were non-boaters.

noted that the Wayah Ranger District made this alteration with "little or no public notice." In the fall of 1993, Ken Stoner, a raft guide on the Salt River in Arizona, and seven accomplices blew up the Salt's infamous Quartzite Falls, under the battle cry of river safety. According to 1998 article in Paddler Magazine, Stoner told a friend - "I made something safer and lives will be saved. That outweighs the destruction of a natural resource in my mind."

In our pampered and litigious society, the natural world is often feared and misunderstood. But for those of us who value remote, wild, and sometimes dangerous locales, the freedom to experience these regions is synonymous with living. It is the spice that makes life palatable. We enter these areas by choice, thus we must accept the consequences, and for some, it is these consequences that make these apples seem so tempting.

Merely eliminating the dangers will not save lives. Especially when people seek these areas out. Instead, we must focus more of our energy into educating the public so those who choose these endeavors will be aware of the consequences and respectful of the hazards. According the USFS, ten of

the 37 deaths on the Chattooga were hikers, swimmers, or tubers, and in eight of the boating fatalities, the victim was not wearing a secured life vest. Let's place less emphasis on destroying wilderness and more on educating its users.

If we accept the risks, then we must help our loved ones understand this decision and our admiration of areas untamed. The voice of the dead can't drown out the shouts of the living. If you do not want your death to cause the destruction of someplace you love or the restriction of access for others who share your appreciation, then perhaps it is time to make those wishes known while you still have that opportunity.

After looking back at Left Crack, I paddle over to the shore and get out of my boat. As a safety kayaker, I hold rope below Corkscrew to prevent swimmers or an out of control raft from flushing into Crack-in-the-Rock. This is standard procedure for all the commercial rafting trips on the Chattooga, and it is precautions such as these that have prevented any commercial drowning in over thirty years of operation. If a few more individuals had followed these simple safety measures, then perhaps more people could appreciate the river for



Steve Yook and John "Hobbit" Hawes demonstrate rescue techniques in the hydraulic known as Right Crack during a training seminar for Chattooga River Safety Boaters. Although outfitters have been operating on the Chattooga for thirty years, there has never been a commercial drowning.

its beauty rather than hate it for its danger. We should stop trying to redefine the river and, instead, revise our approach and our respect for its natural features.

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Official Study Addresses Opening the Headwaters of the Chattooga (NC/SC/GA) To Boating!

It was 1995 when American Whitewater first started a concerted effort to have the ban on paddling the 3 distinct Class 4/5 sections known as the Headwaters of the Chattooga lifted. This section of river is a truly beautiful and unique place, and is the only stretch of river in the entire Forest Service system that is closed to boating. Now, as the result of 7 years of constant pressure by AW volunteers and staff, the Forest Service is publishing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that analyzes opening the Headwaters to paddlers. This is a landmark opportunity to work with the Forest Service in an open public process to have the boating ban lifted. It is however, only an opportunity, not a sure thing.

There will be opposition. For the last 25 years the Headwaters have been managed for high quality trout fishing, at the exclusion of boaters. The fishing interests will likely defend the existing ban on boating. All across the Southeast and the Country trout fishermen and boaters use the same small steep creeks peacefully with minimal interaction or conflict, yet a presumed conflict has been used as a justification to separate the uses on the Headwaters of the Chattooga. We feel that there is no true conflict between the two uses, and that the Headwaters of the Chattooga should be managed just as the headwaters of all the other rivers in the USFS system are managed.

It is likely that the comment period for the EIS will be ongoing when you receive this journal. Please check our website (www.americanwhitewater.org) immediately to see how to file comments on the Sumter National Forest Plan Revision (the EIS). Our web site will have detailed ideas for comments, but at the very least state that you prefer the specific alternative that lifts the ban on paddling the Headwaters of the Chattooga. Help us bring 7 years of hard work to a successful end! Our success so far would not have been possible without the incredible volunteer work done by Don Kinser. Thanks Don!

AW Works with Trout Unlimited and Other Groups to Improve Access in Western North Carolina

Recently, American Whitewater sat down with several fishing and boating groups to see if we could come together on a proposal to Duke Power that would increase access to the Tuckasegee and Nantahala rivers in Western North Carolina. What resulted were a series of detailed joint proposals for flows and access that benefit both fishermen and whitewater boaters. The access proposals envision a Tuckasegee River that offers more than 30 miles of class 1 and 2 water that is legally accessible along much of its length. This vision, if realized, would tie into regional greenway plans and offer significant protection from development for the river's riparian area. We are very proud of these proposals as they highlight how we work with other interest groups to protect rivers and increase the role that rivers play in local communities. We will now work together through the final stages of re-licensing to advocate for the proposals' implementation.

New York Access Work Rolls On

New York has no shortage of dams, and therefore no shortage of access work. As mitigation for blocking downstream recreation, dam owners must provide access areas for boaters above and below their dams. American Whitewater has worked closely with New York Rivers United and other regional groups over the past few months to file detailed comments on a handful of hydro projects that should yield significant access enhancements. On the Oswegatchie River our 2001 site visit and subsequent comments in 2002 led to a hydro license that yielded several new access sites to be developed in the coming year. Comments were also filed on the Raquette, Saranac, Black and Mongaup rivers, just to name a few of the many rivers we are working on in New York State. We look forward to reporting many more successes in New York in 2003.

Surf's Up! California Beach Access Protected

A lawsuit was recently dismissed that alleged that the California Coastal Commission does not have the right to require property owners to allow public access near their beachfront homes. The suit, brought by David Geffen of entertainment recording fame, sought to keep people off the beach in front of his home.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge David Yaffe ruled that the September decision by California's Coastal Commission requiring at least a dozen public pedestrian walkways along Malibu's 27 miles of coast was within the scope of the Commission's authority. However, the judge's decision does not necessarily mean the end of the case as he also agreed to hear arguments on two administrative issues.

This ruling is important from AW's perspective because it upholds the right of public access to California's coast and secures a precedent of access to navigable waters across private property. While the ruling may not directly transfer to inland waters, it generally supports our interests and may come into play for whitewater enthusiasts at a future date.

Rapid Threatened by Canal Collapse on NY's Black River

On October 28th a canal wall belonging to Northbrook Energy failed and tumbled into Cruncher Rapid on the Black River, severely altering the rapid. American Whitewater, New York Rivers United, and the Outfitters of the Black River have been working together to encourage Northbrook to fully restore the riparian area and the rapid itself. Work is progressing rapidly on the removal of the material that fell into the river, and on the repair of the canal itself. We have been granted access to the site to monitor the restoration work, and have been regularly communicating with Northbrook. We are urging Northbrook to have this impact to the river corrected in time for the spring boating season.

AW Access Toolkit: Ready for a test-drive

by Risa Shimoda, AW Executive Director

American Whitewater recently posted a first draft of its AW Access Toolbox on its website (americanwhitewater.org). The Access Toolbox is a reference for river enthusiasts interested in learning how to protect and maintain reasonable, fair and safe access to the rivers they enjoy.

"The AW Access Toolbox provides background on the issues that define today's challenges to public access to rivers, illustrations of the challenges we face and the status of current issues, never before presented for use by river enthusiasts in such a format," says Jason Robertson, AW Access Director. Jason has collected and organized documented resources developed since the inception of the American Whitewater Access program, eight years ago. "Several years of time, experimentation, volunteer and staff trial and error, along with love for America's Whitewater resources are represented here," he adds.

As noted on the Toolbox introduction, recreation access is likely the greatest unresolved land management issue in America. While conservation, resource protection, and restoration get much attention from federal agencies and recreationists, access is often overlooked, yet certainly affects one's ability to get to a river and float it. The following is a list of the tools now available for your use. Go grab one and give it a try. What do I mean by that? If there is river nearby on which your ability to recreate has been changed recently due to a new fee, a "No Trespassing" sign, a guard telling you that "new security" rules prohibit boating, or a new string of barbed wire threaded across a river, there is access "news" in the making. You may be able to determine how you can best inquire and /or challenge the creator of this "news."

Navigability Tools - If you know you can get down a creek, it's navigable, right? Not necessarily. State laws governing public activity on the banks of "navigable" waterways determine your ability to access that waterway. Often the legality of using land adjacent to rivers for access or portaging, if the streambank is privately owned, varies tremendously by state. Definition of navigability may date back to the era of the Thirteen Colonies, if you can believe it. You may be trespassing by portaging around a river obstacle on a privately owned riverbank in Colorado, and you'd be perfectly

within your right doing the same thing along a river in South Dakota.

Navigability Tools in the AW Access Toolbox serves as a starting point for educating the public about our nation's laws. These laws are not static; they are in constant flux. Therefore, you should seek independent legal counsel regarding your state statutes before relying on our analyses.

Liability Tools - these include liability laws, used to defend landowners against injury claims from recreational trespassers. These laws are designed to ease landowner concerns about allowing paddlers, hikers, and fishermen on their property.

Risk Management - this section discusses how river guides and outfitters can protect themselves from liability litigation. Liability and litigation are ever-increasing facets of river management; it is useful to be aware of trends in risk mitigation.

Landowners - AW provides advice for river enthusiasts when approaching private landowners to ask for permission to park on, or access rivers via their private property.

Land Acquisitions - American Whitewater occasionally acquires land to protect river access. We typically protect smaller land parcels (1 to 5 acres); however, we have successfully secured larger acquisitions for conservation purposes (>500,000 acres), such as the Alberton Gorge in Montana. Learn about the risks and benefits in this section to help determine if land acquisition is best option for protecting whitewater recreation in your area.

Federal Government Resource Links - The AW Access Toolkit provides links to federal agencies and resources you can use to find out about members of Congress or activity in the Legislature, Judiciary or White House.

Streamgaging - We have posted American Whitewater's advice on how you can help save streamgages, the source of information about river levels on several thousand sections of rivers across the country.

Leave No Trace - Your actions both on and off the river affect how community members feel about boaters visiting their communities. Here is a list of ten reminders that will enable you to reduce the impact

of paddling on the river environment and protect access to your favorite rivers.

River Modification/Policy - American Whitewater is often approached to endorse or otherwise support the development of new whitewater parks, the construction of new features, and the "repair" of hazardous features that have been associated with accidents and river fatalities. Here is our policy for deciding whether to modify streambeds.

River Modification/Strainers and Logs - Most river enthusiasts have a strong environmental ethic, and pride themselves on the importance of approaching Nature on Nature's terms. Here is advice on one commonly-debated issue: deciding whether to remove strainers and other large woody debris from rivers.

Legal Assistance - American Whitewater often assists boaters in finding legal representation when they are charged with navigability violations.

"We are presenting the work for a 'test drive' at the moment, to develop a sense for how it can be most helpful to users and to solicit feedback for format or content improvement," says Kevin Colburn, American Whitewater's Conservation and Access Associate. "I already use and recommend the AW Access Toolbox almost everyday, in my own work on river conservation and access. So far, feedback has been very positive."

I see the AW Access Toolbox as a unique and invaluable tool for river managers and river recreationists nationwide."

Consider making a donation to support American Whitewater's legal defense of boaters charged with navigability violations. Our ability to defend your right to float is made possible through member donations!

If you learn of new information that you believe should be included in American Whitewater's Access Toolbox, please forward it to: American Whitewater's Access Program, 1424 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or email to access@amwhitewater.org.

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South Carolina's "Great Falls of the Catawba"

Introduction by Kevin Colburn

Several weeks ago there was an email and phone volley between AW staff and volunteers regarding a previously unknown (to us) section of dewatered river that once contained thunderous rapids deep in the vertically challenged heart of South Carolina. What resulted was a quick and exciting info gathering session of photos old and new, bizarre topo maps of the skeletal river bed, and first hand accounts that described the section as everything from class II shoals to class VI cataracts. South Carolina AW volunteer Jeff Tallman immediately began planning a site visit to get to the bottom of the mystery. What follow are the results of Jeff's investigations. There is also a note from Risa who scooped Jeff by a few days and also saw the river with water in it!

The relicensing of the dams that divert water around the Great Falls is starting this year, and we now know that working on this project could be well worth our time and effort. We won't know for sure though, until we are able to successfully advocate for a Whitewater Flow Study. With regional support from the paddling community, we could see you on the river in 2008! Thanks to Jeff, and all the others that are helping us explore this truly unique opportunity!

Story by AW Volunteer Jeff Tallman

One of early South Carolina's outstanding natural wonders was the Great Falls of the Catawba, located about half way between Charlotte, NC and Columbia, SC. The falls were created on the fall line where the Carolina's hilly piedmont region meets the coastal plain. The Great Falls have sat dammed and dry for 96 years.

Historically, the Catawba River marked the western boundary of the Catawba Indians territory while the Broad River, located further west, marked the eastern boundary of Cherokee territory (Catawba means "river people"). The land between the Catawba and the Broad was considered mutual hunting grounds and the Great Falls were a major landmark for Native American and European explorers alike. After the Revolutionary War, a National Armory was constructed at Rocky Mount on the banks of the upstream end of the falls, near the present day town of Great Falls, SC.

Daniel Green Stinson, a local historian in the 1800's wrote "In December of the year 1812 I was up on the observatory (the officer's quarters at Rocky Mount), the scene was magnificent, the falls of the river being confined to a very narrow channel whose waters came tumbling down large masses of huge rock, foaming from shore to shore and making a noise

like the rumbling of distant thunder, which could be heard for several miles. The channel of which is walled in by perpendicular heights, as it were, rocks, upon rocks, with a few shrubbed pines, where there were soil enough in the crevices to live....I have been at the Great Falls of Niagara, that is on a large scale, but for sublimity and grandeur of the scene it is not surpassed by that of Mount Dearborn...."

Just prior to the Civil War, a canal (completed in 1823) was dug around the west side of the falls connecting to Rocky Creek, allowing cargo boats passage around the rapids. Another account from 1858 describes more than twenty falls back to back and a river split into two major channels. Today Duke Power operates a series of dams in North and South Carolina that tame the Catawba River into several reservoirs. The old canal and Rocky Creek are now under a lake and the two channels of the Great Falls are dry.

I visited this dry riverbed on New Years Day with a small group that included SC Department of Natural Resources officer and river specialist, Mary Crockett. We paddled flatwater to the base of the two dry channels that made up the Great Falls and hiked upstream. The river left channel is 300 to 500 yards wide and is about two miles long. A trickle of water in the channel left me to imagine what the boulder-strewn riverbed must have looked like when the river flowed naturally.

The Catawba's flow in this area averages about 5000 cfs. The elevation drops about 70 feet. With that information and by looking at the rock-strewn left channel, you could tell that this wouldn't be most people's image of a regular cascade-style "waterfall" but would be more like a rip-roaring two-mile long class III-IV rapid. I'm guessing it would be an almost continuous big-water boogie session, punctuated by occasional four or five-foot drops and dozens of play spots. The only major break in the action would be about halfway into the run. Seeing the rocks immediately reminded me of the New River Dries (WV). The view of the riverbed also looks similar to Frank Bell's Rapid on French Broad section 9 (NC), only bigger.



Apparently the falls still flow occasionally during flood events. In fact, I could see a debris line where the water came up at least three feet within the past two weeks. There are clumps of saplings mid-channel and larger trees now grow in the riverbed, with the largest trees at the edges.

There is a shorter, steeper center channel of the Great Falls that also loses about 70 feet in elevation but does that in only a 0.6-mile distance. The center channel averages about 100 yards wide and is significantly steeper than the left channel. The center channel has more twists, turns and larger rocks. The boulders are large enough that it made for some tricky rock hopping when dry. Our group spotted several species of wildlife on this trip including at least one mature bald eagle and several immature eagles.

The dam that diverts water away from the Great Falls needs its license renewed by 2008 and, of course, American Whitewater is getting involved in that process. Volunteers are coordinating with Kevin Colburn in AW's Asheville office to gather information and maps, take photos and develop support from the local community.

Duke Power estimates that only 1 to 2 percent of its power comes from hydro-electric stations along the Catawba, and is interested in keeping that power readily available. At least one lakeside resident just upstream has expressed concern at the idea of releases. That resident incorrectly assumes that the lake level would fluctuate wildly. A biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Charleston believes that restored flows might aid fish reproduction for some species including the endangered shortnosed sturgeon.

It's going to take a few years and significant effort to get flows restored but the payoff will be huge. The large volume of water sits readily available and the gradient is there. The combination of gradient and water flowing down this rocky riverbed created rapids that impressed all who saw them. Who knows what kind of exciting play spots are hidden right there in plain sight! Support AW and stay tuned for more news on how you can help restore the Great Falls of the Catawba.




Above: Great Falls of the Catawba Diversion Dam
Photo by Mary Crockett


Opposite: Great Falls of the Catawba Circa 1849
Illustration from "Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, Vol. 1" by Benson Lossing, 1850

Note from Risa Shimoda


I picked a lucky day to check out Great Falls—just after it had rained an inch and a half in a day. I drove down two days later, as a small crew cleared debris from the upstream side of the Great Falls diversion dam. During this maintenance, they had to spill into the otherwise dry channel! I couldn't calibrate the volume in the channel, but I saw two enormous smiling holes with at least one banking shoulder, accessible from eddies on shore and from the center island. There are several marvelously grand boulders that decorate the riverbed (before the dam, the drop probably looked somewhat like a cousin to Great Falls of the Potomac!) and create obstacles in what would otherwise be an eventful channel. Looks like a Class III run that is unchoked and boat scutable. I'd only be concerned with debris that might lurk or show up uninvited. Our real assessment of the whitewater recreation potential will be up to Kevin Colburn and those who can help him on this project. If you are interested in investing some time in the future of Piedmont paddling, please let him know! Thanks to Jeff Tallman for the historical background and help on this project!



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SURVIVING THE ZAMBEZI

A Tale of African Whitewater

by Adam VanGrack



During my tenure as a whitewater paddler I've certainly seen my share of great rivers. From the steep gradient of the Rapid River or the big waves of the Gauley to the Potomac and the Yough, I thought I'd seen some serious water. I hadn't. None of those runs compared to the whitewater of the Zambezi River below Victoria Falls. The Zambezi is a huge river that separates Zimbabwe and Zambia, travels through Victoria Falls, the Lake Kariba dam, Mozambique, and then spills out into the Indian Ocean.



The 23 Zambezi River rapid groupings below Victoria Falls are famous for their power, enormity, and difficulty. Before the commercial paddleboat trips tackle the Class V+ rapids, each raft undergoes significantly long flat-water training sessions with a guide to ensure proper stroke, command comprehension, and rapid running technique. In addition, every paddler must meet minimum requirements of physical fitness and ability. In August of 2002 I was in Southcentral Africa with a law school friend of mine and decided to find a way to kayak the Zambezi. The first step was to find a boat.

The towns of Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) and Livingston (Zambia) have become almost exclusively dependant on tourists. The massive Victoria Falls of the Zambezi, adjacent to both towns, attracts them in throngs. Called *Mosi-Oa-Tunya* ("Smoke that Thunders") by the native people, Victoria Falls spans over one mile in width. The spray generated by the falls is its own microclimate and has created a miniature rain forest at the gorge's edge, 330 feet above the river. One small section, the Devil's Cataract, would be a world-renown waterfall all by itself. In the two towns, curio stores abound, shops advertise U.S. dollar conversions, and every local is trying to obtain tourist money. Consequently, it was no surprise to see many outfitters willing to take a couple of yokels down the Zambezi in a raft.

My friend Ivan (a Zimbabwe native) and I decided to try an outfitter in Victoria Falls. The agent was confused by my desire to kayak the river. Their only kayaks belonged to the two safety boaters. I was getting nowhere and asked to talk with the manager. I explained I was a kayak instructor from the United States who boated class V and wanted to *kayak* the river. In retort, he explained to me (1) that the Zambezi was



Above: Downstream view of the Zambezi River



Below: The Kariba Dam of the Zambezi with Nyaminyami keeping a watchful eye on the river

not like any class V river in the world, and (2) that his company did not have a license to take kayakers down the river. Not being above bribery I told him that I would pay "full raft price" if he and I could find some way to get me down the river in a kayak. He decided to talk with his top guide and shortly suggested the following plan: one of the guides had to leave after the first few rapids and could likely be persuaded to leave his kayak. The manager explained that I could travel the first few rapids in a raft and *if* I passed the top guide's skills test, I would be able to kayak the Zambezi in a kayak. We both agreed to this plan. I paid the rafting price and was ready to take on the mighty Zambezi River the next day.

The hike down to the put-in was a steep trail with 400 feet of vertical drop. A few people fell on the way down. When we finally got to the river, we all underwent the mandatory raft training sessions. Shortly after we put in, my (soon-to-be former) raft guide pointed out a huge rock painting on the side of the river of *Nyaminyami*, the Zambezi River God (serpent body, tiger fish head and huge fangs) painted by the native Tonga people. On the river, I quickly realized that *Nyaminyami* was alive! The rapids were *much* larger than anything I had seen before. The house size holes were pure chaos and the waves were mammoth. Many rapids are known as "gamblers" meaning that regardless of the guide's skill they will flip at least 50% of the rafts. We shortly reached the guide's exit point and my chance to try out the kayak.

I met the top guide (Japhet) and he showed me to my equipment. The boat was an old, beat-up, plastic boat of unknown origin with *no* foot pegs or outfitting, the PFD was






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Above: Devil's Cataract section of Victoria Falls

Opposite: Victoria Falls rainbow and "the Smoke that Thunders" just before the world-renown Class V+ whitewater section

a commercial, heavy-duty, bright orange beast, the skirt had more holes than Swiss cheese, the paddle had an aluminum shaft with cracked and chipped plastic blades that was cheap in 1970, and the helmet was a paper-thin, plastic model. This gear wasn't just bad—it was scary. Japhet's test was this: go out in the water and "do stuff." So, I went out and paddled, rolled, and fooled around. However, after fitting into the horrible gear and getting smacked against my deck during a few test rolls by the industrial-strength PFD, I wasn't so sure. I said to Japhet, "Ummm, I think I'm going to pass on the kayaking." He said, "You'll be fine, friend." I said, "This river *might* kill me, but with this equipment it *will* kill me." Nonetheless, he told me, "No worries, I'll show you the lines. Trust me." Thinking that it might be a mistake, I decided to go ahead. It seemed like a good time for a private prayer to the Zambezi River God, *Nyaminyami*.

Before I had adjusted to the current, my first instruction was for an immediate Class V monstrosity. Japhet said, "Stay left of center then break right. If you start too much right, you die." Nice easy introduction, right? Miraculously, I made it through this chaos of holes and waves upright with an American "yee haw" and a "dear God, that was huge!"

The waves and holes of the Zambezi's rapids are enormous. The Three Ugly Sisters (Rapids #12a, b, & c) are followed by Their Mother (Rapid #13) which starts with (at least) a 15-20 ft. high wave that flips most rafts and towers over any paddler. Just as I saw Japhet disappear into The Mother, I remember thinking: if I crash strait through, I will get tossed; and if I ride it strait up, I will get tossed. Thus, I had to combine a surf up and a dive through to make it to the other side. By the time I made it through the end of The Mother series, I was so waterlogged from the neoprene sieve wrapped over the top of my cockpit that I was stern-squirting through every feature.

Rapid #18 (Oblivion) is considered *the* major carnage spot: only allowing about 1 out of every 4 rafts through it upright. Crashing and bracing through Oblivion was a completely crazy ride through heavily aerated water. In one rapid series, The Washing Machine (Rapid #15), *everyone*, including rafts, skirted the colossal hole to the right. And *every* boater portaged Commercial Suicide (Rapid #9), which was some of the most insane whitewater I have ever seen. The *only* line (kayak sized) through Commercial Suicide's rapid series leaves no room for error, and even a perfect line may not lead to a clean run.

Thankfully, Japhet knew the river and its lines very well, and was an excellent guide. In fact, it was not until after my adrenaline wore off later that day that I realized that we had not scouted a single rapid. When I could see him I would follow his lines; when he vanished, I would just boat scout. Despite having to empty our kayaks every 2-3 rapids (due to "holey skirts") on mid-river rocks, I was able to handle the river despite the equipment. I found myself stern-squirting out of many holes due to the excessive water in the boat but I only flipped once (in the middle of the Three Ugly Sisters). When I finally scraped myself off the deck and rolled up, I heard Japhet say, "Very good, you got up! Look ahead!" . . . only to briefly see the Second Ugly Sister before I hit it (or she hit me). I distinctly remember going through the first huge holes of Double Trouble (Rapid #17) and Oblivion (Rapid #18) saying aloud, "Be kind *Nyaminyami*!" My Zimbabwean friend told me that while I was kayaking the river, he exited his raft at least four times.

Despite the powerful Class V+ rapids to fear on the Zambezi, I was more concerned with the many very large crocodiles we saw on the river banks. Japhet told me at one

point, with a stern face, "Up ahead, on the left, is Five Day Eddy. Fight as hard as you can to the right, it is very, very hard to get out of it and many crocks are there!" Earlier he had explained that as long as I did not swim and stayed in the main current I would be fine as the crocks do not like whitewater. In fact, the rafters are told: "When you fall out, stay in the middle of the current, not the eddys, the crocks like the eddys."

Considering the hellacious whitewater and ridiculous condition of my gear, making it to the final eddy at the take-out felt like an extreme accomplishment. I'd never felt so much continual adrenaline in my body before and the gear situation reminded me of learning to kayak in Maryland at Valley Mill Camp's lake. I immediately gave Japhet a hug and told him "*Siyabonga!*" (Ndebele for "Thank You").

The 800 ft. climb out of the Zambezi's Batoka Gorge is incomparable (even to the Upper Gauley's Panther Creek climb) and *long*. For me, there will never be a paddling experience quite like the Zambezi River. At the top of the gorge, all of the raft guides were shocked that this "American kayaker" was able to handle the Zambezi. While they had joked with me before at the put-in, they were now duly impressed, and considered me their friend. Getting to the top of the Batoka Gorge at the take-out, I found one rafter who was still in shock after getting tossed during the last rapid, swimming most of the rapid, almost missing the take-out, and thinking he was going to die. I brought him some water, a dry towel, put my arm around him, and told him, "Hey man, *this* is the Zambezi!"

Before we left the take-out, a few guides asked if I could get them paddling equipment from the U.S. Should I go back again, I plan on bringing as much paddling gear as I can possibly fit in my luggage (personal gear for me, and other, used gear for them). While a boat may be difficult to get through all the customs checks, a decent skirt, PFD, and paddle would be worth their weight in gold in Zimbabwe or Zambia.

A few days later, my friend and I traveled to Lake Kariba. Lake Kariba is one of the largest man-made lakes in the world, created by a massive dam on the Lower Zambezi. Constructing the Kariba Dam in the late 1950s, the governments of Zimbabwe and Zambia destroyed a section of the Zambezi - a gorgeous Class III-IV run, many miles downstream of Victoria Falls. They also ru-

ined the homelands of many native people and wildlife (including elephants, lions, sable antelope, and cape buffalo). Floating down the lake, I could hardly imagine that this lake was once home to a section of the mighty Zambezi. It seemed to me now like an underwater graveyard.

When the two governments began planning to build the dam in the 1950s, the native Tonga people warned that *Nyaminyami* (the River God) would protect the river valley and never allow the Zambezi to be dammed. True to the Tonga threat, the wrath of *Nyaminyami* wrecked havoc on the dam project during the late-1950s. First, two "Thousand-year Floods" in a row (the second bigger than the first) twice destroyed the partially completed dam. Then, a freak accident killed many workers and destroyed a significant portion of the wall structure. Eventually, despite *Nyaminyami's*

powers, the governments completed the dam and opened it in 1960.

Recently, the Zimbabwean and Zambian governments have talked about damming another section of the Zambezi, this time just below Victoria Falls. Once again, they would ruin one of the most awesome rivers in the world. Knowing that whitewater rivers are threatened world-wide, paddlers and conservationists must work together and hope that such a travesty does not occur.

The day after my Zambezi run, while in Zambia near the Falls, I purchased a small hand carving of *Nyaminyami*, the river god. I plan to always keep it with me in my PFD pocket while paddling - to protect me from danger and help me remember the day I survived the mighty Zambezi.



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A Kayaker's Odyssey

The Tropical Island of Bali

by Austin Krissoff

For the majority of the past decade, white-water kayaking has undergone dramatic changes and developments that have ushered the sport into mainstream outdoor recreation and adventure. Remarkable improvements in boat technology and design have changed the sport; thrill seekers can now explore ends-of-the-earth Class V rivers and the after-work crowd can even get wet in their local whitewater park. This broad spectrum of enjoyment keeps kayaking uniquely diverse and popular.

Thankfully, gone are the days of Hi-Float life vests, two hundred and twenty centimeter paddles, and fiberglass boat repair. But alas, not all has been lost. I am reminded of the epic paddling film, "PaddleQuest," which marked the beginning of this new era. It spoke of the sense of adventure that has been ever-present in kayaking from the time of the Eskimos until the present. Specifically, in the words of my mentor, the late Brennan Guth, "This sport has so many different facets to explore; it's limitless. Kayaking can take you to amazing places. It's an amazing way to see the country."

June of 2002 provided me with the perfect opportunity to rekindle that sense of adventure and explore a new place. An Indonesian friend from high school, Omar, offered to take me on a tour of his homeland, specifically the tropical island of Bali. I insisted that I could only get a feel for the place "from the seat of my kayak," and he agreed.

Bali's world-class surf, featured in the movie "Endless Summer II," was all I knew to expect on my journey. Surf kayaking wasn't exactly my forté, but I knew that it was only one facet of kayaking that I had yet to enjoy. What I didn't know at the time was how much I would learn about the people and culture of the island and how little a part kayaking would play in the overall experience. Even in the initial planning stages, which required countless internet and phone hours, I didn't realize that the island's surf, although epic, was only complementary to what Bali had to offer. In the end, I would leave the island thinking about much larger issues than aerial blunts.



Although this wasn't exactly a TsangPo expedition, getting my kayak and myself halfway across the world was no easy feat. My first blunder occurred at San Francisco's Northwest check-in counter. I showed up, regrettably, without a bag for my boat. It was an amateur mistake, and no amount of explaining convinced the Nazi-like ticket agent that my Necky Zip had smaller dimensions than some surfboards! She eventually made me ship my boat via Freight Express. Luckily, I allowed plenty of time prior to the departure of my flight. But that proved meaningless because the flight sat in the runway for two hours on an unexpected delay. "We're missing a starter part for the engine and we may have to send for one outside of the San Francisco area," said the captain. Our international travel plans changed and Omar and I were re-routed through Bangkok, only six hours out of the way from our final destination.

Our arrival in Jakarta was my first introduction to "the way things are done" in some developing nations. According to a new international law, a passport is only valid if it expires more than six months ahead of time from your entry into the country. My passport expired in three. The customs agent said I had "big problem, big problem," and I was sent to a stuffy, enclosed office (interrogation room) wherein the agents proceeded to make travel arrangements for my return to the U.S. There was nothing more frightening than being at the disposal of those custom agents. The fear they instilled in me was exponentially greater than any waterfall I have dropped.

Omar's mother saved my trip. She met us at the airport and, upon hearing things were not working in my favor at the customs department, she promptly marched into the office, sent me outside, feigned a crying tantrum, and bribed the agent with two hundred U.S. dollars. I write about this particular incident not because it is my proudest moment but because it serves as a warning to future travelers that they need to check all possible loose ends before going outside the U.S. One thing is for sure: Uncle Sam will not bail you out if you run into trouble in foreign lands.

As we made the quick flight from Jakarta to Bali, glimpses of the island unfolded beneath wisps of clouds. The blue waters of the Indian Ocean reflected against the sky, a reef break appeared not far off shore: paradise. When we landed and emerged from the airport, a completely different scene awaited us. Bali is a small island with

a bustling population of 2.6 million people. We were greeted by traffic jams and heavy pollution from two-stroke engines. On the way into our hotel, passing through the districts of Sanur and Jimbaran, it was easy to see that prostitution and illegal drugs plague Bali.

After dropping our luggage off at the hotel, we took a walk through the town of Kuta, which rests comfortably next to the ocean. Street vendors repeatedly asked Omar and me if we wanted "Ladies, hashish, or ecstasy." We replied with "Terima kasih," (Thank you or no thank you). Omar reminded me, as custom on the island, to always bow and smile. Surprisingly, these same street vendors were very deferential to women. It was not long before we came to our first McDonald's, and then shortly thereafter a Dunkin' Donuts. Although I had in mind more authentic cuisine, we didn't retire for the evening until we partied down at some of the clubs for which Bali is famous.

I was eager to try out the surf that beckoned just beyond our hotel room. Kuta Beach, although crowded with surfers, had a nice break. Further out, the reefs had perfect rolling breaks with a pocket and a tube on every wave. But my boat still hadn't arrived. Unexpectedly, that day provided me with an opportunity to get a true feel for the place, which I probably wouldn't have done if my boat had been there.

A trip to the Monkey Forest near the historic cultural town of Ubud, only a two hour drive inland, gave me an inside look at the real Bali, away from the hubbub of commerce and tourism that besieged the coast. Omar and I fed bananas to curious monkeys and then headed up to Mt. Gunung Agung for a Balinese lunch (rice, meat, spices, and delicious shrimp cookies) complete with a view of the holy mountain. The mountain is sacred to the native Balinese people; they all sleep with their heads facing in its direction.

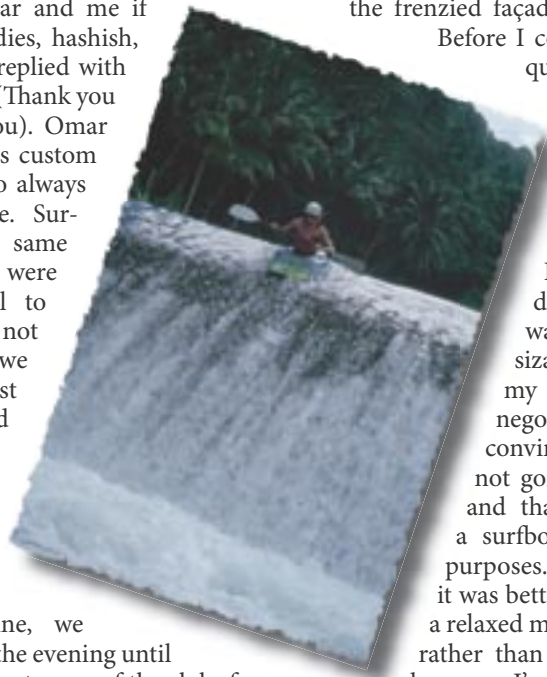
I had a feeling as we toured around this cultural mecca that Bali was slowly revealing itself to us, and not at all in the form of McDonald's or shopping malls. Bali is predominantly Hindu, and according to Rachel Greaves in the magazine *Hello Bali*, "there are more temples than houses in Bali, most villages have at least three, and every home has a 'merajan' (shrine) or 'sangghah kemulan' (house temple)." What was this cultural lifestyle, where had it gone, and how had it so subtly disappeared under the frenzied façade of global tourism?

Before I could answer my own question, we were back in the car en route to Kuta...my boat had arrived.

Again, I ran into problems with the Indonesian customs department. They wanted to charge me a sizable tax for importing my kayak. After heated negotiations, I was able to convince them that I was not going to sell my kayak, and that it was, much like a surfboard, for recreational purposes. In this case, I found it was better to communicate in a relaxed manner with the agents rather than "flexing my muscles because I'm an American." Of course, had Omar not been fluent in both English and Indonesian, I would have been plain out of luck. Again, Omar reminded me throughout the negotiations to smile and nod.

That evening I got my first taste of the island's amazing surf waves, by sunset. As light faded and the crowds dispersed, the surf became outstanding. With only the distant lights of Kuta as my guide, I caught many sizable four to five foot, right waves that pushed me to their corner, the pocket. Tremendous forces spit me high into the air like a watermelon seed, hurtling me through the black, sticky, tropical air. Without the weight of a heavy dry-top and fleece underwear, I felt free and unencumbered. It was a great introduction to the surf of Bali, and it never got any worse.

Driving on the island was so convoluted with one-way streets and back alleys that a seasoned driver was required from the rental car agency. For a reasonable price, the next day we loaded up the car with my boat strapped on top and drove to a surf



spot called Dreamland. As the name suggests, the surf was heaven on earth. After a short drive and a rigorous hike down a goat trail, a perfect six foot rolling break awaited me. The surf tumbled into a white sand beach, complete with European women who didn't particularly care for bathing suits.

There I met and conversed with an amiable Australian long boarder, who was comically decked out in matching yellow board shorts, t-shirt, hat, and yellow zinc oxide that covered his ruddy nose, not to mention his identical yellow surfboard. He was more than happy to fill me in on the "hot" surf spots around the island. He had been coming to Bali for more than twenty years, and he understood the dynamic of culture on the island just as well as he deftly caught those six footers rolling in from the sea. According to him, Bali was a welcoming place to travel to from Australia. The Balinese loved Americans and Australians because of their friendly personas. They agreed with the relaxed Balinese way of life. However, when he traveled to the neighboring island of Lombok, he usually said he was from Canada because of the Muslim influence there.

I was pleasantly surprised by his cordiality. I am used to the bitter, age-old hostility between surfers and kayakers so often experienced on the Pacific West Coast. In addition, not even the native surfers showed any aggression towards me, and I wondered how many kayak surfers they have actually seen. Most were amazed that I could catch waves and do tricks without having to stand up.

A Sobek rafting trip on the Telaga Waja turned my attention back inland. The scenery was spectacular. Monkeys tree-hopped above the river canyon. Waterfalls vaporized in midair and cascaded as rain droplets into the river. Surprisingly, the guides were all Balinese. After the run, we ascended terraced rice paddies to the guide house where they served me a special lunch.

Having mastered the two main rivers on the island, the guides eagerly wanted to

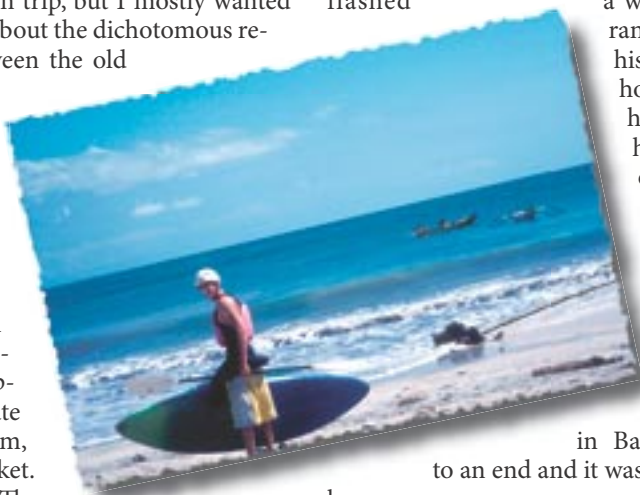
know more about the elusive Grand Canyon of the Colorado. The size and power of American whitewater captured their imaginations. I was more than happy to fill them in on the details and logistics of doing a Grand Canyon trip, but I mostly wanted to know more about the dichotomous relationship between the old and new Bali that seemed so pressing to the island's well being. One guide, Kaplut, concurred that there has been no real sustainable development to moderate growth, tourism, or the job market. The result? The environment has suffered, which has sprung such clean-up groups like "Bali Fokus." Other than that, he went on to say, Bali doesn't have an industry besides catering to the transient tourists. Bali used to have a rice agricultural system, but that has long since disappeared. We finished our discussion and soon enough, it was time to head back. I graciously thanked the guides for their hospitality and ensured them they always had a place to stay in America—if they wanted to run the Grand.

There was one thing left to do. I had yet to surf the reef break. Reef breaks are enticing because there is no chance to get "stuck inside" (caught inside the enormous break). One merely has to paddle out and around the reef to catch the next wave. For thirty thousand rupiah (three U.S. dollars), a native fishing boat took me out and dropped me off for two hours. There is a possibility that a sharp, shallow reef can leave you looking like the disfigured Tom Cruise in *Vanilla Sky*, but the formation and shape of the waves of the Kuta reef break were unparalleled.

After my session was over, a fisherman picked me up. He was about my age and

in his broken English he told me he was a surfer, but he liked my kayak. He especially admired my stylish helmet, which I gave to him as a token of my appreciation for the great surf and his generosity. He flashed

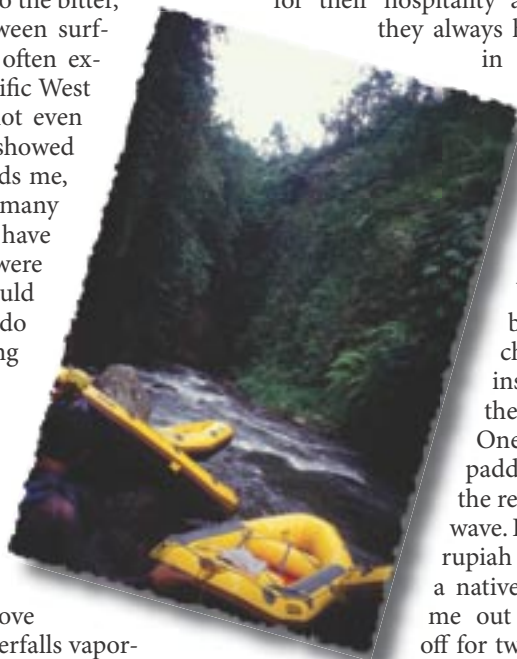
a wide grin, and ran back to his fish camp hooting and hollering at his new piece of gear—no doubt showing off to his friends. But, my "PaddleQuest" kayaking adventure in Bali had come to an end and it was time to head



home.

So should you travel to Bali to kayak surf? Yes, the surf there is epic. But don't just go to Bali for the waves. There are even better offshore breaks on the islands of Java, Lombok, and Sumbawa. But, I learned from Bali is that there is more to a "PaddleQuest" adventure trip than just getting an adrenaline fix from the whitewater. In truth, I left Bali knowing that I had not only explored a different facet of kayaking, but that I had explored a different facet of the world. It had not just been a lesson in maneuvering through pounding surf, but also a lesson in social anthropology.

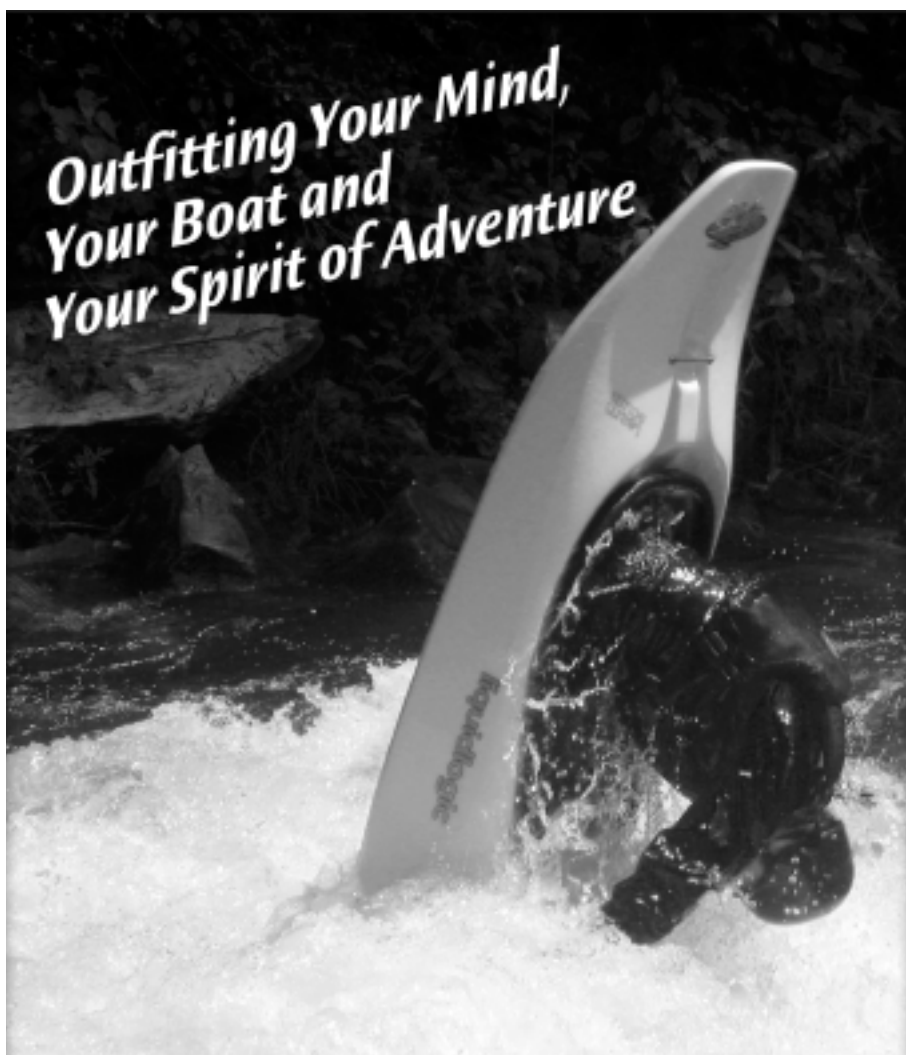
After the Dutch were forced out of colonial occupation following World War II, Bali struggled under the pressures to equate itself with more developed countries of the twentieth century. I wonder how it will fair in the next. Some find comfort in knowing that "sustainable Hinduism" ([Hello Bali](#)) will prevail because of the essential belief, incorporated into many Balinese dances, of the "rwa bhinneda" or the "two differences." In essence, a balance is always found between complementary opposites, such as "night and day, good and evil." It is my hope that a balance can be found between the opposing past culture of Bali and the new development that has taken place. Until that balance is achieved, go to Bali, surf its waves, visit its shrines, but don't forget to smile and say... "Terima kasih."



Author's Note: I wrote this article last July, with the memories of my trip to Bali still very fresh in my memory. The October 12th terrorist attacks on the island, which leveled an entire city block and killed nearly 200 people, were both shocking and tragic. These events seem to signify that Bali is more than just a Hawaiiansque tourist hub of the South Pacific. As mentioned in my article, Bali is an island with a turbulent history and much cultural diversity. Simultaneously, Bali is in transition from the pre-modern to the modern world and in search of a balance between globalization and the preservation of heritage. In light of these recent attacks, Bali has inevitably been swept into the mainstream political and economic forces shaping this era. Some say that the safest time to visit a region is directly after a terrorist attack. However, in no way is my article an advertisement for kayakers or other tourists considering a visit to the Indonesian paradise. Rather, I see this article as a testament to some of the distant places kayakers experience while doing what we love. I have talked with fellow paddlers coming back from Nepal, having been in some scary situations with the Maoist uprisings. Although the waves are great in Bali, as I'm sure the rivers are in Nepal, the cultural changes these places are undergoing remind me of something else. Though we are kayakers first, we are also world citizens, capable of coming home and telling the truth to our neighbors and friends about what we really saw. Forget CNN and the BBC. Death tolls don't mean much until you've been to a place and related to its people and, for most subscribers to this journal, until we've paddled its rivers or surfed its waves.

Austin Krissoff

November 28, 2002



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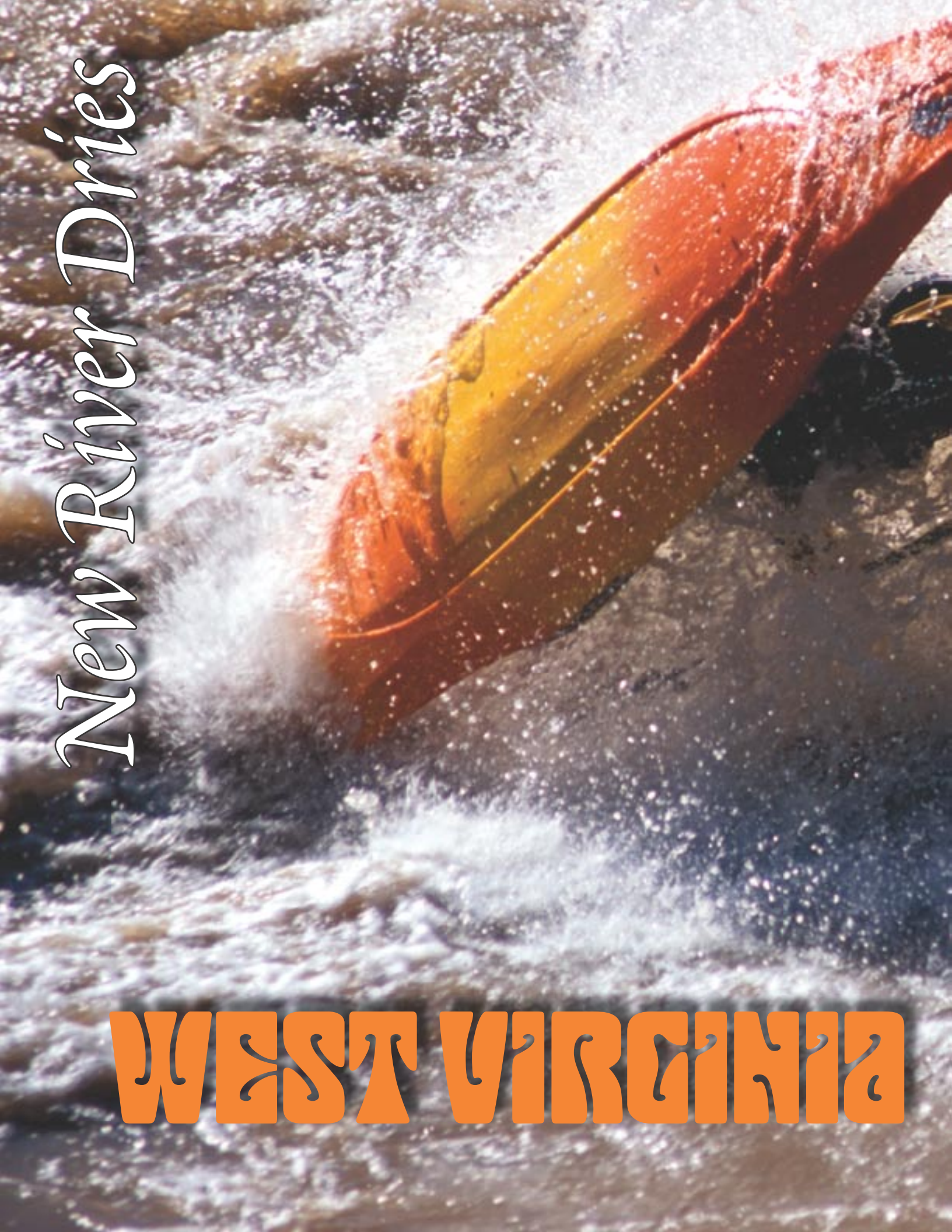


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New River Dries

WEST VIRGINIA



This is the second part of a two-day paddling adventure in West Virginia when water levels were just right. Day one was an epic high water run on the North Fork Blackwater (story in Nov./Dec. AW). This is about day two, on the New River Dries. The New River Dries is a run downstream of the New River Gorge that, due to a hydropower intake, only has water when the New is over 10,000cfs. When it's over ten grand, water spills back into the dry riverbed and forms one of the best playruns in the world.

BIG WATER PLAY

Photos by Erica Mitchell, Story by Jimmy Blakeney

Erica Mitchell, Steve Fisher and I had just finished an epic high water run on the North Fork Blackwater and were finishing dinner in Davis, West Virginia. From looking at levels this morning I knew what we had to look forward to for tomorrow... the New River Dries at high water. Steve agreed to head back to Fayetteville with us when I told him that we would be paddling one of the best big water play runs in the world. A Zambezi local for years, Steve is always excited about "big water play." Sleet pelted our vehicles on the drive home from the Blackwater, making us wonder what West Virginia's unpredictable spring weather had in store for us the next day. What we did know was that levels would be HIGH, and the New River would be cranking.

Last summer two floods hit the Fayetteville area and ripped apart one of its best creek runs, Laurel creek (of Captain Crunch Falls fame). While the flood turned Laurel creek into a mile long scree pile, it also dumped tons of rock and debris into the New River right at the put-in for the Dries. This narrowed the riverbed, creating a "new" wave right at the put-in. This isn't just any wave either, it's one of the best I've ever surfed.

I first discovered it just after the flood last summer, and I'd been waiting all year for it to come back. The question was, would there be enough water? Classic Dries levels are from 9 to 11 feet on the Fayette station gauge. At these levels the standard playspots that make the Dries famous appear. For the "new" wave to be in, the gauge needs to be closer to 14 feet, upwards of 35,000cfs. At this level the run becomes a big rollercoaster ride with HUGE wetrains and a few HUGE holes to avoid, but otherwise straightforward (eventually all the holes wash out and become giant catch-on-the-fly waves).

As soon as we arrived in Fayetteville from our three hour drive I went straight to the computer to check levels. Oh yes, tomorrow was going to be another epic. The New was at 35,000cfs and still rising; we didn't need to worry about too little water. From what I remembered it seemed like the wave should have a good window of surfability, so I wasn't worried about too much water, either. Tired but excited, we all fell asleep dreaming of the huge aerial moves we'd be pulling the next day.

We woke the next morning to sunny skies. I poured myself a bowl of cereal and glanced out at the thermometer, already 45 degrees at 9 o'clock. I checked the computer gauges again to find that the New had come up to 15 feet while we slept! The graph had peaked that night and would be dropping all day, but we had plenty of time to get to the river and enjoy New River Dries surfing at it's finest.

As a paddler, living somewhere like Fayetteville eventually begins to make you lazy. With unbelievable whitewater right at your fingertips you take it for granted that you'll be paddling at some point during the day. The sense of urgency that usually goes with long distance drives to unfamiliar rivers begins to wane. Driving from our house in Fayetteville to the put-in of the Dries (and several other runs) takes about ten minutes. Needless to say, we weren't in a huge rush due to time constraints. On top of that, the shuttle for the Dries takes about ten minutes one way. When the Dries are up, Fayetteville playboating is at it's best and most convenient. It makes the 20 minute drive to the put-in of the Upper Gauley seem like a marathon, not to mention the three hour

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drive to the North Fork that we'd just done! My point here is that we took our time and still made it to the put-in at 10:30am.

Crossing the short bridge at the put-in took us nearly a minute due to the unavoidable urge to inspect the flooded riverbed. Looking downstream from the 100 foot tall bridge we could see the "new" wave on river right, followed by another big wave that spanned half the river but had no eddy, followed by huge wavetrains as the river spread out through the forest on river right and disappeared around the corner. A third of the river bypassed its normal course around a shoulder on river right, opting instead to plow straight into the riparian vegetation. This created an explosive scene, with thousands of cfs slamming into large trees, shaking them violently. I've seen several people accidentally go into these trees and it wasn't pretty. I recommend the left line, but when your surfing a wave about 100 yards upstream on river right this nightmarish whitewater forest is always in the back of your mind. 100 yards seems like a long distance, but with 40,000cfs and good gradient it takes about twelve seconds of floating to go from wave to forest. Needless to say, you needed to catch the eddy on river right above the forest if you hoped to surf the wave again. Not too difficult with a good roll and solid forward stroke. From the eddy you could paddle back up to the wave with only minimal effort.

We finally made it across the bridge, parked and began to unload gear. The sun was shining and the temperature had already reached 60 degrees...this was going to be another incredible day! I smiled, knowing that Steve was about to be blessed with another "Oh my God" West Virginia whitewater experience.

After unloading we ran shuttle with another group of boaters. Despite running the Dries dozens of times I'm never able to run shuttle without craning my neck to see the river. Since I've done the shuttle a lot I know the spots that offer a good view. Steve, on the other hand, was constantly staring out the window hoping to catch a glimpse of the river, 500 feet below us. No doubt when I visit Steve on the Zambezi I'll be doing the same thing.

Back at the put-in, we suited up and hiked under the bridge to river level, just upstream of the wave. Once at river level we could feel the awe-inspiring power of 40,000+ cfs surging past us. As a paddler it's an even more incredible feeling to know



you are about to commit yourself to such power. As I stood admiring the New river Dries, I couldn't help but feel extremely lucky.

From riverside I could see the true size of the wave, (two waves back to back, actually). The first wave had a 20 foot face which peaked in a sharp foam pile. The backside of this wave drops off steeply into the second one. The water accelerates down the backside of the first wave and creates a depression wavehole that is extremely fast and powerful. This is the one we came to surf, but the first wave offers entrance move opportunities such as aerial kickflips, wave-wheels and macho moves—a downstream loop done like a wavewheel (check it out at www.stevfisher.net).

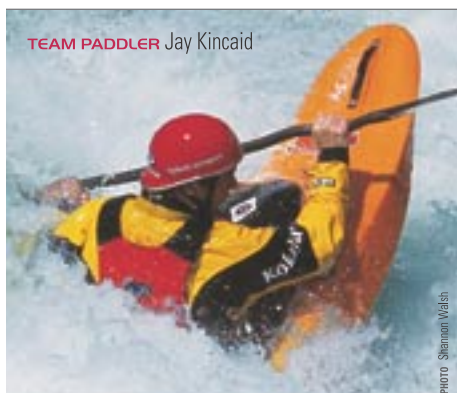
Our friends BJ & Katie Johnson, Dave Garringer, Clay Wright and Christie Dobson were already in the water or on shore setting up filming equipment. This was definitely a media worthy spot, and everyone was ready to take advantage of the opportunity.

As is usually the case, I was the first one in the water. The closer I get to putting on a river the more excited and anxious I get, until I can't take waiting anymore and rush to the river, forcing myself to stretch before getting in my boat. Once on the water a sense of relief and happiness flows through me. It's like I'm finally in the place I belong, the place I feel most content, comfortable and knowledgeable. For me, paddling is like going to work, getting to my desk, and

being totally amped to dive into the days work. In this case, the days work would consist of aerial blunts, kickflips, air screws, backblunts, flipturns, pan-ams, and lots of aggressive forward strokes to avoid the whitewater forest.

I entered the office with a seal launch, landing in an eddy directly under the bridge. After a hasty five minute warm-up I was forced downstream by the magnetic pull of two perfectly formed waves. I peeled out of the eddy onto a conveyor belt of smooth brown water, positioning myself laterally so that the flow would take me to the peak of the first wave. About ten feet from the peak of the wave I initiated my bow and loaded the volume deep into the water. Just before reaching the peak of the wave the volume began to lift me up as I stood up on my bulkhead and threw my weight forward over the peak. Due to the size of the wave I was over ten feet off the water looking down into the trough of the second wave, attempting a downstream loop, aka "macho move." My timing was slightly off, so I failed to initiate the stern to complete the loop. Instead I fell back onto my head, felt myself accelerate into the trough of the second wave, hit the powerful foam pile, and rolled up into a front blast. Once on the wave I could feel the speed and surge of the water flexing the hull of my boat. You know you're on a powerful wave when you can feel vibrations in the boat flowing through your body. I spent my first ride exploring the wave, finding the sweet spots, recovery zones and power zones. The river left shoulder offered a nice recovery zone where I

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could set up to head back into the center of the wave, which happened to be the power zone. River right was a strange wave/hole that almost sat on top of the wave's trough, creating a nice set-up spot to drop into the sweet spot and power zone (the "G-spot" as Corran Addison would call it). On big waves I call it the launch pad, cause it's the spot where the most power is concentrated on the wave to allow you to launch into the air. This is the spot good playboaters look for each time they surf a wave or hole, the spot where the river's power converges, making otherwise impossible moves possible. All good waves and holes have a g-spot, but this doesn't mean all boaters have access to this zone. The ability to read and "feel" the water is a key factor in finding the g-spot. All of us have spent frustrating hours surfing and trying tricks that seem to be impossible, only to finally hit the g-spot and experience instant revelation.

Erica and Steve were close behind me, and we all spent the next five hours surfing, filming and spectating as a solid group of about ten paddlers explored the possibilities of "one of the best waves in the world." These words weren't just coming from myself and other locals, but from Steve Fisher as well...pretty strong endorsement from a Zambezi paddler!

Our session began to wind down as the river level dropped and the wave lost its shape and power. As our muscles went more and more lactic we began to contemplate the rest of the run. Normally just paddling down the Dries is a great time in and of itself, but after five hours straight on an extremely powerful wave we weren't sure if we'd saved enough energy to go downstream! I was kinda bummed that Steve didn't get to experience "mile long," "landslide," and some of the other classic big water rapids the Dries has to offer, but I couldn't really complain. There will

definitely be a next time. As we walked our boats back up the hill it suddenly dawned on us that our car was at the take-out. For the first time in our paddling careers we actually had to un-do a shuttle...usually considered a negative thing, but in this case our surf-encured perma-grins were proof that destination boating is a worthwhile endeavor.

If you're ever in the Fayetteville area, check the New river gauge at Fayette Station. If the New is over 8 feet, head downstream to the Dries...you won't be disappointed. Don't worry if you only have one vehicle, you'll probably hook up with some other paddlers (although it's almost never crowded). And if you don't, just run the short shuttle and hitch back up to the put-in. It will be worth the effort. This stretch of river is dewatered and flows are unpredictable, making a planned trip to run the Dries nearly impossible. BUT, because there is a dam upstream, it is possible that releases could be secured on this stretch of incredible whitewater. Imagine planning your next trip to West Virginia to paddle the Dries in August, just before your yearly pilgrimage to the world renowned Gauley in September. Releases on the Dries would add just the right spice to West Virginia's already rich whitewater calendar.

Editor's Note: Jimmy Blakeney is a world-class paddler who spends his non-traveling time at home in Fayetteville, West Virginia with his wife Erica Mitchell and dog Hailey. You can learn more about Jimmy and Erica at their website, www.prokayaker.tv, which features a calendar documenting their travels, along with regular photo and video updates, including a "how to" section covering freestyle and river running technique. Also check out Steve Fisher's website at www.stevfisher.net, which documents his travels around the world with incredible images and amusing stories.





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*By Christopher Clark
Photos by Jed Weingarten*

The runoff in California was wonderfully consistent this year. The combination of good snowpack and cool spring temperatures made for an extended boating season. Class V runs like the South Merced, Clavey, Silver Fork, and Middle Feather all ran for weeks. This was lucky for me because each of these rivers imitate a different aspect of the run that was my goal for the year: the NF Mokelumne, better known as Fantasy Falls. The granite boulders of the Merced, the gorges of the Clavey, the gradient of the Silver Fork, the multi-day, self-support nature of the Feather—each of these challenges can be found in the Mokelumne Wilderness.

Fantasy Falls is the kind of run that threatens to overload the psyche with apprehension. I tend to be overly analytical of my skill and condition on every trip, so I knew that taking a swim in March, or missing a line in April could affect whether I finally put on the Mokelumne in June. Once boaters float beyond the put-in to Fantasy, the only decent option to return to civilization is by river.

The canyons of California's Sierra-Nevada are deep and rugged. When significant injuries occur on these rivers, more often than not, the only way out is by helicopter. I had the misfortune of witnessing an incident in Bald Rock Canyon in early June. A friend badly broke his leg during a portage at Big Bald Rock, less than a mile below Curtain Falls. In this case, the unfortunate individual had made pulp out of his tibial plateau (the part of the leg which bears $\frac{1}{2}$ the weight of the body). Being a big guy, it took 4 people 45 minutes to move him 30 meters to a stable location. Six hours later, five minutes before dark, he was extracted by a California Highway Patrol helicopter and flown to Oroville Hospital. For me, intent on my Fantasy Falls expedition, this was a reminder of what can happen. (Note:



When in need of a helicopter rescue in the Sierras, do attempt to have the CHP fly for you. They're free...so far).

I'd been paddling with my friend Gabe for most of the month, and we were having a blast. For a run like Fantasy, good chemistry is important. As the gauge dropped toward an optimal level, forming a group became the focus. Gabe had started to feed on my excitement for the run and was ready to go. One thing led to another and we had a solid group of paddlers. Four originally from the Northwest: Chris, Gabe, Jed (OR), and Jeff (WA), and three from elsewhere (Jared (CA), Courtney (CO), and Peter (NZL)). We all met at Salt Springs Reservoir around midnight on Monday with put-in scheduled for the next morning.

To the best of my knowledge, there isn't any way to be sure if Fantasy is running, without driving up to the put in. Jed had been there two weeks previous and there had still been too much water. A general rule of thumb seems to be that if you are floating cleanly through the first miles of the run, there is plenty of water in the creek. Only the paddler who ventures all the way into the canyon knows whether there is too much.

The shuttle for Fantasy is longer than average for a Sierra run. However, our friend Matt graciously volunteered to do it for us (as if life wasn't sweet enough already).

Fantasy was all it was cracked up to be: stunningly beautiful, remote, pristine, and full-on big drops for three days straight. We put in Tuesday on a flow of about 150 cfs and began the painful 3 miles of class IV that leads to feeder creeks, where we hoped to find cleaner rapids. Inconsequential pins

and broaches were the rule through this section, which is actually one of the steepest on the river. Three miles in, we got the creeks we were looking for, but the rapids still hadn't cleaned up as we would have liked. The more water we got, the better it became, though.

The NF Mokelumne goes through about 5 or 6 distinct gorges. You KNOW which ones count and which ones don't after you go through them. In between these carved out gorges are valley meadows with sequoia groves and class I-II water to calm the nerves. This is where you finally get the opportunity to look up and see just how deep in the wilderness you really are.

We made it through the junk all right, with the exception of Gabe rolling his ankle pretty badly on a portage. He wrapped it up tight with some duct tape and we moved right along. With the many gorges, you can imagine that some of the portages are a little exposed. One portage early on the first day resulted in a near fall and a boat being dropped into the river from about 50 ft above the water. Fortunately, everything was intact and the boat was easily recovered.

The rapids slowly increased in difficulty, which gave us an opportunity to get used to having some water in the river. We paddled and portaged through a mile of class IV-V whitewater between the junk and the first gorge, the "Total Perspective Reality Vortex" as it is called. This stretch consisted of three medium length mellow slides that lead into three large drops (each greater than 20 feet) spread out in a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile long gorge. All of us, with the exception of Jed, sized up the first of the three big ones and hiked around. Jed, who ran this drop

last year, went back to the top and got in his boat to run it.

Once you start this drop, you are basically on a 70-degree slide and have little control over where you go. As Jed would say later, (his voice rising in pitch) "Oh Bro, you must be in the middle at the bottom." After about a 20' slide into a teacup with a big hole, you go over a 5' ledge into another stout hole. Succinctly put, Jed wasn't in the middle at the bottom. He was far left and he pitoned the teacup edge with great force which resulted in instant deceleration. He flowed out of it upside down into the next drop and side surfed for about 10 seconds before swimming out. His ankle was pretty f&*&ed up—not broken, but the ligaments were clearly not behaving normally.

By then we were four miles into the run. It would be a 10-hour hike out—for someone with two solid getaway sticks, that is. So now we had two hobbled paddlers, one of whom could put no weight whatsoever on his bad ankle. We managed to assist Jed through two more tough portages and a ferry crossing, covering the final 1/4 mile to camp in about 2 hours. Fortunately, one of the best campsites I have ever stayed at was waiting at the end of this gorge. This is where Jed had the pleasure of spending the next two days as we paddled out to arrange "transportation" for him. We left him with plenty of food (thanks Peter), firewood, pain relievers, and a river full of cool, drinkable water at his disposal. The remaining six of us headed out in the morning.




Day two took us first into a meandering valley in and out of sequoia groves and then into the second gorge. I only remember a couple of the many drops in this gorge. What I do recall is running pressure packed lines sandwiched between big portages. One drop began with four of the six in the group scouting a vertical 15 footer from an island in the middle of the river. The two of us on river right went in search of a reasonable portage in case no good line could be found. No "short" portage route was discovered, but a narrow line on the left side of the falls was.

There was an auto-boof flake on the right side of the left channel, where if you came off just right, you would land in a 2 1/2 foot wide spot between some boulders. At this point you wanted to get out of that landing zone really quickly and catch the eddy right behind those boulders. Jeff manned up and ran it first and had the line of the day. This could be any rapid of many on this run: tight lines without much margin for error. One by one we all pretty much nailed the line and continued downstream, portaging the huge rapid immediately below the boof.

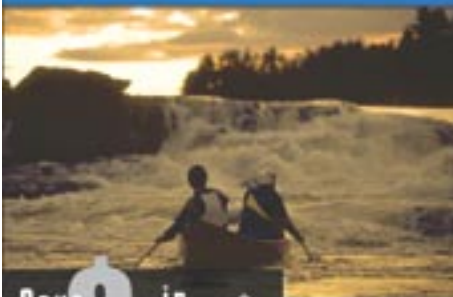
We completed the second gorge on day two and portaged gorges three and four in their entirety, due to several manky rapids in each. Both of these portages involved going up 100+ feet on river right over big granite shoulders. Despite all this portaging for us, we knew that every rapid save for one has been run before. We camped out that night around 6pm just below the large rapid that remains unrun (Gabe looked at it for awhile.....).

The sentiment of the two people on our trip who had paddled Fantasy before (Peter and Jed) was that it had been more runnable on their previous trips. Jed had seen the run at a higher flow, and Peter with less water. It seemed we found ourselves with a level that was just in between two optimal flows.

Day three began the earliest of all, in hopes of getting to the dam soon enough to get Jed out that night. This proved to be the most runnable stretch of river we had encountered yet. By now, we had lost more than 2000 feet in elevation and the landscape had changed in similar scope. The granite cliffs separated by large patches of manzanita gave way to pines and poison oak. Still though, there were huge granite peaks in all directions, 2000-3000 feet above us.



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We had only one portage in the first two hours of paddling. The drops were read and run for the most part and not terribly difficult. On several occasions, however, a follow-the-leader approach was necessary due to the steepness and length of the drops. In these rapids, one by one eddy hopping worked best. After an hour or so of no-portage warm up, we arrived at the run's namesake "Fantasy Falls."



These are two falls separated by a pool. The first is a 30+ ft high angle sloper, and the second a vertical 20 footer, both framed in by a massive granite dome on one side and the Mokelumne Tetons on the other. Everyone had good lines on both, which is to be expected since they are so straightforward. My skirt popped as I landed the top falls and my boat completely filled with water. Rated not a swim by the judges, I paddled my boat to the edge of the pool where I was assisted onto a granite ledge between the falls.

The Fantasy Falls fed us into the slide section of the run. This portion is highlighted by three large slides. All of us except Gabe

ran 1.5 slides. He ran all three expertly, as usual. The second slide occurred where the river was split into two white tongues by a massive flat granitic island. Each side had extremely tight lines where in at least one spot the water slammed into an overhanging part of the canyon wall in a way that said just one thing to most of us... "No." Not Gabe though.

He had to catch an eddy in the middle of the drop so that I could give him a signal when the log in the pool at the bottom had cleared the landing zone. As he came through the crux of the slide, he disappeared from view in a massive boil coming off the wall, only to come out upright and intact and missing the floating log at the bottom.

A twisting class IV rapid dropped us into the Salt Springs Reservoir, and 5 miles of flat water lay between us and the shuttle rig. One hour later our soggy gear was laid out drying in the California sunshine.

Epilogue

I spent a good hour on the phone with Amador, Calaveras, and Alpine's Sheriff dispatches as well as county fire. All were essentially clueless about the remote area where Jed was, despite the GPS coordinates I gave them. At first they wanted to send a ground team in to get him. I tried to explain that there were no trails, that it would take a minimum of 10 hours to reach him and that he was totally immobile. Finally they figured it out, and 4 hours after the phone call he was at a hospital in Auburn getting his ankle irradiated.



The punch line of this sick joke is...can you guess? Remember the helicopter pilot heroes of Bald Rock Canyon from two weeks ago? Yep, same flyboys.





What Lies Beneath

Mokelumne Flow Info Available Online

Although Fantasy Falls is tough to catch at the right flow, thanks to AW, flow information is now available for four great intermediate runs downstream.

by John Gangemi

American Whitewater is posting flow information for four whitewater runs on the Mokelumne River: the Class IV-V Devils Nose run; the Class IV Tiger Creek Run; the Class III Ponderosa Way run; and, the Class II Electra run. The information includes weekly forecasts for spill, real-time and historic flows (previous 7 days). The flow information can be accessed via American Whitewater's website: www.americanwhitewater.org. Click on the River Info button, California and Mokelumne. The flow information will be posted for the respective stream reaches. You can customize the American Whitewater homepage to display flow information for the Mokelumne. Flow information is also accessible via a toll free phone number: 1-877-708-8828.

American Whitewater fought hard to get public access to flow information in the new license. Our logic was simple and honest. Rivers belong to the public as part of the public trust. A federal hydropower license grants a utility to use a portion of that resource defined in the terms of the license. The Licensee then has a duty to provide flow information demonstrating that they are in compliance with the terms of the license to use the public trust resources. This real-time flow information should be available to all members of the public due to their inherent right to the public trust. Not only does this real-time flow information allow agencies and citizens to monitor compliance but it also provides the opportunity for the public to utilize the river reach based on prevailing flow conditions.

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Some Dos and Don'ts for Outfitting Your Creek Boat

by Clay Wright

So you got a fresh creek boat and Mish Michaels has painted your state dark green.... Some duct tape, some hip pads and your ready to go, right? Not really. With some extra time, glue, and effort you can make your creeker safer and more comfortable, and keep the bruises to a minimum even after that triple run down Bear.

Safety

A bulkhead is designed to fit the tallest possible paddler. There will therefore likely be a significant amount of room between the bulkhead and the toes of an average sized paddler. If there is enough space for your feet to slide under the bulkhead on impact, place the bulkhead where it fits you with river shoes on, then fill in the gap between it and your hull. By gluing foam 'spacers' that reach your hull on top and bottom, you'll keep the structure from sliding out of the way under pressure. Add a larger foam section over the top, and you'll soften the blow while keeping your butt in the seat.



Knees

Knee bruises are common in creek boating and can make paddling uncomfortable or impossible. The outside of your knees take the blow when you hit hard, so thigh grips are no help here. By padding the boat where your outer knees meet the sidewall, you will not only save your kneecaps but also take impact pressure off your ankles.



Seat

Sore back? Join the club. Just because you're not running 50-footers doesn't mean you aren't pounding your spine. Pad the seat to soften the blow. One thin strip may be all you can handle, but bouncing over rocks is hard on the butt and back. Adding 1/2" of foam to your seat is minimal, in my opinion. Your center of gravity may be raised, but you'll have more rib and elbow room and a soft landing on bouncy drops.



Shoulder-pad

Planning to portage? No matter what, you will end up carrying your creek boat and it is much heavier than your play boat. Give yourself a break and pad the cockpit rim where it balances on your shoulder.



Spray skirt

Got a great skirt? Hope so. My skirt never blows, but I still sand the outside rim on both sides, then put a thin coat of contact cement around the edges. The glue will stick to the sanded plastic, and grip the rubber/neoprene of your skirt far better than slick plastic.



Photo by Jed Weingarten

Basic instructions for gluing foam to a kayak

Spray-glue is for people who have plenty of extra hip pads on hand and access to free foam and an outfitting room between trips. In short, it's short-term and rarely holds up to hot sun or highway-speed travel. I prefer to use Wedgewood contact cement, which costs \$5-7 bucks at Wal-Mart.

Put the boat indoors for at least an hour if it's cold or damp outside. Dry, warm plastic takes glue best. Sand the area with rough-grit sandpaper, a serrated knife, or even a rock, if necessary. The textured surface won't allow the glue to peel like a slick plastic surface will. Rough the foam up with sandpaper as well, and put a first coat on as you do the boat. Wait until both surfaces are no longer tacky so you won't have to hold the two together for long. Press very hard when bonding the foam to the kayak for about one minute. Foam that has been spray-glued may still peel off when glued with contact cement 'cause...well, spray-glue sucks.



Extra Credit, or Shuttle Bunny Tricks of the Trade

Do give them money to buy beer. Don't suggest that running shuttle is shameful.

Do let them drink all they can while waiting for you at the take-out. Don't expect them to help load boats or drive on the way home.

AW's New Events Program for 2003

by Michael Phelan

Weather forecasters predict that the 2003 whitewater season could be one of the best in seven years. With water temperatures slowly on the rise in the Pacific Ocean, we are keeping our fingers crossed for a wet year in between warm, sunny days at events.

American Whitewater's leadership and membership support river events as a fundamental component of the organization. AW conducted a self-assessment in 2002 and decided to re-focus our event program to better support the organization's mission. Our new 2003 events strategy will focus on meeting four goals:

1. Events that are effective at increasing membership,
2. Events that focus the media and the public on significant conservation and access issues,
3. Events that motivate passive members to become stewards, fighting to protect and restore whitewater, and
4. Better serve likeminded groups who support American Whitewater in order to reach mutually beneficial goals.

In 2003, American Whitewater will not organize a competitive circuit, series, or tour. AW will focus its energy, instead, on river events that attract the broadest spectrum of the whitewater community, such as a new festival in California, an improved Deerfield River Festival and the continuation of

the biggest river festival in the country, the Gauley River Fest. These festivals will blend camaraderie, music, whitewater activities, and vendor marketplaces to create a celebration of a healthy river community and the outdoor lifestyle.

Feather River Festival
Twain, CA June 7-8

Deerfield River Festival
Charlemont, MA Aug 2-3

Gauley River Festival
Summersville, WV Sept 19-21

In addition to hosting the three American Whitewater River Festivals, AW will also be partnering with independent events that share AW's passion for protecting rivers and pledge to affirm the work of American Whitewater through a financial donation. In return for this pledge of support, AW will offer its communication tools and resources to enhance the event's success.

In 2002, there were many events that utilized American Whitewater's resources and made generous donations in return. Please help us in thanking these events and organizations for supporting AW in 2002.

Coosa River Whitewater Festival
French Broad River Festival
Russell Fork Rendezvous
National Paddling Film Festival
Potomac River Festival
Skyfest
Gore Canyon
Moose River Festival
Styrofoam Cup



Above: AW Volunteer Vicky Vline

Below: AW Volunteers working hard at the Tallulah

AW's communication tools and event organizer resources have become amazingly effective at promoting river events. Our resources now include the AW website www.americanwhitewater.org which receives 20,000 page views/day, the organization's electronic newsletter, AW BETA, that is distributed to 4,000 readers every month, and the infamous American Whitewater Journal, eagerly awaited by 14,000 readers bi-monthly. If you or your organization are interested in taking advantage of these communication tools to increase the boating public's awareness of your event, please feel free to contact us and discuss the possibility of a partnership. Interested organizations will need to sign an agreement with AW by March 1, 2003. It is our desire that this program be flexible, helping your event be as successful as possible.

In 2002, a record number of event organizers requested AW's support and presence at their events. Every one of those generous offers was a fantastic opportunity to spread the AW gospel. Unfortunately, limited time and money prevented us from being able to capitalize on many of those opportunities. In 2003, AW has made it a goal to have a presence at as many river events as possible. In order to achieve that goal we are looking for volunteer help. We have developed a new outreach initiative that focuses on using volunteers to create an AW presence at events all across the county. If you or someone you know is interested in attending an event on behalf of AW, to talk to paddlers about the importance of being a member and educating people about the issues facing their local rivers, please call us and we would love to talk to you about this exciting new program.





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Montana Meltdown!

The Ultimate Western Roadtrip

by Gordon Dalton

The dreaded “D”-word: D-R-O-U-G-H-T. A thought no kayaker likes to ponder for long. Talk of the east coast’s historically dry conditions was surfacing again and again last spring as my friends and I began to firm up plans for the annual summertime surfing safari. A summer creeking trip to Colorado has become a habit in recent years, and I spend all winter dreaming of runs like Lake Creek, Vallecito, and Crystal Gorge. None of my paddling partners have been spared the tales of my Rocky Mountain ramblings. Most of these same folks have also been subjected to endless piles of pictures taken on previous trips. I sometimes feel like a missionary spreading the Gospel of the Steeps. And this time several of “The Crew” had been converted. We had talked about it for months. Vacation and “sick” days had been saved up. Gear had been organized. Wives and girlfriends had been prepared (i.e., kissed up to). We were ready.

But where was the water? Colorado was suffering from its worst drought since the ‘70’s. Snotel and USGS websites showed more snow, and more water, the farther north in Colorado I looked.

The trail of snow kept leading that way, so I pointed my internet snooping north. Sure enough, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho all reported decent snowpack. Further examination of various websites showed that western Montana, in particular, was looking pretty wet. About this time something very interesting arrived in my mailbox. They say good things come in small packages and this little parcel was stamped, “Montana Surf.” “Sounds like my brand,” I thought as I tore open the paper. Inside was a sweet little guidebook with tons of beta on creeks and rivers in Montana, as well as some runs in neighboring states. The fire had been stoked.

The next weekend I showed the book to Josh and Harris after a beautiful day of West Virginia creekin’. We each perused the book with interest, but one page in particular seemed to get a lot of attention. It was a picture of a steep slide about 300 feet long



plummeting at obscene angles downward through a rock-lined mini gorge. In the background stood a snow covered peak. At the top the slide was maybe thirty feet wide, but near the bottom it narrowed to three or four feet across, forming the drop's namesake feature: "The Pinch." It was awe-inspiring. The home of The Pinch, Montana's Big Timber Creek, contains many other worthy drops, and has been featured in such videos as Twitch, Nurpu and a Dagger promo. "I might need a little warm-up before I hop on that," said Josh.

That Sunday night we all headed back home with thoughts of steep slides and snow-covered peaks in our head. Our plan was coming together, and although we didn't know it yet, things were about to get even better.

You wouldn't expect South Dakota to be much of a breeding ground for serious whitewater boaters. Corn and cold are what comes to mind when I think of that state (not that I think about South Dakota much). Maybe I've seen Fargo too many times but I can't help imagining the Dakotas as a cold, flat wasteland full of Marge Gundersons...and corn.

Somehow though, two die-hard creekers named Dan Crain and Todd Andrews exist in the town of Spearfish on the western edge of South Dakota. Dan even owns a kayak store in nearby Rapid City. Somehow these guys manage to hold on to solid boating skills through the long, cold Dakota winter and then emerge again in the spring like bad-ass butterflies ready to go big. After meeting Dan and Todd last year I learned that Spearfish isn't far from the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming. I had never really thought of the Bighorns as a boating destination but Todd and Dan assured me there was "prime creekin' in them hills."

I don't know what most people do all winter in the Midwest, but Dan and Todd seem to occupy themselves scouting and "cleaning out" new creek runs in the Bighorns. As Josh, Harris, and I dreamed of dropping vert. in the shadows of the Rockies, Dan and Todd must have been out straddling some steep frozen trickle sawing frozen logs out of a remote Bighorn creekbed. Hearty folks, those Dakotans.

In a phone conversation, Dan revealed that winter had been kind to the Bighorns. We would be getting to Dan's house right as the melt in the Bighorns was ready for paddling. To top it off, Dan guessed we might

catch one of several as-yet-unrun creeks in the area. Soon enough it was almost time to leave.

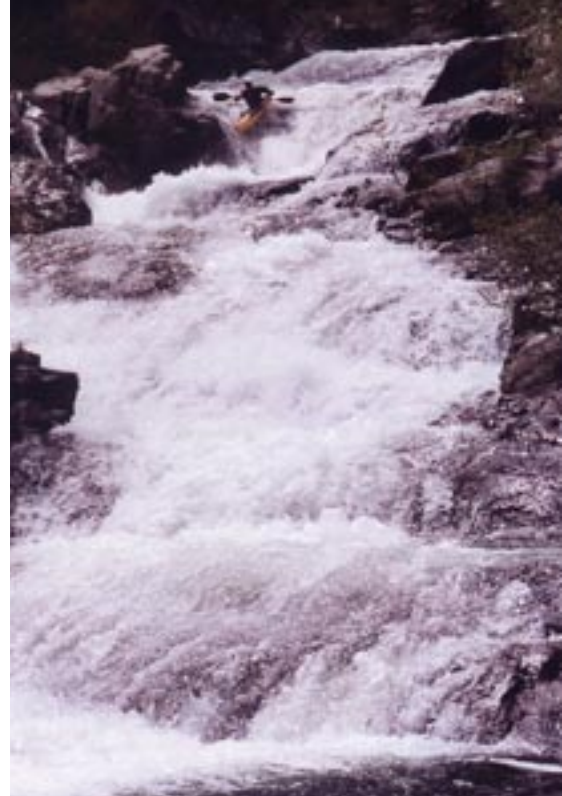
Which is when I saw the hole in my kayak....

We had planned to leave early on a June morning. Anticipating an early wake-up I went out to tie the boats onto my truck the evening before departure. I threw the playboat in the back of the Toyota pickup and put the creeker on top. As I was lashing it down I saw it—a 3" long crack on the bottom of the hull. I looked closer and saw that it didn't appear to penetrate all the way through the plastic, but I knew though that it would probably be huge after one or two rocky creek runs. A few quick calls to my local dealer and to the boat manufacturer assured me that I would have a new hull within a few days. But we were set to leave the next day. Another call to Dan saved the day. He had a boat that I could borrow if mine did bust. I began breathing again—the game was on.

Day One

On a hot, sunny June morning I pulled up to Josh's place and we groggily stuffed bags of gear and food in the back of my truck, then strapped his boats to the rack. Two creekers, two playboats, three paddles, coolers (filled with bottles and cans, and I don't mean Red Bull), CD's, sleeping bags and some duct tape—thankfully we didn't forget the duct tape. By noon we were west of Charleston, WV—we were "leaving the shire." At 4pm the next day we pulled up in front of Dan's house in Spearfish. It felt like home pulling up to a yard full of kayaks.

After a few beers on the porch, Dan took us inside and showed us some photos of the creeks he had scouted. It was hard to make out much of the creek in some shots since they were all taken from the rim of some high, sheer canyon. It was clear that these creeks would be a bit more "committing" than most eastern runs. Dan hit a few buttons on the computer at his desk. A topographic map came up on the screen and Dan clicked the mouse. A little cursor automatically traced a route along the map on the screen, following a curvy blue line that cut like mad through contour lines. A gradient profile of the creek popped up next to the map. "That's Shell Creek Canyon," Dan said. "Most of these runs are 300 to 400 feet per mile." I looked closer at the map. There was serious steepness going on



Above: Gordon Dalton runs Shakedown Street, Big Timber Creek
Photo by Jeremy Laucks

Opposite: Jeremy Laucks runs Big Timber Falls
Photo by Gordon Dalton

around this run. "I think we can climb into the canyon here," Dan continued. "And we'd need to get out at this steep gully because the falls is down in there." Apparently, Shell creek has a couple of 40-footers that land on solid rock. Harris arrived and, joined by Todd Andrews, we hit a local bar and grill for dinner.

Day Two

At some ungodly hour the next morning we were up and at 'em again. Dan is a coffee connoisseur so we all got a caffeine boost and a warm-up to protect against the chilly morning. As we shot west down Interstate 90 the wind must have been blowing 30 miles an hour. We stopped only briefly to glimpse Devil's Tower to the north.

A few hours later we crossed Clear Creek in Buffalo, WY. Todd hopped out of his rig and looked meaningfully at some stream gauge that I never even saw. "Too low," he said before we sped off again. We stopped for some last minute groceries and began switchbacking up into an absolutely beautiful Bighorn pass. Todd's eight-cylinder quickly outdistanced my V6; but my pride was saved by Harris's 4-cylinder truck as he faded far into my rearview mirror. As we made yet another switchback I spotted a moose not far off the road in a stand of

alders. Wildflowers covered the ground wherever the Wyoming sun could find its way through the conifers.

A half-hour later we crossed Powder River Pass and looked down Tensleep Canyon from the head of the gorge. Tensleep is a striking canyon with sheer limestone walls and spotty high desert vegetation. Grassy rolling mini-hills within the canyon partially obscured our view of the creek's course, but we could tell it was steep enough. We could also tell it was plenty high! Todd scrambled down to yet another invisible-to-anyone-whose-not-from-this-time-zone stream gauge. It became clear that Tensleep was more than a little too high this day.

Secretly I was a little relieved to hear that this muddy, no-eddies, barnstormer was not to be our warm-up run. It was clearly cranking. Besides, if this thing was too high then we must have hit the window of flow right on. We were all still psyched as we knew we had plenty of other options for the day. We motored on, down the canyon, stealing glimpses of Tensleep Creek from high above. Next stop, Paint Rock Creek. This time, like Goldilocks on her third bowl of porridge, we found one that was "just right." A visual inspection of the creek several miles below our intended run revealed that we would get wet today. "Paint Rock is IN."

Paint Rock is surrounded by private property, flowing through a large working ranch. A stop at the ranch office netted us



permission to cross the land we needed to access the creek at put-in and take-out. As we drove shuttle the whistled tune from some Clint Eastwood cowboy flick played in my head, alternating with Kid Rock's "Cowboy."

Our giddiness at finally being on our way to the first run of the trip—along with our travel-weary minds—was overshadowing the logistical realities of the coming decent. Someone noted the time (it was now almost 2 o'clock in the afternoon), and asked about the length of the run.

"11 or 12 miles," said Dan. I made eye-contact with Harris. That seemed a little longer than what I might expect for a steep creek that averages 223 fpm. We would later learn that Paintrock has three miles over 300 fpm, and one mile at 404 fpm! The "flat-test" mile of the run is still well over 100 fpm. For all of you east-coasters, in terms of gradient, Paintrock is like 7 miles of Upper Yough with 2 North Fork Blackwaters, plus a couple Bull Run's, thrown in at random intervals. Oh yeah, we were making a 3rd decent, so no one really knew the lines—any of them. One more thing: no drop was over 10 feet either so forget flat water—forget eddies, even. Then there's the "Wood Factor." And it was now 2:30 in the afternoon and we still had a long shuttle to run. Not to mention the 2 mile hike-in...I decided to pack my headlamp.

After a long, dusty, and beautiful shuttle we parked the rigs and started walking. At least it was downhill and grassy enough for dragging boats.

We put on below a giant cascade on the North Fork of Paintrock and started imme-

diately into a long, shallow boulder garden. Somewhere within this first quarter-mile of whitewater I heard a sharp "Crack"—sharper than the usual bonks and bangs of a kayak bumping over solid rock. Instantly I knew my boat was done for. I began to feel snowmelt tickle the backs of my feet and legs, but I didn't get out. Not that I could have stopped if I'd really needed to; Paintrock rolled on and on and on, down the valley, around bends and into blind boulder piles. Not even a half-mile into the first run of the summer safari and already my boat was screwed! Eleven miles to go, this was just the beginning.

The first mile of "P-rock" is not the steepest, but it's right up there so we scouted when things got "too blind." At each scouting stop I engaged in a ritual that became very familiar that day: 1) wallow to shore with half-sunk boat, 2) get out and open drainplug, 3) drain boat and look at ever-widening crack, 4) curse and put drain plug back in, 5) go look at the next drop (I must survive before I can rest again). Somewhere in the blur of the day's events I neglected to follow step 4. At the following stop I noticed the drain plug had disappeared, another material sacrifice to the all mighty P-rock. Now missing a drainplug and sporting a 3" long crack under my boat I came to one of the baddest rapids of the day: a long twisting rock garden with several 5-foot boofs leading into a series of holes and sieves. This rapid had not been run on the earlier trips but today was the day. Harris and Todd sent great lines and I followed behind in my creeker/squirt boat, sloshing into the final small bank eddy before a portage. Making the eddy in an intact boat was not a guaranteed deal, but making it in a half-full (is that optimistic?) creeker was indeed a sketchy

endeavor—after that I took a few minutes to fashion a “permanent” drain plug out of some mini-cell foam and duct tape which I had wrapped around the shaft of my paddle weeks before. Drain plug secured (kind of) I desperately tried to close the widening hole under my boat. Strands of duct tape, backed by resin from a riverbank pine tree were the best I could do.

Soon, back in the maelstrom of Paintrock’s continuous and pushy flow, I heard a snap over the white noise of the rapids and looked back. In the second or two that I had to look behind me all I could see was Josh barely bracing himself upright after obviously rolling. Up now, but fighting to stay in control of the boat, Josh looked a little... concerned. I looked back downstream and scrambled into a small ½-boat eddy and watched Josh go past. Like those “What’s Wrong With This Picture” comics you see as a kid, I noticed something was missing from Josh’s picture. Half of the blade on his paddle was hanging on by a few carbon threads. We got to shore and surveyed the damage. The duct tape made another appearance. With 2 finger-sized twigs as a splint, we used up the remaining duct tape in an attempt to salvage Josh’s paddle. Several of us carried break-downs, but we did not want to leave Josh’s expensive and salvageable stick down in this remote canyon. There would be no practical way to carry the paddle without actually using it. As we pushed off from shore again I could not help but hum The Flintstones theme song: Josh had a paddle held together with sticks, and I had a kayak caulked with pine tar. Team Bedrock baby!

We never made it to Bedrock. The taped-up AT was no good. It lasted maybe 100 yards before we had to stop and break out the breakdown. Josh stabbed the AT shaft into the mud by the river, like he was planting a flag on the moon, and we hurried to catch up to the others.

Later, after all 5 of us scrambled for a one-boat bank eddy above a gnarly, huge, river-wide/river-level tree we watched the sun slip serenely below the horizon and realized it was almost dark. Harris, Josh, and I opted to use the remaining daylight to get as close to the take-out as we could via the trail on river-right. Dan and Todd opted to stay on the river. They had run the creek once before and expected things to “mellow out” a bit as they neared the take-out (the creek does ease down to 150 fpm in the last mile).

Mentally-fried, physically-done and “jet-lagged” from our cross country cannonball, the Virginia crew shouldered our boats and paddles (or what remained of them) and trudged down the trail along the river-right. Soon, under the light of our headlamps, we crossed the final cattle grate and were greeted by Dan and Todd who had made it to river’s end not long after dark. Wearily, we loaded boats and gear and headed on to our next adventure: sleep, much deserved sleep. Our adventure had definitely begun.

Day Three

I’m not ashamed to say that Day Three was a rest day. Actually only Harris rested. While he snoozed in the sunshine of our mountain meadow campsite, high in the Bighorns, I removed the seat from my creek boat and tried plastic welding the spacious groove on the hull (where I found not one, but 2, cracks). Dan and Todd went 4-wheeling down toward Main Paintrock (always scouting), and Josh set off on foot down North Paintrock looking for the remains of his AT stick.

Day Four

On our fourth day, the noontime sun found us at Shell Creek, upstream of Shell, Wyoming. Shell Creek Canyon is a deep, sheer gouge cut into the Bighorns by millions of years of erosion. The colorful layers of rock exposed by Shell Creek’s constant flow have created a beautiful and harsh desert canyon with a sweet little whitewater gem at the bottom. The “usual” Shell Creek run is 2.5 miles with a gradient of around 250 fpm. Upstream from this lies Shell Canyon proper with a gradient much greater than 250!

Access is a strong limiting factor in Upper Shell. The canyon walls are completely sheer and well over 200 feet high in places. Putting in above the canyon would force one to run one of Shell’s two huge waterfalls. The 2nd waterfall drops maybe 75 feet onto rocks, with an overhanging wall intersecting the flow right about where your head would be—if you decided to run it. The section below the falls is good to go though, so we set our sights on that.

After a rest day, we were tanned, relaxed, and ready. Our “First D” section would be about one mile of 240 fpm boulder fields made from house-sized stones cleaved



Above: Jeremy Laucks on Big Timber Creek
Photo by Gordon Dalton

Opposite Right: Dan Crain hiking into Paintrock Creek, WY
Photo by Gordon Dalton

Opposite Left: Gordon Dalton entering “The Pinch”, Big Timber Creek
Photo by Jeremy Laucks

from the canyon walls. Dan had scoped out access. He pointed out a vertical, narrow draw leading downward from the road. Steep and paved with loose shale, the draw looked dubious. Dan was confident though, so we excitedly gathered our gear and shouldered the boats. Harris was particularly stoked, and needed a reminder to take his paddle with him down the trail.

After switchbacking down a near-vertical dust and scree wash we came to a flat grassy bench where we caught our breath and unclipped the tethers we had attached between the kayaks and ourselves in case of a slip. Dropping a boat on the side of the canyon would have meant quite possibly losing it forever. Dodging small cacti, we made it relatively easily to the canyon floor.

Now, Harris is an excellent paddler, and he might have been able to negotiate Shell Creek that day without a paddle if he had forgotten that. But he hadn’t forgotten his paddle—Dan had reminded him of that while we were still at the top—instead Harris had forgotten his SKIRT. Developed later, my photographs clearly show an ecstatic Harris, beaming from ear to ear, descending the “trail” to Shell Creek.

Helmet on head, boat on shoulder, paddle in hand...no skirt in sight.

"Oh man!" was Harris's comment on the situation at riverside as we prepared to hit the river. His skirt was in the truck—at the take-out.

Harris made excellent time back up the canyon to Todd's vehicle, drove down the road, got his skirt and was back to the river before we got bored enough to leave him. Apparently even an encounter with a rattlesnake somewhere on the trail didn't slow him down.

Shell went off without a hitch. We took turns alternating the lead and performing the occasional scout. I was feeling good in the spare boat Dan had been good enough to loan me. Overall Shell was much more mellow than Paintrock, although it did hide a few limestone undercuts. We were on the "main" Shell run in no time, and then back to our take-out at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant well before dark.

Day Five

Heartened by our "First-D" success on Shell, The Crew headed for MONTANA! By unanimous decision we headed straight for Big Timber. A big paddling trip like this can be shaped by one run that you want to do so bad it almost becomes the barometer by which the whole endeavor is judged. The photos in Montana Surf, and the clip I'd seen in Twitch sealed the deal for me. We had to run Big-T!

Big Timber flows out of the Crazy Mountains in south-central Montana. The Crazies are a sight to see on their own. Like Pig-Pen

in the Peanuts cartoons, the Crazies had their own personal storm cloud overhead while the surrounding plains were cloudless and sunny. The excitement level grew as we cruised up the long dirt road that leads into the Crazies, even though our sunny day was turning into a cloudy afternoon the closer we got to the creek. The level looked right (i.e., barely running) and we had plenty of time before dark. We opened the gate to Big Timber Canyon as a few snowflakes fell. By the time we parked the trucks near the take-out it was really snowing and a dusting coated the ground. We walked up the hiking trail and were immediately confronted with Big Timber Falls, a large multi-stepped behemoth with a twelve-foot ledge drop above an angular rock island cutting the flow into two distinct channels immediately above a thirty-foot waterfall. Impressed, we continued upwards. Soon we were post-holing our way through 3 feet of wet snow. We finally managed to find and scout The Pinch, that mythical slide which had been a big part of the motivation for the trip. We had reached Big Timber! And we were soaked and nearly frozen. The thought of post-holing our way even farther up the creek with boats on our shoulders quickly neutralized our motivation. We headed back down to the trucks to set-up camp. We knew Big Timber would have to wait till tomorrow....

Harris is the one guy you can always count on to be motivated for ANY run in ANY conditions. This day was no exception, and as the rest of us rigged tarps, popped tops on beers, and started a fire in the fire ring, Harris continued to cajole us into making an afternoon run. "The snow will be melting." "The level is perfect." "Lots of time left." We were getting pretty settled in though, and I wondered if anyone would fall prey

to Harris's enthusiasm. Even though we had already settled into the Afternoon Party Mode for the day, I vowed that if anyone went up that trail with a boat I'd be going with him. Gathered around the fire after setting up camp, with beers in hand, the conversation lulled for a moment.

Harris broke the brief silence, "Alright, let's go up."

Todd, Harris, and I slowly began getting gear together as Josh and Dan sat in their camp chairs, shaking their heads as if to say, "I don't believe they're really going to do this NOW." And indeed there was something surreal going on as the three of us headed up the still-snowy trail, past the roar of Big Timber Falls, into the soft early evening light.

Our plan was to only go up as far as the Pinch, and put-in below to avoid the deepest snow higher up the trail. As we staggered to a stop near the bottom of The Pinch, Harris smiled and asked between pants, "Anyone, going, to...Pinch one?"

Heaving from the steep hike and the altitude, I found myself slowly gasping, "I, think, I...might." That must have been all the encouragement Todd needed because there was no delay in his response, "Sweet Gordon! We're doing The Pinch! I'm stoked."

Todd and I headed farther up the trail toward Tripple Dipple, the 3-step sequence that leads into The Pinch while Harris fought his way through some scrub pines to set safety below The Pinch's constriction and the small eddy that separates Pinch from the sizable slide rapid just below. Todd and I set our boats down on a small rock shelf above the gargantuan Pinch slide. Todd readied his video camera and I humbly surveyed the big slide one more time.

At the top, The Pinch narrows down to 15 feet between two rock walls, then quickly opens up to maybe thirty feet wide as it drops steeply down 75 feet before narrowing again dramatically near the bottom to a Pinch of maybe 4 feet wide! At this point the creek's entire volume is compressed through this small orifice before dropping a final 30 feet or so into a quickly moving pool with a small eddy on the left. It didn't take much imagination to think of what would happen should a boat be sideways or less-than-straight when hitting the Pinch. Satisfied with my line I trudged back to the





Above: Gordon in "The Pinch", Big Timber Creek
Photo by Jeremy Laucks

Opposite: Josh Sandage on Big Timber Creek
Photo by Jeremy Laucks

top and stood over my boat briefly, looking across the horizon line to see if Harris was in place.

From my perspective at the top of The Pinch I could see only Harris's head and shoulders where he stood near the bottom. Harris held both hands over his head like a referee signaling a touchdown. This was to indicate the constriction and how much room there would be for me to make it through. Next Harris pointed at himself. Then, down low at waist level he gave the universal hand-waving-over-hand sign for "No Way!" like an umpire saying, "safe." The only problem: from my vantage point I could not see Harris give the last sign, the "no way" sign. Harris' intended message for me was, "Way small constriction. If it were me...No Way." Seeing only the first two signs, the message I GOT was, "Constriction. Me." In other words, "Hell yes, I would run that Pinch!" I nodded and threw a thumbs up. Harris nodded. We were each sure that the sign-language conversation had been a successful and informative exchange. Harris's (misinterpreted) signaling was, to me, the last bit of confidence boost I needed as I shoved off into the shallow, fast water at the head of the slide.

Trying to stay right at the top, I quickly realized how steep the huge slide is. Bouncing high and hard in the borrowed red boat, my view of the rapid consisted mainly of the

bow of the kayak and views of the sky as I bounced high, alternating with ever-closer glimpses of The Pinch rushing up at me from the bottom: sky, bow, pinch...Sky, Bow, Pinch...SKY, BOW, PINch...SKY, BOW, PINCH...SKY, BOW, PINCH!!!!!!

And then I was jetting through the Pinch along with the creek's volume of snowmelt, blinded by spray (and nerves?), sliding to a stop in the small eddy at the bottom. Harris smiled. I breathed. I turned around a pumped my fist in the air. I gave the thumbs up to Todd. Good to go!

Todd had an excellent line as well. He got turned somewhat sideways at the very top but kept his cool and quickly corrected the boat's orientation, completing the massive slide with a deft wrist-flick eddy turn at the bottom.

With that kind of intro, I knew it would be a good run. We boofed and slid our way through the next drop, and we all beat house odds at The Gambler, a slide into a sticky hole. We zipped down through the remaining slides, boofs, and boulder drops looking down to the start of the Falls. Not wanting to push our luck in the waning light we skipped the falls—although I was torn about the decision and knew I would be back to run the falls another day—and put in at Shakedown. Although it is the last big drop of the run, and not much is made of it in books and video, Shakedown may be the technically hardest drop on Big Timber. A large pine log blocked the middle of Shakedown so we slid in below the log and ran the last half of the drop. Secretly I was a little glad the log was there since it meant we couldn't run the manky, undercut and sticky-hole-ridden gnarr above. We paddled the remaining couple hundred yards to our riverside camp spot. The whole surreal semi-epic experience had taken only 3 hours, including the hike-up. Dan and Josh were surprised to see us back so soon, and we made sure to repeatedly show them Todd's footage of the run so that they would know what they had missed. More than one Moose Drool Ale was raised in honor of "Big T" that night.

Editor's Note: Don't forget to check out the rest of the action in American Whitewater's May/June edition, as Gordon's tour of western steep-creeks continues...

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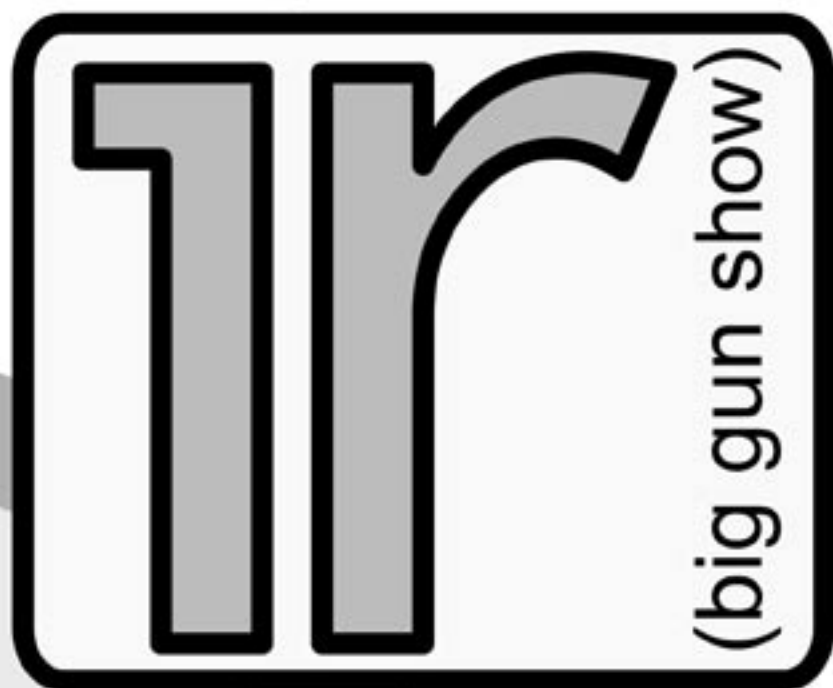
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Yellowstone Liberation Army Speaks:

Montana guidebook favors inspiration over detail as it charts a new line through river non-fiction

by David Madison

The writing started in a cabin at the north end of Bozeman. A friend was going to Chile, so Nick Turner and Matt Wilson had a place to stay. For two months, they let the river stories pour out. A laptop ticked away, spinning recollections into stunning accounts of paddling the most difficult whitewater in Montana. Turner and Wilson's first book, *Montana Surf*, pools the evidence of these adventures.

They've traveled the world boating with a group of friends from Park City, Utah, where their mutual obsession was nurtured by Lars Holbeck and Chuck Stanley, authors of the classic *Best Whitewater In California*. "That book is like the Bible," says Turner, 25. "That's what we read when we went on our first big trip." From the granite slabs of the Sierras, Turner, Wilson and Co. (a group self-nick-named "The New Riders of the Perfect Wave") have kayaked the planet's steepest whitewater. They've appeared in and produced paddling videos for the ski film outfit Teton Gravity Research in Jackson, Wyo.

And, if reports in *Montana Surf* are to be believed, the authors have received communiqués from a group calling itself the "Yellowstone Liberation Army." The inside joke begins with an explanation about how this group, YLA, kayaked the Yellowstone River in Yellowstone National Park—something that's prohibited by the Park Service. "The following description was delivered in an unmarked envelope," report Turner and Wilson in *Montana Surf*, before describing the illegal YLA float. The Yellowstone ban on whitewater boating is an old controversy, and the views offered in *Montana Surf* clearly try to reinvigorate the debate. Especially now, as the Park Service continues to increase the number of snowmobiles allowed in Yellowstone.

The YLA-related content earned Turner a call from someone describing himself as an investigator for the Park Service. He wanted to know who was behind statements like this, which appear in *Montana Surf*: "[The Park Service's] stance on the issue is firm and unchanging. So in respect to the park we are only left with one alternative—poach that s*%t."

The poaching goes on for eight interesting pages, skillfully designed by artist Russ Fry, who parts with the conventions of guidebooks past. All the important stats are there, in addition to something called a sweet-meter. Big Timber Creek in the Crazy Mountains gets five stars on the sweet-meter as it bounces down a gradient of 720 ft./mile. In one photo, boater Ben Selznick is hitting top speed on his way into the fabled "Pinch Slide." "Man, you're nuking when you come through there," says Turner, who advises paddlers to make sure "your boat is either forwards or backwards as you enter the Pinch—not sideways!" That's among the more explicit warnings in a book that profiles 63 of the best stretches of whitewater in Montana.

Noted climber Yvon Chouinard adds his amusing story about making the first successful kayak descent of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone in the Bear Tooths. There are no photos from Chouinard's trip, but more than most guidebooks, *Montana Surf* pays extra attention to graphic detail. In the full-color center spread, the paddlers appear finessing the waterfalls of every major drainage in the state. Turner pulls off a spectacularly photogenic move on Big Timber Falls, falling over a sheer lip and perfectly into frame.

The boating is serious in *Montana Surf*, but the cream puff, cowgirl graphics and photos of a grizzly bear Turner says is named Koko and trained for the movies, give the book some cornball comic relief. The laughs are welcomed breaks from certain photos that seem to celebrate the differences between a class V and a class V+ rapid. In one shot there's a boat with no paddler. Just to the right, there's a color close-up of a bloody head wound. On the same page, readers see a severely dented boat and someone trapped in a keeper hole. There is no caption to explain the locations of the head wound or the keeper hole. *Montana Surf*,

as the authors try to explain in their disclaimer, is a guidebook, but not necessarily a document of record. "The authors of this book may have descriptions that are completely wrong," states the disclaimer.

Turner thinks *Montana Surf* works best as a catalyst, something to motivate capable boaters. "It's to get you stoked, like people can keep in their bathroom," says Turner.

"We didn't really hit the safety stuff

real big. Most people give the big speech at the

front. We don't want to give the big speech."

Montana Surf does stress the need for good throw bag skills and CPR training. The rest they leave up to the individual paddler, who ultimately has to decide if life-threatening whitewater is their game.

Many can't resist, including Turner's brother Lucas. Turner dedicates the book to Lucas, who died boating in 1998. The accident happened in Jacobs Ladder, a V+ drop on the North Fork of the

Payette in Idaho. It was there, reads the poem dedicated to Lucas, that "he was playing with the river, and while he was playing his movements and thoughts mirrored the movements and thoughts of the river so closely that he became the river."

Those behind *Montana Surf* have, through books and videos, found a way to create a living that mirrors a life consumed by kayaking. This summer, while working on another TGR project, Turner, Wilson and the "New Riders of the Perfect Wave" hope to boat in Labrador, Kyrgyzstan and Russia.

Collaboration with the YLA on these trips is not expected.

Editor's Note: David Madison is a journalist based in Montana's Flathead Valley.

Wilson Creek

by Barbara Hall

I have a thing for Wilson Creek Gorge. First I painted it, then I swam it, then I kayaked it. I have even scuba dived in it. That which does not kill us...you know.

I first came to Wilson Creek as an artist. I stepped across it high on Grandfather Mountain. I searched for and found it again at a sharp elbow in the Edgemont Road farther down from the Blue Ridge Parkway, but still on Grandfather's shoulders. Its bright water gurgled and splashed into reflecting pools made green by the canopy of hardwoods, which choked out the direct sun as Wilson Creek slipped off the mountain. I painted that day until the light was gone and later tried to hike with the stream, but its tight canyon rejected me.

Weeks passed before I followed Edgemont Road down the mile-high mountain on the bent and folded road looking for another view of Wilson Creek. At Edgemont I saw a flat river playing through a meadow, somewhat drained of that risky character. It polished round river rocks across the road from the Coffee's General Store. Lost Cove Creek joins Wilson Creek at Edgemont, doubling its size before leaving town.

I continued along Wilson with power lines and modest recreational homes—some converted school buses. A few miles down the road, a cluster of houses flanked the Walker's General store at Walnut Bottoms. Soon the mountains pinched away the houses, and the creek regained some of its playful character (Class I-II water) sliding around larger boulders and filling the occasional deep pool.

I passed through Mortimer where floods in 1916 and 1940 washed a thousand houses from the landscape and took the textile mill away along with the railroad, and the Ritter's logging camp. Modern Mortimer is

a Ranger station, a primitive campground, a little store and a few homes.

I turned right at the store and crossed to the other side of Wilson Creek, which now hurried toward adolescence. After passing a sturdy bridge at Adako, and a rowdy roadside campground, the road steepened and the creek fell away, cradled by pink granite walls. My heart leapt. It must have been early or late in the season, because I don't remember cars and other people at the overlooks. At several points I took the wooden stairs and pathways down to the pristine, clear-water river playing in a pink granite gorge. It was heaven on earth.

I'd never seen such an organized river. It carved its bed through solid rock, falling into exceptionally clear, deep pools only to return quickly to ankle deep water before plunging again, or sluicing, sliding or cutting through big granite steps. Here Wilson Creek is a storybook of waterfalls and whitewater rapids. And at the end of the two-and-a-half-mile gorge, every bit of sand that washed through the gorge fell over the last vestige of pink granite, and landed at Brown Mountain Beach, my new vacation location.

If Disney had created a river, it would have been Wilson Creek Gorge. A Class IV river, 10-50 feet wide, with notable waterfalls named Ten Foot, Boatbuster, Triple Drop, and Razorback. Wilson Creek falls nearly 200 feet in 2.2 miles, according to *Appalachian Whitewater: The Southern States*, and has hazards that include strainers, pinning spots and numerous hydraulics. Its beauty rating is excellent, and the road through the gorge makes rescue easier although difficult in spots due to the high, granite and boulder strewn walls.

I didn't know any of that when, nearing 50 years-of-age, I bought my entry-level whitewater kayak, a white Swiftly, at a bi-



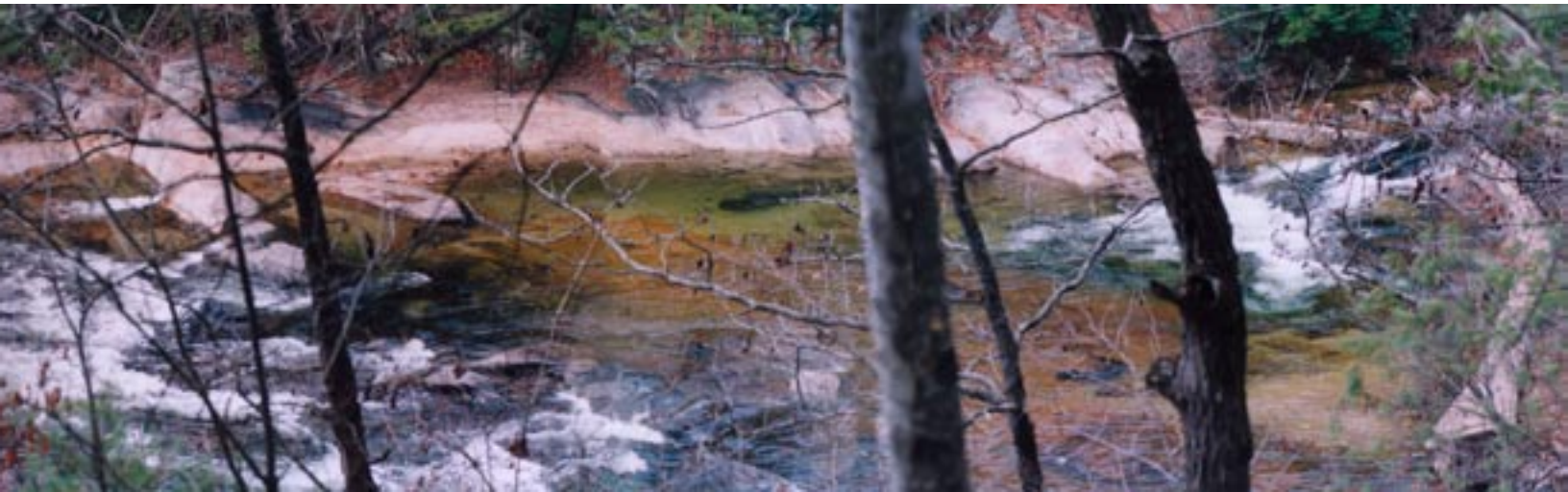
cycle shop in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I didn't buy any books, just the flimsy splash skirt that came with it, a PDF and a paddle. I knew one thing only—that whitewater kayaks go in whitewater. I had been swimming and painting in the gorge for three years. I tested Snoopy in the class I-II whitewater at the edge of Brown Mountain beach. What fun!!! I sat up straight then lollopped through the purge in the little dam upriver, and paddled the following rapids. Then I went down river past the length of the campground with ease and excitement. I played with confidence.

With Swiftly in hand I convinced one of the campground owners to drop me off near the beginning of the gorge, saying I would portage around the difficult falls, paddle the smooth water and try the rest. Greg Siddons and his brother Jeff looked at me strangely and told me of the many drownings, but I appeared to be sane and they knew I wasn't reckless...really.

I could see them softening.

"Don't expect me back for four hours," I said casually. "I plan to take my time and play." After warning me of the dangers again, Greg Siddons drove me to Lady in the Rock and dropped me off, returning with my truck to the campground.

I could feel the love of the river in the sunshine. I poured myself into the Swiftly and Wilson Creek Gorge. With a happy heart, I tackled a few of the ledges. I waved at people picnicking on the banks and with encouragement from an "expert," I followed some tubers into a series of rapids, slides



and a drop. On the drop my Swiftly nosed over, into and under water. "Kayaks aren't supposed to do that, are they?" I wondered. I swam the kayak to the side, dumped the 60 or so gallons out and climbed back in. I tackled a few more drops, had a few more swims, and a few more loads to dump. I portaged around the boulder gardens and anything that sounded bad up ahead. I lifted and pulled my wet boat with me (later on, I learned about the little cork in the end that would let me drain the water out). The sun rose high, I breathed heavier and the road lifted higher up the canyon wall. People waved. It was beautiful, the rocks and water were nearly intoxicating when I was alone with the granite cliffs and the boulder—pines edged the sky high above.

I floated past a couple of swimmers resting on a broad sloping edge and asked if the water was difficult ahead, since the canyon seemed to be pinching. They said no, nothing dramatic.

I paddled forward in a beautifully dramatic little canyon and rounded the bend to a distant thunder. Hmmm. I rounded another bend and above a knife-edge of reflection I saw...the tops of trees—the tops of trees??

I back paddled. I back paddled with gusto. I turned and ran-paddled back to the picnickers who pulled Swiftly and me onto their slanted rock in the beautiful-little-pinch-gorge. Holy tomolee. I think my timbers shivered.

Never, never trust a non-kayaker!

From somewhere a twelve or thirteen year-old boy appeared and helped me pull Swiftly over the huge boulders that now stood like soldiers in my path. Huffing and puffing I caught my first riverside glimpse of Boat-buster where the whole river squeezes through a five-foot gap—with gusto! Attached to the end of the drop in the boulder garden is Thunderhole, a giant slide into a thundering hydraulic. My portage wasn't so much a portage, as it was a vertical hike and a drag with a boat.

The boy stayed with me, a while longer and offered to swim my kayak to other points down stream for me. What did he know...I was already doing that. I was falling over on most every drop I attempted. He was having a blast.

"Don't you think your parents are beginning to worry about you?" I asked breathily.

"No," he said, "I do this all the time."

Good boy. I wanted to pat his head.

I don't remember much of the details of the rest of that day—all the portages, my falling on the drops, the many times I struggled to empty Swiftly on the beautiful-pink-granite-slanting-rocks. I just remember that further down the river, I thought "Why even get in the boat, it would be easier just to hang on and follow it through the rapids." So that's what I did until I hit the shallows where bottom rocks thudded into my stomach and ribs as I hugged the back end of not-so-Swifty.

That was it. The river won. I pulled my Swiftly up onto the beautiful-pink-granite-slab-rocks and began my 60 foot vertical climb out of Wilson Creek Gorge. I pulled me onto the dry dusty road above and stood. A hundred yards up the road a dutiful, dusty sign told me I was leaving Pisgah Forest. "That may be," I thought, "if I can walk that far." Across from it, a chain link fence surrounded Brown Mountain Beach Campground. Moan, I'd quit only couple of hundred yards from the end, seven-and-a-half hours after it all began.

I gingerly walked into Gladys and Walter's campground store and asked for a ride to my campsite. They offered no I-told-you-so's. They helped me onto a golf cart and drove me to my vacation home. I paid a guy to go get my Swiftly.

I must face reality. I am a Class IV-hearted kayaker in a Class II, maybe Class III body.

At work the next day, at Fort Bragg, I reported-in with my sprung body, and went home sick, very sick. I earned a point or two of respect from the Green Berets I worked for, but I also earned a weekend goodbye from Command Sergeant Major that included the admonishment "Don't go kayaking!"

I smiled a sly, 50-year-old-bent-bodied, in-your-hat smile.

This was not an end, this was a beginning.

In 2000, I had a great soldier assistant from 19th Special Forces Group, Mark Boyer, who had never kayaked but was game for the trip. We did a modest portion of Wilson Creek Gorge, and dived in it too—in April—in 53-degree water. My lips were numb. And so was Mark in an ill-fitting, rented neoprene suit.



Above: Kayakers in Wilson Creek Gorge

Opposite Top: Photo from the flood of 1940

Opposite Bottom: Wilson Creek at Brown Mountain Beach

In April 2001 I had a great birthday. I spent the week painting and video taping at Wilson Creek. In Lenoir I bought food and cake and candles and brown bags to make birthday dinners for my friends, the owners of Brown Mountain Beach. Nobody else was camping.

I intended to have a middle-of-the-river birthday, so we sat out there on the rocks, Kim and Suzie (married to Jeff and Greg) and Suzie's son, waiting for the others to come. Soon Gladys appeared on the beach and yelled out to us, "Hey, Barb, I just gave you a birthday present. I parked 22 kayakers around your campsite."

What a great birthday!

Back at my campsite, I quickly introduced myself to the Kenny Sanders group—a loose federation of kayaking friends from New Jersey and Pennsylvania who make an annual pilgrimage to run southern whitewater. Kenny Sanders is a legend, the designer of some of New Wave's first creek boats. Wilson Creek was on their list because of its beauty and clear water. I spent the evening listening at the several campfires—wishing like crazy I had brought my Swiftly with me. I may have mentioned my seven-and-a-half-hour-ordeal to them. The next day, I followed my new friends to the river and filmed the experts making all the right moves.

By late morning they were gathered in the parking lot at BMB snacking on each other's cold lunch offerings, and getting ready for the journey to the next river. Eric Werner proudly offered everyone red twiz-

zler licorice. Elaine Poinsett told me about NOC (Nantahala Outdoor Center) in Western North Carolina where I could take some lessons to upgrade my skills.

In 2001 I got an even better gift. Chris Balduf, a paddler, came to work as the new NCOIC (Noncommissioned Officer In Charge) of our admin office. We quickly became kayaking partners and Chris introduced me to something new, books on kayaking. I learned about floats and strokes as we paddled and camped all the mostly flat water around Fort Bragg—the Lumber, Cape Fear, Drowning Creek and the Little River, as well as the Inter-Coastal Waterway at Fort Fisher. We used Bob and David Benner's book on Eastern North Carolina rivers.

Chris always wanted to paddle when the rivers were flooding, one of the few no-no's in my book. I had told him of the glories of Wilson Creek and finally was able to drag him there. Wilson got into his soul. Now stationed in Germany, he says he dreams about Wilson Creek.

I took a class in March of 2002 at NOC, learned to dangle up side down in the lake and got a great subscription to American Whitewater magazine. The weekend I was at Nantahala, the Kenny Sanders group was doing the Ocoee, an hour from NOC. I took copies of my video over to them late my first night as they talked around a campfire—it was good to see their silhouettes.

This March I'm taking another class at NOC. Maybe I'll see the Kenny Sanders group at Wilson Creek, they are coming in April this year. My life seems to be getting richer with each year. It's not an ending, it's a continuation.



I Was a Cannibal On The Kali Gandaki

by Andrew Zimet

The last time I saw Joe he was striding briskly, boat on shoulder, toward the road back to Pokhara. At first I blamed his unhappiness on the Myagdi Khola, a committing run we had just finished. The boating had pushed him to his limits and out of his comfort zone. But we were on the Kali Gandaki, a fun class 4 river when he took his leave, so something else must have been bothering him.

At the time the idea that cannibalism might have something to do with his actions certainly never entered my mind. But now, after all that has happened, I can't think of any other explanation. I know Joe saw me chewing on my cuticles and sucking the blood from a small cut that refused to clot, but it is hard to imagine that alarming him. In retrospect, I realize he must have had a premonition; somehow he knew that if he continued on, more than a bit of cuticle would be nipped off. He knew that actual human flesh would be devoured. If I had had the same powers of intuition, I too would have run.

The Kali Gandaki is considered a holy river and, as such, is an auspicious site for cremations. Peter Knowles states in his book *White Water Nepal* that "every confluence is dotted with cremation sites" and "the beach is slick with the grease from burning bodies...human bones crunch underfoot." I saw a cremation in progress, as well as many sites of past cremations. You'd think that I might have been leery of the bits of charred stuff floating in the river water that I scooped up to make soup with. I wasn't.

After dinner I reluctantly picked up the book I had brought along, *Red Dragon* by Richard Harris. I say reluctantly because it is a gruesome story about Hannibal Lector, a serial killer and, of course, a cannibal. I was quite upset with myself for bringing such a morbid story on a trip. Usually I take a book that is uplifting and relevant to my journey. Something like *Seven Years in Tibet*, *Annapurna*, *Autobiography of a Yogi* or *Meditation for Dummies*. But though my book might not have been inspiring, it was relevant. As I began to read, it finally hit me: the flotsam in the water was bits of grilled bodies. I was a cannibal! Joe's premonition had been realized.

With a little foresight I could have avoided this unfortunate state of affairs. I could have camped near a small side stream or if I'd had a filter I could have filtered the water. Even a crude filter made with my polypropylene underwear could have removed most of the pieces (and as a bonus would have rinsed out my dirty long johns at the same time). But I had done none of those things.

My foremost concern was that I might catch some disease from my meal. However, since I boiled the water to cook the noodle soup, I probably killed any diseases living in the river water. But then I remembered Mad Cow disease, an incurable form of dementia caused by prions. Prions are short strands of protein that are remarkably indestructible. Coincidentally, I was boating a Prijon, which like a prion is also amazingly indestructible. Surprisingly, like a prion, Prijons also can lead to neurological disease. The Prijon boat I was paddling contributed significantly to my kayaking frenzy, which if you asked any of my ex-wives, is definitely a form of dementia.

Though this congruency was fascinating, it didn't divert me for long. I knew that more than boiling was needed to inactivate a prion. In fact you need to heat them to about 50 degrees above boiling for an hour. But then I remembered that Nepal is probably the last place on earth you would find Mad Cow disease. It is the world's only Hindu kingdom and the Hindus believe that bovinity is divinity. They treat their sacred cows very well indeed, starting with the fact that they do not eat them. So, I concluded, happy cows that aren't ingested surely eliminates Mad Cow disease from consideration. I felt a wave of relief sweep over me.

It may be too soon to give myself a clean bill of health, but so far there have been no negative effects. In fact I find myself thinking fondly of that tasty meal of ramen style noodle soup with nuts, green beans, garlic, chili peppers and human bits. But don't worry. The thought of human flesh doesn't make me salivate. It was good, but it's hard to get excited by something that tastes more or less like chicken.

Classical Whitewater

A tour of Greece and its rivers

by Gordon Bare

"Greece? Why Greece?" asked Jack Hession, boating buddy and Alaska director for the Sierra Club.

"Because it has rivers," I said, "and I've never been there. That's why."

Granted, Greece does not immediately spring to mind as a whitewater destination like Chile, Nepal or New Zealand. But long ago German boaters discovered the country and wrote guidebooks about its rivers. It had been in the back of my mind for years. All that was missing were a couple of friends, an airline not averse to carrying large plastic objects, and a rental car with a roof rack of some sort.



Greece is an incredibly rugged country with significant snowpack in its 9,000 + foot mountains. The terrain is reminiscent of parts of Idaho, but warmer and with olive trees. The time to be there for whitewater is from March to May. As befits the Mediterranean climate, runoff is early and most rivers quickly drop to unrunnable levels. Spring is a great time for anyone to visit Greece. The days are warm, nights are cool, and few tourists have yet arrived.

Based on these enticements, I knew I wouldn't have trouble recruiting travel companions. Ed Gertler, guidebook author and owner of the longest life-list in the sport (upwards of a thousand rivers,) and Jack Hession quickly signed on. Ed and I could stumble through the German-language guidebooks, but we both had trouble with the innumerable colloquialisms the books used to describe whitewater. How many ways can you say that a bodacious rapid will eat your lunch in German?

Upon arrival, we therefore decide to seek the blessing of Poseidon, the Greek god of

the sea. There is a magnificent classical age Doric temple at Cape Sounion on the marvelously named Apollo Coast, a few miles south of Athens airport. He may or may not do rivers but a visit to pay our respects to Poseidon seemed an auspicious way to start our adventure.

For our first rivers, we ventured into the Peloponese, the southern part of mainland Greece, for the Lousios and Alfios rivers. The former has a Class IV-V-X upper stretch but settles down to Class II-III slalom through a tight, tree-shaded canyon before emptying into the Alfios. We passed on the top part and put in on marvelously clear water near the mountaintop fortress and village of Karitena. The run continues for another 8 miles on the Alfios with rapids up to Class IV+. At several points we spotted what could only be called cliff dwellings—crude structures of indeterminate age clinging to the canyon walls at nearly inaccessible places. Maybe they were abodes of hermits or monks, or perhaps places of refuge from the wars of centuries past.

The Alfios is a river of both history and legend. Its lower reaches flow past Olympia, site of the games, which began in the seventh century BC. The ruins are partially restored; the ancient stadium features worn stone seating for 20,000 and overlooks a dirt-floored arena where the start and finish lines are still discernible. The Alfios is also the river that Hercules diverted in order to cleanse the Augean stables. Fortunately, it has gotten a lot cleaner since.



Above: Poseidon Temple

Left: The Tholos at Delphi

Below: Private Beach on Corfu

The next watershed over is the Erymanthos. We ran the Class II-III Conglomerate Canyon stretch on minimal flows. We didn't really object to the low water at those places where the river squeezed to little more than paddle-length in width between sinuous vertical walls of white rock. There were several stretches where we were totally committed to the river; climbing out was not an option.

In Greece one is never that far from the ocean, and we threw our boats in at several points. Exploration was great fun but the consistently calm seas limited our surfing. We visited the old fort guarding Kardamili harbor on Messiniakos Gulf. We did a workout to relieve the kinks from a day of driving at Messalongi. It was here that the English poet Byron died during the war of Greek independence, in the early 1800s. On Corfu, we explored sea caves on the north coast within sight of Albania. On the west coast, we visited land-inaccessible beaches bounded by sheer cliffs. Both mainland Greece and its islands have wonderful opportunities for overnight sea kayaking—both camping and inn-to-inn possibilities—but we didn't have time to take advantage of them.



From the sea we traveled north to the mainland and the Pindos mountains. We ran the Red Gorge of the Trikeriotis, a Class II-III. At the put-in we meet a group of German boaters, the only other kayakers we would see for the entire trip. Unfortunately there was not enough water in two nearby tributaries, both of which are highly recommended Class IV runs. We did the Agrafiotis (which means “unknown river” in Greek), on a water level that would not meet minimum standards under usual circumstances but was our only option for the day.

Doing rivers leads one to remote country that the casual traveler would have little occasion to visit. In Greece this means remote villages where older women still dress entirely in black and the goats far outnumber people. The villages themselves usually feature houses constructed from the local rock and blend in seamlessly with the harsh hills. We were there for the Orthodox Easter holiday. We saw fireworks in the square, midnight services, city dwellers returning to the old home village for the four-day holiday and lamb roasting on spits in yard after yard.

Greece also means rocky, one-and one-half lane shuttle roads with no guardrails clinging precariously to mountainsides a couple of thousand feet up. In many of the more remote villages, the roads narrow down even more and two vehicles cannot easily pass. None of the shuttles are simple—they come in hard, harder, and hardest. Hitchhiking and public transportation are rarely

an option. Most, but by no means all road signs, are in our familiar Roman alphabet alongside the Greek alphabet. Before visiting Greece, brush up on your fraternity letters. We drove close to 3,000 miles in three weeks and traversed most of mainland Greece, save the flatter terrain toward Turkey and Bulgaria.

The Acheron on Greece’s northwest coast is another river of legend—the river Styx across which Charon ferries dead souls on their way to the underworld. The real river goes subterranean at a couple of siphons with mandatory portages. It lies in a deeply incised gorge with the walls frequently closing in to the vertical but with scouting and carrying possible though rarely easy. The guidebook claims it is runnable down to 30 cfs and when we dropped a car at the take-out there was easily several hundred cfs in the river.

We had driven several hours to get to the river and didn’t reach the put-in until about 2:00. There we discovered far less water, though still more than the minimum recommended flows. The spectacular gorge lived up to its three star billing, but we had to carry several drops that were simply too bony to scrape down. We also scouted frequently, which made the going slow. A thunderstorm sent rock from the cliffs bouncing into the river and turned the late afternoon shadows in the canyon several shades darker. Anxiety levels began to rise. The gloom descended on both the canyon and on us. We weren’t quite sure how far we were from the take-out. But before darkness closed in completely we came to a footbridge. Stashing boats and walking out seemed like an outstanding idea, particularly since immediately below the bridge we faced a mandatory carry and lengthy scout. A good trail took us back to our cars as the light failed completely. Our pace on the river had been well under one mile per hour.

A good meal and a beer or three at a local restaurant restored our spirits. So did a night not spent huddled on a river bank. We walked back to our boats the next morning and completed the run without incident. Shortly before the take-out, large springs tripled the marginally inadequate flow, solving the mystery of the missing water.

More sightseeing rounded out our trip: the monasteries set atop rock pinnacles at Meteora (featured in an otherwise undistinguished James Bond movie); Delfi for



Above: Ed Gertler on the Trikeriotis

Left: The author at the takeout of the Acheron

Below: Shuttle Road for the Voidomatis

Opposite Top: Near the putin of the Trikeriotis

Opposite Bottom: Cliffs and sidefalls on the Trikeriotis

the ruins of the Golden Age religious center; and a final afternoon at the Acropolis in Athens. Greece proved both a boating adventure and a tourist’s delight.

Editor’s Note: Gordon Bare has paddled in more than twenty countries. He coached the U.S. Slalom Team for thirteen years.





Planning Your Greek Boating Vacation

The most recent and best whitewater guidebook, now available in English translation, is Greco: A Detailed Guide the Greek Whitewater by Franz Bettinger and John Londen. You can order it from Greco Verlag, Franz Bettinger/Ulla Eich, 66386 St. Ingbert, Obere Kaiserstrasse 127, Germany, e-mail Martin-Bettinger@t-online.de. I do not know of a source for river level or snow pack information, but if you discover one I'd appreciate hearing about it.

A general tourist guidebook such as the Michelin Green series, Rough Guide, or Lonely Planet will steer you to off-the-river sights. A wide range of accommodations is available. Basic hotel rooms can be had in the \$20 per night range. Private campgrounds offer a range of amenities but are not especially cheap. Rough camping is possible at many river access points.

British Airways flies to Athens and has a good reputation for carrying kayaks. They waived the excess baggage charge on the way over and charged a manageable \$110 on the return. Boating season is off peak for tourists and fares are much lower than in the summer months.

Most major American and European car rental companies serve the Athens airport, offer an unlimited mileage rate as low as \$100 per week, and have vehicles with some type of roof rack available.

Detailed road maps at 1/250,000 scale are essential for navigating the shuttle roads and are widely available in Greece (but you'll still get lost a few times).



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Conflict on the Ocoee

by Tom Tohill

A boater in the Ocoee's famous Hellhole, ignoring people shouting, "raft," finds himself launched skyward by the force of the collision. Landing, he grins and paddles up for another turn. Darned if he doesn't jump in front of a raft on his next surf.

In the 2002 season this scene occurred all too often. A boater and a guide were arrested for assault after they tangled at Hellhole due to a similar incident. The guide's company recently had a 14-year-old girl's face bloodied when she was smacked by a kayaker's paddle. The fact that she had just been fitted with braces only added fuel to the fire.

On this day the boater didn't get out of the hole and was shoved out by the raft. As he paddled around the raft, the guide reached out and choked him before tossing him back into the river. The boater chased down the raft and slapped the guide with his paddle. A state ranger arrested them both; he witnessed the whole thing.

Collisions and conflicts like this have become more frequent in recent years with many Ocoee boaters switching to playboats. Problems are not limited to boat vs. raft, either. Conflicts between boats in the hole and downstream boats have caused arrests, cursing matches and endless arguments on boater newsgroups. Additionally, some playboater's seem to intentionally flip inflatable kayaks.

I have spent many days and hours play-

ing at Hellhole and know that 99% of the boaters are kind and courteous. But it only takes a couple of jerks to get someone hurt. The Ocoee has always been unique when it comes to river rules. An average July or August Saturday sees about 5,000 people on the river. "Wild and scenic" takes on a whole new meaning.

The conventional rule on rivers is that a boat coming downstream has the right-of-way. . . but every rule has exceptions. The Ocoee is an exception. The rule does not make sense and is difficult to follow at a place like Hellhole.

At Hellhole the upstream boat is in a huge eddy. Stop and go paddle signal are all that is needed if a boater wants to run the hole. A boat in the hole has a difficult time seeing an upstream boat but the upstream boat can easily see the playboat. Additionally, many upstream boats avoid the hole by going left. Paddlers hate to leave the hole just to see a line of upstream boats go left.

A Hellhole-specific routine for playing and running the hole has evolved over the years and works wonderfully when observed.

Here's how it works (see photos):

1. Boats coming downstream decide whether to run the hole. . .

a. To run the hole, drift down on river right and hold up your paddle before the waves begin. When you see a "go" signal, start paddling.



b. If you are not running the hole please point your bow to river left so people downstream know your intentions.



2. Boats in the hole leave when a raft is coming. . .

a. If you surf the edge of the hole when a raft comes through, you must be skilled enough to be 100% sure you will not hit anyone.

b. Please do not surf the edge of the hole when boats or inflatable kayaks come through. Most of these boaters are beginners and it makes them very nervous pass so close to another boat.

3. There are three eddies used for playing, one on river right and two on river left. Two of the eddies lead directly into the hole. The high eddy on river left is used for surfing the haystack wave above the hole. Please observe the following eddy usage. . .

a. Everybody takes a turn, left then right.

b. If all three eddies are occupied the rotation is right, lower left, right, upper left and repeat.

We can all get along. There is plenty of time and water for everyone.



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Septuagenarian Rocks the Boat

by Ambrose Tuscano

Many of us in the boating community consider ourselves to be participating in an obscure sport. But for those exploring rivers in the early 1960s, paddlesports today must seem downright mainstream. Relatively few boaters could tell one end of a paddle from the other in those days; fewer still continue to boat in the 21st century. Ann Dwyer is that rare combination of past and present.

Raised in Marin County in Northern California, Dwyer was never far from water. With the Pacific Ocean breaking on its western border, and the San Francisco Bay to the east Marin County is surrounded by coastline on three sides. When the Golden Gate Bridge finally connected Marin to San Francisco in 1938, Dwyer was there, walking on its spans before the first automobile whirled across.

Though she hasn't strayed far from Marin County in her 77 years, (she now lives in adjacent Sonoma county of wine-making fame) Dwyer got her first official canoe instruction in the Rockies. Volunteering as assistant water safety chairman for the Marin County Red Cross in 1960, she asked to be sent to small craft school in Idaho.

Two years earlier, her oldest son had failed to receive his canoe merit badge at Boy Scout camp. The incident prompted Dwyer to start thinking about canoeing, and led indirectly to her training in Idaho, where she became a certified instructor of small watercraft. By 1965 she decided that it was time Marin County residents had exposure to rivers, and founded the Marin Canoe Club, one of the first such groups in the country.

Dwyer continued to canoe avidly until she met Tom Johnson, creator of the first rotomolded plastic kayak. Johnson's production of the Riverchaser changed the landscape of whitewater kayaking in 1974, but even before then he had a significant impact on Ann Dwyer's life. At a regional ACA meeting in the late 1960s, Johnson introduced Dwyer to one of the first kevlar kayaks.

"Once I paddled a kayak," says Dwyer, "I knew this was the direction I wanted to go in watersports."

At the time, individuals, not companies, usually built fiberglass kayaks. Instead of picking out a boat at the local paddling shop, kayakers had to rent a mold from one of a handful of kayak designers and laboriously form fiberglass sheets around it. Besides the time investment the process required, boaters also had to endure the toxic fumes and maddening fiberglass shards that irritated exposed skin.

Ann Dwyer's involvement in kayak making went beyond that of the average boat builder. She began to see design flaws that bothered her. In her mind, kayaks of the day were too much geared towards class III boating and above. Dwyer had experience on class III water, but her true love was class II. Of the designs available, none were stable enough to be ideal for easy waters. Moreover, the fiberglass models all featured tiny cockpits that were a struggle to get in and out of.

Each flaw that Dwyer perceived in the available kayak designs made her think of a corresponding solution. Together these solutions formed a mental image of a new breed of kayak, ideal for the class II paddler. While traveling in New Zealand for the Sierra Club, Dwyer came upon two designs that matched her concept of a suitable class II boat in many respects. After speaking with, Grahame Sission, the boats' designer, she arranged a deal to import the designs to the U.S. with permission to modify them as she saw fit.

Dwyer combined certain aspects of the Tadpole and Pollywog (as the imports were called in the U.S.) with many of her own ideas to form her first original design. The Minnow was the first model sold by Dwyer's company, Kiwi Kayaks. Several years and a few fiberglass designs later, Dwyer sprung for a rotomolder and joined the plastic revolution. Her first plastic design, the Kopapa, was her most popular ever. Other plastic models followed, including the Lobo, a boat designed and named for her six and a half foot tall son who didn't fit in a Kopapa.

Even though she sold Kiwi Kayak Company years ago, the Kopapa remains Dwyer's favorite river running boat because it is the only kayak designed specifically for class II water. Though Dwyer claims the Kopapa



Ann Dwyer sailing a Kopapa (Kiwi Kayak)

has been copied by several companies in the form of "recreational boats," these designs are not suitable for class II. The Kopapa succeeds because it is light (33 lbs), stable, easily turned, spacious, rollable and easy to get in and out of.

"Most kayaks are heavier than the average woman can comfortably carry," Dwyer explains. "But the Kopapa weighs about as much as a four year old child, so it is something that men and women alike can handle."

While class II kayaks are perhaps Dwyer's most recognized inventions, she also had a hand in the conception of the throw rope. The idea was given to Dwyer's friend and fellow Marin County Canoe clubber, Gordon Young by a navy sailor who was asked how to deal with the hassle and potential hazard of 50' of loose rope laying in canoes. His suggestion was, "Put it in a bag," so Dwyer started putting rope in bags. She alleges that the idea was copied by an east-coast company, which started producing throw ropes shortly thereafter.

Along with the throw rope, Dwyer has devised numerous accessories for canoes and kayaks. Her handmade inventions are sold under the name Dragonfly Designs. The list of products includes drybags, knee cushions, thigh straps and spray skirts.

Perhaps Dwyer's best selling inventions have been her guidebooks. In 1972 she published her first book, *Canoeing Waters of California*, which met with moderate success. Her next book didn't appear until 28 years later. *Easy Waters of California: North* has been in demand since it first became available. Without heavy marketing or widespread availability, half of the original printing has sold in the first two years.

Dwyer's love of canoeing and kayaking has led to a passion for primitive paddle craft.

This hobby has taken her all over the world in search of various handmade boat designs. The craft range from 5' by 25' dugout Cottonwood canoes in the Gulf of Mexico to tiny bowl boats of willow sticks and hide on the island of Wales.

Dwyer's search for original, simple boat designs seems natural for someone responsible for designing a craft like the Kopapa. Meaning "small canoe" in Maori, *Kopapa* is an elegant word to describe a functional boat.

Because it is spacious enough for overnight gear, the Kopapa eliminates the need for raft support on wilderness trips. Dwyer explains that this is one of the boat's biggest advantages.

"When you've got rafts along, you end up spending your evenings cooking elaborate meals instead of taking beautiful side hikes," she says. "There's plenty of time for cooking when you get home."

Dwyer's 40 years of paddling are comprised of countless river miles and hundreds of trips. Notable excursions include the first descent of the popular Chili Bar section of

the American River in a tandem canoe and a solo paddle from Hoover Dam to Mexico. This three-week trip down the Colorado traced southern California's border with Arizona all the way to the U.S. border with Mexico. Dwyer managed the 320-mile trip without cooking meals. When she needed food, she stopped in riverside marinas to resupply.

Today, whenever Dwyer needs something to bite into, she's just as likely to set her sights on the boat-making industry as a bag of chips. For decades she has been critical of the major whitewater manufacturers for the lack of attention they pay to class II boaters. Dwyer recently spoke with an executive from one of the industry leaders who told her that his company's boat line satisfied the needs of every level of boater. Dwyer disagreed.

"There are a lot of options in flat water boats, and plenty of whitewater kayaks," says Dwyer. "But there still isn't a design other than the Kopapa that covers the ground in between."

That gray area, also known as class II, is Dwyer's passion. She is quick to point to the

neglect that easy water suffers, both from the boat-making industry and individual boaters. To make matters worse, Dwyer notes, most people can't even define class II water. To her, class II is the most difficult water that one can paddle safely without a roll. In other words, moving water that is challenging but not dangerous.

Dwyer also bemoans the state of paddlesports because she feels that too many newcomers to the sport are rushed from flatwater into class III. Her kayak academy, which she runs out of her home in Healdsburg, focuses on teaching people to succeed on and appreciate class II. Classes are taught on the Russian River, a short distance from Dwyer's home.

Aside from teaching kayaking, Dwyer also remains active in the Marin Canoe Club and the Kopapa Kayak Club, both local groups that she helped found. And, when she just can't think of any other ways to keep busy, there are always the grandkids.

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AW FATAL WHITEWATER ACCIDENT SUMMARY

July-December 2002

The second half of 2002, like the first half, saw fewer whitewater fatalities than previous years. From July through December we received news of 3 kayak, 3 canoe, and 4 rafting fatalities. A total of 12 kayaking deaths were reported for the entire year, as opposed to 20 in 2001 and 17 in 2000. Canoeing and rafting accident reports were also down significantly. Several factors could be at work. In addition to the widespread drought, several heads-up rescues helped to keep the death toll down. We also think people may be paddling smarter.

The accounts come from a variety of sources, including newspaper clippings and personal narratives. Many accounts were posted on Boatertalk.com and other paddler bulletin boards. The best way to cut down on gossip and speculation after serious accidents is to describe what happened on line. It's also helpful to post accident reports on the American Whitewater Forum. Found on AW's web site (www.americanwhitewater.org), the bulletin board is focused on our conservation, access, and safety programs. While still a part of Boatertalk, it contains very little casual chat.

Since there's really no way for one person to check all the relevant web sites and newspapers, we couldn't publish this report without our safety correspondents. I'd like to take a moment to thank Kathy Streletzky, Slim Ray, Aida Parkinson, Vince Thompson, Tim Bromelkamp, and the board and staff of American Whitewater for their contributions. I'd like to encourage all our readers to forward relevant material to the AW Safety Committee.

Fatalities

Guidebook author, Don Morris, reported a death on the South Branch of the Grass River in Upstate New York. Sometime this past June, a Mr. Bryant, 68, put in at the Spruce Mountain Road access in a 12' canoe. Despite the fact that the river below here contains Class II-III whitewater, Mr. Bryant was paddling alone without a PFD. Some time later he washed over Copper Rock Falls, a 10-12' drop into a nasty hole. There were two spruce trees lying across the falls, and he was found pinned against one of these. The ranger speculates that Mr. Bryant either flipped in the approach rapid and swam the falls or made it through the

approach rapids upright but missed the final eddy.

There are several serious Class V drops on California's Stanislaus River between Goodwin Dam and Knight's Ferry. On June 30th a raft with four paddlers attempted the run. None of them were wearing life vests, helmets, or wetsuits. Their experience was limited to rafting the Class II section just downstream. According to an article in the Sacramento Bee, the group flipped in "Mr. Toad's Wild Ride" earlier in the day. Then the group washed into "The Matterhorn", an 8 foot high ledge into a very nasty hole. Commercial outfitters portage here when the water is as low as it was that day. One man bailed out above the drop and swam to shore; the others went over and washed out. Mario Rosales, 20, who apparently couldn't swim, was last seen floating downstream on his back. The group, shoeless and battered, ended up on opposite sides of the river. One man had a broken leg. Someone hiked out of the steep canyon and called authorities. The Toulumne County Search and Rescue Team responded and was able to recover the body the next day.

On July 1st Howard Wymper, 73, fell out of his raft while rafting the Yellowstone River in Montana. According to a newspaper article in the Billings Gazette forwarded by Kris Gagnon, the accident occurred in Yankee Jim Canyon at Sphinx Rapid. Mr. Wymper's son and 6 year old granddaughter made it to shore, but he did not. His body was found floating face down some distance downstream. Sheriff's deputies performed CPR for 40 minutes without success.

Jeff Peters, former manager of Mountain River Tours, forwarded this brief report: Rob Horne, a 14-year veteran Firefighter, drowned on Barton Creek near Austin, Texas on July 3rd. The river was flooding after several days of heavy rain. Horne, an experienced kayaker who was wearing a PFD and helmet, was paddling alone when he presumably flipped and bailed out. Nearby residents saw Horne being swept downstream and called 911. His body was recovered downstream, in the vicinity of Sculpture Falls, at about 5:00 p.m. Ironically, the Austin Fire Department had closed all streams in the area to boating a day earlier.



Charlie Walbridge
Safety Editor - American Whitewater

Esopus Creek is a popular Class II dam-release run in New York's Catskill Mountains. On July 20th a group of 9 paddlers from the Appalachian Mountain Club put in at the Portal at around 11:00 a.m. About 15 minutes later they reached a spot where the river curves sharply to the left, undercutting the right bank. Although the rapid here is not difficult, several trees have fallen into the river, and the current is pushing hard in their direction. According to a report prepared by Ken and Gretchen Tardell, Larry Kerwin, 49, was running third when he entered the rapid. He angled his boat to the left but did not paddle forward. The current carried him sideways into a downed tree, where he flipped upstream and pinned solidly. Rob Andersen, the trip leader, and Herb Stermer eddied out downstream, climbed up onto the strainer and worked hard to free Kerwin, but he was apparently snagged in roots and branches several feet below the surface. Another paddler ran to a nearby house and called 911. After a few minutes of intense struggling the two men freed the pinned kayak, pulled Mr. Kerwin loose, and swam him ashore. Here two onlookers who identified themselves as emergency room nurses began CPR. The estimated time under water was five minutes. Emergency Services personnel arrived soon afterwards. They transported Mr. Kerwin to a hospital in Kingston where he was pronounced dead.

Mr. Kerwin was an experienced paddler and a member of the National River Safety Patrol and several whitewater clubs. He had run this river many times before. The move to miss the strainer is not difficult, and it's unclear whether Mr. Kerwin misread the water and became disoriented or simply looked away at the wrong time. Either way, it shows the importance of maintaining focus in the presence of dangerous hazards, even in easy whitewater.

Mr. Kerwin died in the same spot that claimed the life of a tuber on June 10th. Headlines in the New York Post screamed, "Death Creek Kills Again" and referred to the area where the accident happened as "Death Row." In the aftermath of the first accident the landowner refused to allow local paddlers to remove the hazard. She relented after Kerwin's death, and the tree was removed. In the aftermath, some people said that they believed that the State should regularly clear "debris" from the river. This is an impractical and inappropriate suggestion. Unlike amusement rides, natural rivers have dangerous hazards that must be avoided. Paddlers, not some government entity, are ultimately responsible for their safety when on the water.

We have a very sketchy report of a possible foot entrapment on the Rouge River in Quebec, Canada. It occurred in "Family Rapid" just upstream of the Seven Sisters; it might have been a kayaker. Anyone with more information is encouraged to contact the Safety Committee.

The body of a retired piano tuner was found in the backwash of the Plymouth Dam on Pennsylvania's Schuylkill River. David


Moore, 73, had taken up kayaking three years earlier. He was paddling alone on August 11th when the accident happened. An article in the Philadelphia Inquirer forwarded by Bill Pearlstein stated that Mr. Moore was wearing a life vest. His wife said he knew the area well and always portaged around the dam. There were no witnesses, so we'll never know exactly what happened. His wife became concerned when he did not return at 4:00 p.m. as planned. As darkness fell she notified police. His kayak was never recovered.

A 27 year-old New Zealand woman drowned in Class IV Staircase Rapid on Idaho's South Fork of the Payette. On August 14th Caroline Granger was paddling an inflatable kayak with her sister and a friend. None of the three wore life vests or helmets. Furthermore, they were paddling with three people in a boat designed to carry only two. According to an article in The Idaho Statesman, the group expected a run more like the Class I Boise river in town. Ms. Granger apparently fell out in the rapid, hit her head on a rock, and disappeared. Her body was pulled from the river a half-mile downstream. The others were helped ashore by kayakers.

There was another drowning in the Payette System on August 24th. According to an article by Greg Moore in the Idaho Mountain Express, a party of 8 catarafters put in above Screaming Left Turn on the North Fork of the Payette near Banks, Idaho. The river was running at 2150, a high level for the summer. In the next rapid, Jaws I, Nicholas Conant, 34, was caught in a river-wide hole and thrown from his boat. Witnesses said they saw him start to swim for shore, then go limp. Another catarafter caught up with him above Jaws II rapid, but was unable to pull Mr. Conant, who weighed 250 pounds, into his boat. He didn't get another chance until Hounds Tooth Rapid, over ¾ of a mile downstream. He clipped Mr. Conant to his raft and pulled him ashore. Two passing firefighters stopped their vehicles and administered CPR, then a number of other trained medical personnel who were in the area joined in. An ambulance and life flight helicopter arrived too late to do any good.

Labor Day Weekend saw the first scheduled whitewater releases in the Stone Valley section of New York's Raquette River. This section has an impressive array of Class IV and V rapids. Dr. Richard Ginsburg, 50, arrived on the morning of Sept 4th. He

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and his group scouted all the drops; one person opted out, the rest elected to run cautiously and carry whenever necessary. Tim Kelly, AW Safety Chair, is familiar with this stretch of river. He investigated the accident and filed this report: "Dr. Ginsburg's kayak stalled out during a boof of the final pourover in the "Narrows." He flipped, was held for about five seconds, then washed out along the right-hand wall. He attempted a couple of rolls without success, then his boat jerked as though he was attempting a wet exit. Two paddlers in his group moved in for a bow rescue, and when Dr. Ginsburg did not grab hold, they pulled his head above water. He had lost consciousness despite only being upside down for a minute or two. The pair was unable to keep him upright, and were forced to break off the rescue as they washed downstream, around the corner and into the next big rapid. He was finally sucked out of his boat by a hole in "The Tub" and pulled ashore below. His kayak was recovered with the sprayskirt still attached and the grab loop incorrectly tucked inside."

Dr. Ginsburg was a skilled paddler who had been running hard whitewater for many years. Clearly he had trouble with the drop he flipped in, but if he had rolled or wet exited successfully he would have been fine. Modern sprayskirts are very tight fitting and will not release unless the grab loop is pulled. Dr. Ginsburg was wearing neoprene gloves, which made releasing the skirt much more difficult. Once he let go of the paddle and was unable to exit, he was trapped! My suggestion is for everyone to take a moment to figure out if you can release your sprayskirt without pulling on the grab loop. You can often "pinch" the sides with your hands and pull the rand off the cockpit rim. If you wear gloves, be certain you can find your grab loop.

A 5 year-old boy drowned in a Class II section of Washington's Skykomish River on September 14th. The boy was with his parents and two brothers aged 4 and 7. Everyone was wearing a life vest. Their canoe hit a logjam just downstream of the Lewis Street boat ramp in Monroe. Two boys and their mother were out of the water by the time firefighters arrived. The father was caught in the logjam with the 5 year old, who was dead on arrival at a local hospital.

On Saturday, December 28th, the North Fork of Oregon's Smith River was flowing at over 8,000 cfs – high water! After a big water run on the North Fork, two paddlers in a three person group elected to try a sec-

tion of the Upper Middle Fork, a solid Class IV at this level. According to a report written by Scott Bowman, J.T. Middleton, 40, put in with a friend at Idlewild around 2:30 p.m. After running an intense stretch of big Class IV water, the lead boater eddied out. When Mr. Middleton did not appear after a lengthy interval, he got out of his boat and headed upstream. Then he saw a boat, paddle, and finally Mr. Middleton, floating downstream. He was alive, sputtering, and swimming for shore. After he tried to reach Mr. Middleton with a throw line the lead boater ran along the bank, but couldn't keep up. He then climbed to the highway and ran down the road, trying to keep his partner in sight. The third paddler (who had opted out of the run) was driving down the highway and also gave chase. Finally Mr. Middleton was spotted, pinned underwater in a clump of willows about 8 feet from the bank.

Rescue squads were called, but it was dusk by the time they arrived. They decided to postpone the body recovery until the next day. By Sunday morning water levels had dropped 3 feet, and Mr. Middleton was mostly out of the water. His belt-mounted throw bag had wrapped around his waist and passed through his crotch before becoming snagged in the tree. Even with lower water, the recovery took two hours!

Injuries and Near Misses

While no one suffered any permanent injuries in these incidents, smart boaters will get useful lessons from these write-ups.

A kayaker broke both of his legs while attempting 30-foot Brownstone Falls on Wisconsin's Bad River. According to Jeff Kiffmeyer's account, he scraped over a shallow rock at the lip, penciled straight down to the base, and hit a shallow ledge. The impact tore his paddle from his grasp and caused his kayak to fall end-over-end into the pool. Mr. Kiffmeyer hand-rolled back up, then hand paddled to shore. His two friends pulled him out of the kayak, then one of them ran to get help. Rangers evacuated him to an ambulance in a Stokes litter to a waiting ambulance. At the hospital they determined that he'd fractured the tibia and fibula in both legs, and he was evacuated by helicopter to another medical center He's facing a minimum of ten weeks in a wheelchair.

On July 1st a man driving a 1961 amphibious car launched into the Delaware River at New Hope, Pennsylvania and was washed downstream into Lambertville Rapids. The Trenton, NJ Trentonian reported that the car became pinned on some rocks. The owner and his two passengers were trapped there for over four hours. Fourteen different police, fire, and rescue units responded. After rescue boats were unable to reach the trio, they were airlifted to safety by a Coast Guard helicopter. Ironically, the whitewater here is Class II, and the site is very popular with local paddlers. A canoeist or rafter who knew what he or she was doing could have made the rescue quickly and easily, saving the taxpayers considerable expense.

Ted Martz reported two very close calls on Pennsylvania's Lower Youghiogheny River on the weekend of July 27-28. On Saturday a woman got caught by an abandoned throw bag, which had wrapped itself around her neck. Responding to her cries for help, a guide cut the rope, and nearby kayakers pulled her to shore. She had a weak pulse and was not breathing. Several paddlers from Three Rivers Paddling Club administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and she started breathing again. She was carried to the bike trail and life-flighted out. On Sunday a young woman participating in an "adventure race" got caught in "Charlie's Washing Machine" in Railroad Rapids. She washed out, attempted to stand, caught her foot, and was pushed under water. Fortunately, an alert group of Canadians heard her cries for help, got her out, and administered CPR on a mid-stream rock. Rangers arrived and rafted her to shore, where she started breathing on her own.

A newspaper article syndicated through the Canadian Press reports that four men survived a plunge over a 20 meter (60+') waterfall on Alberta's Ram River this past August. Lured by a two sentence description in a travel guide that called the river a "scenic multi-day paddle" and didn't mention any waterfalls, the group planned a four-day raft trip. They lost much of their gear in the plunge, which occurred on the second day. So they dug the letters HELP into the beach and waited until a rescue helicopter spotted them. This turned out to be a wise decision, as there was an even bigger waterfall less than a mile downstream.

Students of a well-known kayak school in Washington, DC had a very long day on West Virginia's Cheat Canyon this past August 25th. According to "Splashes," the newsletter of the West Virginia Wildwater

Association, the river was only running 6" on the Albright Bridge gauge. The 11-mile run is passable at this level, but it makes for rather long day. Somehow the guides miscounted, and the group was one kayak short. They elected to run anyway, with the guides taking turns swimming down the river. This was not a good idea. After putting in at 1:00 p.m., the group was slowed further by numerous student mishaps. Eventually it became clear that they weren't going to make it out before dark. One of the guides sprinted ahead and reached the Jenkinsburg Bridge at 10:00 p.m. Here he met a rescue squad that had been called by the distraught spouse of one of the overdue students. The rest of the group formed a human chain, holding onto the boats ahead of them and behind them. After several hours of paddling and wading in the dark they arrived in Jenkinsburg at 1:00 a.m. the following morning.

On September 1st a tough New Zealand woman escaped serious injury after she flipped her kayak while running a 12' waterfall in North Carolina's famous Green River Narrows. Jeanne Cox, 22, had been running the Green Narrows all summer and knew it well. According to an article in the *Asheville Times-News* forwarded by former Safety Chair Lee Belknap, Ms. Cox landed on her head! Fortunately, she suffered no spinal injuries. She "just" separated her shoulder and had a 3" laceration on her head. After being treated by friends with Wilderness First Responder training, Ms. Cox hiked out under her own power. She met a rescue squad part way out, refused treatment, and took herself to the hospital. Rescuers said that this was the first kayaking accident they'd responded to this year.

On the evening of November 3rd rangers received a call that two kayakers had failed to reach their take-out on West Virginia's Gauley River. The National Park Service Morning Report stated that the flow that day was over 4,000 cfs, significantly more than the usual fall release levels. NPS Rangers began a search of public and private access points. At about 9:30 p.m. rangers checking an old railroad grade on river left heard whistle blasts coming from the opposite side of the river, above Sweet's Falls. Two rangers drove to the Sweet's Falls access and scrambled and bushwhacked upstream to reach the men. The paddlers were in the early stages of hypothermia and showing signs of mental confusion. They were given energy bars, then the group began the long trek back to the access road. Cliff bands, rain-swollen creeks, dense laurel, and the

kayakers' exhausted state all made for slow going. They emerged at the Sweet's Falls access four hours later. The low temperatures that night were in the mid-thirties, posing a real risk to these paddlers survival if the rangers had not intervened.

Strainers are a real hazard on many rivers, and the location of these hazards changes from year to year. Paddlers who are familiar with a river might run a steep drop blindly with serious consequences. For example, several new hazards on the Tallulah this year were reported on the AW web site during the fall release season. Alabama paddler Shane Hulsey reported on November 4th that he had just finished pulling a friend off of a nasty strainer on the right below the boof at Lynch's Wrench when a woman flushed against the tree upside down and pinned. He was able to pull her free quickly, but we shudder to think what might have happened if no one had been around to help. AW Board Member Sutton Bacon provided detailed descriptions of two other spots to the AW web site: www.americanwhitewater.org.

Rivers change and paddlers must never assume that a drop is clean. But there is something you can do if you encounter an unexpected hazard on a run. Go to the AW web site, look up the stream, then go to the bottom of the page. Press the bar that says "add a comment" and report your observation. When there is an unexpected hazard on a popular run like the Tallulah, please also email Charlie Walbridge (ccwalbridge@cs.com), Lee Belknap (rgypsy@sprintmail.com), or Safety Chair Tim Kelly (tmkelley@clarkson.edu). We'll do what we can to help get the word out.

A group of creek boaters got more fun than they bargained for on Alabama's Lively Creek this past December 11th. The group started down nearby Miller Creek, but realized that their group was too large for a fast, clean descent. Lively Creek was low, nearby, and had the same takeout. They put on at 2:15 p.m. and started banging down the rapids. According to Shane Hulsey, who filed this report, the trouble started when he suddenly caught his paddle in some rocks, flipped, and swam. The boat went around the bend into a steep rapid and disappeared into an unrunnable boulder sieve. One of the two people chasing the boat grabbed a tree and hung on; the other couldn't stop, washed into the sieve, and became trapped in "a little room of doom". He was actually bracing against the rock when the boat went under, hanging on, waiting for the

rope. Hulsey, got to shore and pulled the paddler who was grabbing the tree to safety. Then the two of them climbed to a spot above the sieve and lowered a line down to the trapped kayaker. The trapped boater was able to clip the line to his boat, pop his sprayskirt, and climb out. Then Hulsey, using a topo map, started to walk out. He was missing one shoe, but got a lift from an ATV rider and actually beat his friends to the take-out by ten minutes.

American Whitewater depends entirely on its members and friends to produce this accident summary. The information we acquire is added to our Safety Database, the largest collection of its kind in the world. Created by former Safety Chair Lee Belknap and accessible at www.americanwhitewater.org, it provides a real-world basis for our safety policies. Please forward accident descriptions, newspaper articles, personal accounts, and any other material of note to ccwalbridge@cs.com (Rt. 1, Box A43B, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525).



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Tim Troy
Cabell Tutwiler
Kate Udall
Dan M. Valens
Dr. Stephen J. Vanasco

Vermont Paddlers Club
Steven & Gayle Vest
Michael D. Violet
Kurt Vogel
Duanne Wagner
David Wallace
Steve Wallace
Rich Ward
Gary and Joan Warner
Chris Webster
William E. Weddle
Greg Weeter
Peter L. Weingarten
Bill Wells
Dane White
Milton Wicker
Kent Wigington
Wild River Adventures
Paul D. Wilson
Steven and Tracy Wilson
Nathan Winslow
Ethan Winter
Todd and Gina Wiser
Larry Wolff
John D. Wolken
Bennet Wolper
Jeryl Yantis
Jim and Patty Young
Robert D. Young
Steven Young
Elizabeth F. Youngman
Zoar Outdoor

\$250 - \$499

David B. Abernathy
Diane Allemang
Terrell Anderson
John Arthur
Atlanta Whitewater Club
Brian M. Aubin
William O. Bank
Frederick W. Beck
Keith Beck
Jon Becker
Michael Beriss and Jean Carlson
Chris G. Black
Raymond Bragar
Canoe Cruisers Assn
Raphael A. Carter MD
Thomas J. Christopher
Dick 'Sarge' Colgate
Kevin Coyne
Tim Dibble
Anthony Edwards
Adam Eichberg
Stephen D. Ensign
Jeff Essmann
Chuck and Lola Estes
Michael French
Edward Gertler
Hans & Gail Geyer
Jennie Goldberg
Robert Harris and Jody Schaeffer
Alan F. James
David K. Joyce
Chris Kelly
Don and Nanci Kinser
Troy Langley

Jeffrey R. Leighton
Kevin Lewis
Harry A. Marinakis MD
Karen Merriam
Paul D. Michael
Otto Milet
Phil Montgomery
Monocacy Canoe Club
Bryan and Patty Morrison
Reuben Munger
James Murphy
Thomas O'Keefe and Rie Yamazaki
Aida M. Parkinson
Joe Pulliam
Shasta Paddlers
Quality Technology Solutions
Ted Rowe
Gary and Belinda Sanda
Steve Scarborough Family
Risa Shimoda
Bill Tilton
Robert Tyler
Werner Paddles
John R. Wilson, M.D.
Nick L. Zervos

\$500 +

David A. Decoursy
Mike Farrell
Kent Ford
James H. Gibson
Kokatat
Erica Mitchell and Jimmy Blakeney
Ken Ransford
Norwood Scott
Mowry Smith. III

\$1000 +

Rich and Stephanie Bowere
Yvon Chouinard
Chip Duckett
Scott, Lori, Zac and Riley Duffens
Joseph Greiner
Bill Krissoff
Graham Matthews
Northwest River Supply (NRS)
Sarah Stephenson
Barry Tuscano
Charles and Sandy Walbridge

\$2500 +

Andy Laakmann
Jay Kenney

Dedicated Funds for 2002

Paul Zirkelbach Colorado Access Fund
Upper Yough Access Fund
Sky River Access Fund
Paul Horner Memorial Fund
Stoney Creek River Fund

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Donations:

1. *I donated through the combined federal campaign (CFC) in 2002, why don't I appear on this list?*

a. We usually do not receive money or notice of CFC contributors until a year later, in most cases. We are more than happy to honor those contributions for the year they were made, but we must receive notification via e-mail, fax or phone – otherwise, we are forced to wait until we receive the official verification from the government. If you donated in 2002 have yet to notify our office, your name will appear in next year's list.

2. *I donated to American Whitewater, without using the Combined Federal Campaign, and my name still doesn't appear on the list.*

a. The probable reason is that you donated to a fund that has been designated as 'restricted'. Restricted funds are dedicated to specific areas (some are yet to be dedicated at all). The money put into restricted funds is unavailable to American Whitewater towards our general programs or daily expenses, and therefore, we do not count them as general 'donations', which appear in this list. A list of restricted funds for 2002 can be found below.

3. *I donated to American Whitewater, and I didn't designate my donation as restricted or as a Combined Federal Campaign, yet I still do not appear in this list.*

a. The problem could be that your donation counted towards either the 2001 year (if made towards the beginning of the year) or it counted towards the 2003 year (if made recently). If this is still not the case, or you have an specific question regarding your donation, please feel free to contact our office. The appropriate contact information is below.

4. *I was an American Whitewater 'Access Associate' and my name does not appear on the list.*

a. If you were giving to us on a monthly basis, and your donation total does not appear correct, please contact our office as soon as possible. There are a number of possible reasons, from expired credit card numbers that need updated to the duration of the monthly donation coming to term.

Questions or Comments? Contact:

Jessie Rice
Membership Coordinator
American Whitewater
(301) 589-9453
jessie@amwhitewater.org

AW Club Affiliates

ALABAMA

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

ALASKA

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

ARIZONA

Grand Canyon Pvt. Boat Assn. Flagstaff

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

CALIFORNIA

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Ch., San Jose
Sierra Club Rts, Sacramento
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor
Shasta Paddlers, Redding
Chico Paddle Heads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus

COLORADO

Colorado Whitewater Assn, Englewood
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
Arkansas Headwaters Rec Area, Salida

CONNECTICUT

AMC Boston Chapter, Bloomfield
AMC CT Chapter, Stafford Springs

GEORGIA

Georgia Canoeing Assoc., Atlanta
Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
GeorgiaTech Outdoor Rec., Atlanta

ILLINOIS

Chicago Whitewater Assn., Cary

INDIANA

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

KENTUCKY

Bluegrass Wildwater Assoc, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club

MAINE

AMC/Maine Chapter, Hallowell

MARYLAND

Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers,
Boonsboron
Garrett Comm. College, McHenry

MINNESOTA

Boat Busters Anonymous, Oakdale

MISSOURI

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

NEVADA

Sierra Nevada WW Club, Reno

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
Waterline, Manchester
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia

NEW JERSEY

KCCNY, Teaneck
AMC NY-NJ Chapter, Rockaway
Garden State Canoe Club, Millington
The Paddling Bares, Milltown
Mohawk Canoe Club, Trenton
Hunterdon County Canoe Club,
Flemington

Focus on: Carolina Canoe Club

Carolina Canoe Club, based in Raleigh, has over 700 members throughout the state of North Carolina. The club aims to provide a resource for paddlers of all kinds - whitewater, flatwater, and oceanwater. CCC was a huge part of our success in 2002 by becoming a prominent member of our club affiliate team. American Whitewater would like to thank Carolina Canoe Club for all its work and dedication to helping us continue to serve our mission.



NEW MEXICO

Adobe WW Club of NM, Albuquerque

NEW YORK

Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Sq., Ossining
Clarkson Outing Club, Potsdam
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk
Adirondac Rafting Co., Lake Placid
F.L.O.W.

NORTH CAROLINA

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh

Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem
Camp Carolina, Brevard
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville
Nantahala Racing Club, Almond

OHIO

Toledo River Gang, Waterville
KSU Kayak Club, Kent

OREGON

Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis
Outdoor Rec. Center, Corvallis

PENNSYLVANIA

Canoe Club of Gr. Harrisburg, Le Moyne
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnson
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf

SOUTH CAROLINA

Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

SOUTH DAKOTA

Whitewater! Discussion Board, Spearfish

TENNESSEE

E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club,
Chattanooga
Eastman Hiking & Canoe Club, Kingsport

TEXAS

Rockin' R' River Rides, New Braunfels
Bayou City Whitewater Club, Houston

UTAH

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

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

Join the growing network of paddling clubs that have already become affiliates and support AW as the only group devoted full-time to national conservation and access issues. Club affiliates receive many benefits, in addition to being recognized in our journal and on our website. If you are interested in becoming a club affiliate, please let us know!

For more information, contact Jessie Rice at jessie@amwhitewater.org, call our office at (866) 262-8429 or sign-up online at: www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

VIRGINIA

Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond
Canoe Cruisers Assn, Arlington
Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Reston
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
Richmond WW Club, Mechanicsville

VERMONT

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

WASHINGTON

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Kayak Pursuits, Redmond
Associated Students, Bellingham

WEST VIRGINIA

West Va. Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

WISCONSIN

Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, La Crosse

WYOMING

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson



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Corporate Sponsors Update

By A.J. McIntyre

AW/Lotus Designs Co-branded PFD and Throwbag



Joining the American Whitewater Corporate W.A.V.E. Sponsorship program, Lotus Designs continues to prove itself a company aware of the issues concerning its customers! Entering the sponsorship program on the Class III Level, Lotus has applied the AW logo to 100 Sherman PFD's.

Each PFD will carry the AW logo on the front, directly below the Lotus Designs logo. The decision to co-brand a PFD correlates directly with American Whitewater's mission of educating boaters about safety on the water, and a portion of each sale goes directly to American Whitewater. Co-branded PFD's will be available this spring through www.americanwhitewater.org, and both the Patagonia catalog and Lotus Designs website.

In addition, Lotus Designs participated in the AW Blood Drive Program, ensuring that every member of the Lotus Designs Team supports American Whitewater

through a personal membership. Lotus understands that membership is the lifeblood of AW. With their support, and the incredible support of our members, AW continues to protect and restore rivers across the US.

Kokatat Increases Events Sponsorship



Signing on as a Key Sponsor of the American Whitewater River Festivals, Kokatat has increased their support of American Whitewater this year! Kokatat will participate in all three of the River Festivals, taking place across the United States during the spring, summer and fall of 2003 on the North Fork Feather in Plumas, CA, the Deerfield in Charlemont, MA and the ever popular Gauley River in WV.

Kokatat's participation in the 2003 American Whitewater River Festivals will help AW provide venues for increased visibility of our mission of access and conservation, while educating both boaters and the local community at each festival site about whitewater issues in the surrounding areas.

Continuing Their Support



Mountain Surf has always been dedicated to American Whitewater by providing the take out for the Upper Yough, and in recent years, by maintaining a changing room for boaters. In 2003, Mountain Surf increases its support by co-branding a Duro-Ring Spray Skirt. Each co-branded skirt will sell for \$10 over retail, with the proceeds going directly to American Whitewater. Skirts can be found at the Mountain Surf store, on www.americanwhitewater.org, and at local retailers.

In 2003, Immersion Research expands its line of co-branded AW gear with a new pair of men's board shorts, and a thick skin. Last year's co-branded items were the first of their kind for American Whitewater and provided unrestricted funds for AW to support its missions. IR's co-branded 2003 line will continue to do the same, proving that IR continues to be a leader in the whitewater industry. Look for co-branded gear at www.americanwhitewater.org, the IR website, and at local outfitters and retailers near you.



For more information as to how your business can support American Whitewater, please contact AJ McIntyre, Corporate Relations Director, at aj@amwhitewater.org or 301.589.9453.

For information regarding an AW Blood Drive at your place of business, contact Jessie Rice, Membership Coordinator, at the above phone number or Jessie@amwhitewater.org.



The Lotus Design Team

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 or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater

boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

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

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not

our intent to offend our more sensitive members and readers.

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

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

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



Release For Publication

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

- ☐ I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution, will be archived on the American Whitewater web site.

Signed _____

Date _____

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

Send your material to:
Journal Editor, 1424 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910

You can save a river forever... ... by planning a gift for American Whitewater

Your gift can:

- ☐ Secure permanent access to rivers for generations to come
- ☐ Protect and/or restore an endangered whitewater river
- ☐ Promote whitewater safety
- ☐ Support the world's leading whitewater organization

Consider the following in your will:

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- ☐ insurance
- ☐ stocks
- ☐ trusts
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Forget "Open Sesame."
If you want two words that will
magically grant you access, try
"American Whitewater."

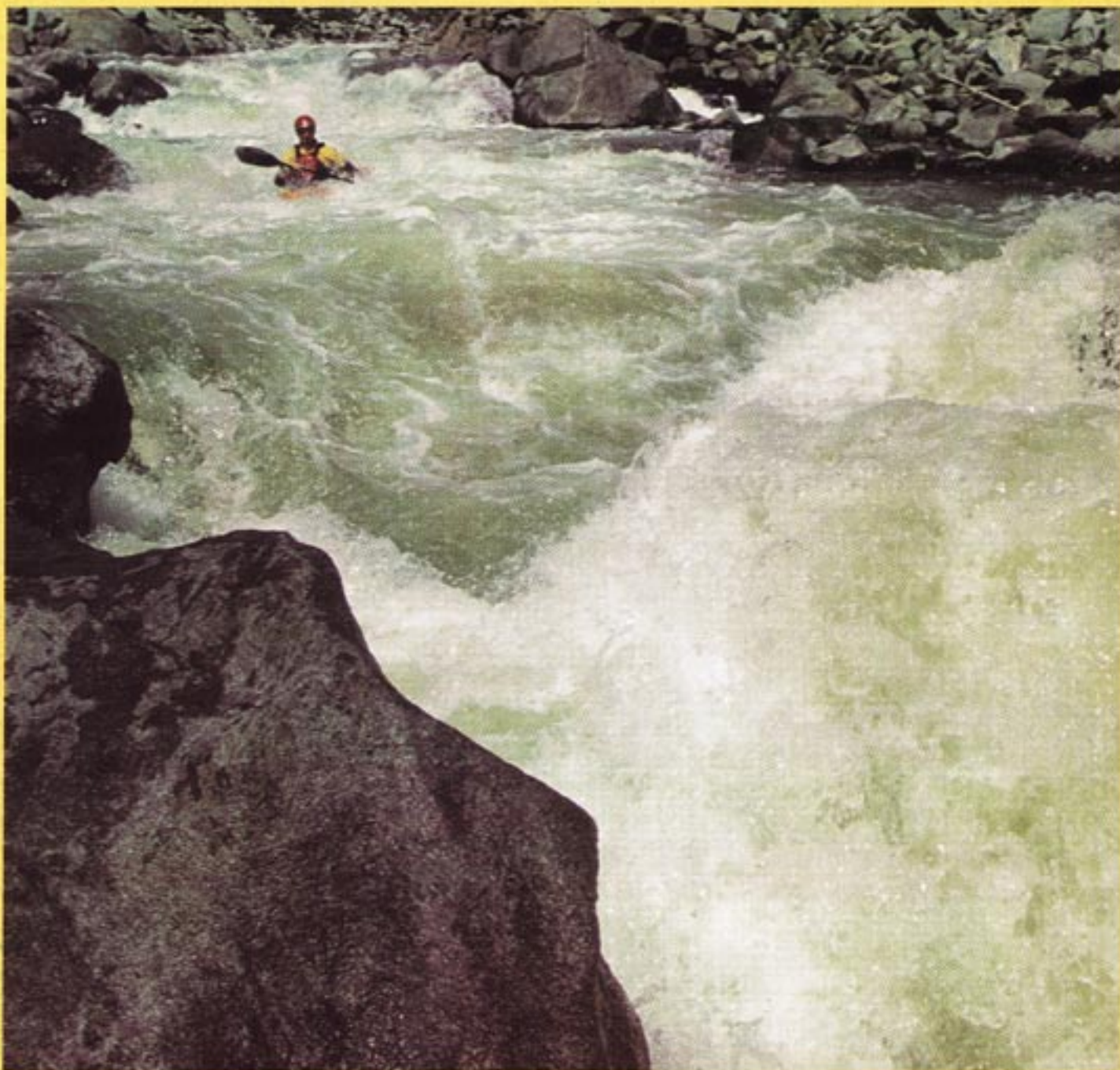
Support American Whitewater, and you're supporting
safe, legal access to rivers all over the country.

Unless the only reason you bought your kayak is because it looks really cool on top of your car, access is an important issue. And it's an issue American Whitewater has devoted itself to, full-time. AW is the only organization in the country that has someone working year-round and nation-wide to protect paddlers' ability to access whitewater safely and legally. In other words, if you want to be sure you can put in, it's time to put up - by supporting American Whitewater. Call toll-free 1-866-BOAT4AW or go to www.americanwhitewater.org to join



* get with the flow

MAN VS GNAR



The Gnar thunders and rages and pummels
and when harnessed has the power to light a small city.

The Man has opposable thumbs, titanium cojones
and a Wave Sport kayak. Cheater.



wavesport.com



The 'D' is for Dominance

Congrats Team D for winning most medals in 2002



Team D Pro: Anna Levesque, Andre Spino-Smith, Andrew Holcombe, Aleta Miller, Becky Andersen, Ben Selznick, Brad Ludden, Brandon Knapp, Brendan Mark, Brooks Baldwin, Dustin Knapp, Jayson Bowerman, Jed Selby, Keith Liles, Kelly Liles, Mariann Saether, Michael Quinif, Rush Sturges, Tobias Bersch, Tao Berman.

Photo by Jed Selby, Paddler-Dre. Visit Dagger and Team D online at www.Dagger.com



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

AW Journal

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