



Keel-Hauler's KaNews Jan. 1999

FEB. 1999 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
JAN 24, 1999 - Yeah, I know, it's about
time I printed this.

Jan 9...Roll Sessions Begin

Cliff Wire...(440) 439-6541

Jan 2, 9, 16, whatever...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

Matt Muir...(330) 668-2329

Jan 9-10...Downhill Skiing, Holiday Valley or Peak 'n' Peak

Monica Keil...(216) 581-1729

Jan 12...Meeting, Middleburg Hts. Recreation Center

See newsletter for program
announcement....15700 Bagley Rd

Volunteers Wanted for the Vermilion River Race:

Contact Tom Berneike: 216-521-1228.
scubaohio@hotmail.com

You can get the 1999 Vermilion Race
application, Waiver & Map from club
web pages:

<http://pages.prodigy.net/keelhauler>

Other Important Stuff

Also notice that the web pages now contain
a Message Board, similar to our phone hot
line. You can leave messages to each other
about impromptu trips or whatever. 1999
Proposed Trip Schedule is posted on the
Web. You can still volunteer to lead trips.
Posting on Web can be changed at any
time by sending trip change to John Kobak
keelhauler@prodigy.net.

MEMBERSHIP

Jeff Kobak will be the temporary
Membership Chairman while John is out of
town from 1/14 to 3/15. Send any new
applications or dues to him.

Jeff Kobak, 30940 Lorain Rd, N. Olmsted,
OH 44070, 440-779-5841

KEEL HAULERS CANOE CLUB MINUTES

DATE: December 8, 1998

New members and guests: None.

Chair Reports:

Library: Ron Whitney had nothing new to
report since the last meeting.

Membership: John Kobak reported that we are
doing "pretty well," but there are still 160

members who have not paid their 1999 dues.
The total membership for 1998 was 384. John
announced that he is looking for someone to
oversee membership during January and
February, when he plans to be away. **Pool
Sessions:** A series of eight pool sessions at
Orange High School, will begin on January 9,
1999.

Safety: Chuck Singer's report focused on the
value of bulkheads as opposed to foot pegs for
prevention of foot and leg injuries. When
running waterfalls or steep rock slides, the
speed of impact can cause foot pegs or legs to
break. A bulkhead, particularly one padded
with foam, is stronger and distributes the force
on the bottoms of the paddler's feet better than
foot pegs. Even with bulkheads, however,
running waterfalls involves some risk of
significant injury and should only be done if
you are willing to accept the risk.

Chuck announced that he will not be at the
upcoming January, February, and March
meetings, and he suggested that someone else
present the safety reports at those meetings. He
further recommended that meetings
occasionally include safety reports that deal
with sea kayaking and noted that early 1999
might be a good time to initiate such a practice.

Old business: There was extended discussion
of possible sites for club meetings next year
while the Middleburg Heights Recreation
Center is unavailable. Cliff Wire announced
that the Bedford Recreation Center is available
for \$15 per hour. Other possibilities he had
investigated would cost more, and their
availability is not guaranteed. Gary Smith
reported that the Garfield Heights Library
would be available but only if club meetings
can be held to one hour, from 7:45 to 8:45 PM.
The Garfield Heights and Independence
Community Centers are possibilities. Rick
Feinberg reported that the Peninsula Library
appears to be available. Concern was expressed
by some members about the distance they
would have to drive to Peninsula; the site's
proximity to the Cuyahoga River was noted as
an attractive feature. Cathy Shilling suggested
that the inquiries continue over the next month
and that we plan to make a final decision at the
January meeting.

Matt Muir reported that the 1999 trip schedule
is coming along well, but a few outings still
need trip organizers.

New business: John Kobak reported that new
features have been added to the club's web site,
including a bulletin board to facilitate
communication among members.

Cathy Shilling announced that American
Whitewater is seeking feedback on its proposal
to open the Yellowstone to whitewater boating.
Cathy also proposed splitting the August Yough
trip in the same way that is now being planned
for the July outing.

Kurt Reno proposed a "Kids' Introduction to the
Yough Weekend" that would include a day of
biking and a raft- or ducky-trip down the river.
There was some discussion of the rules that
would have to be followed for such an event to
occur safely; the feeling of most members was
that primary responsibility for judgment and
decision-making would have to rest with
parents. Kurt agreed to organize and run the
event. The proposal received enthusiastic
support from all members present.

Tom Berneike announced that sign-up sheets
are now available for people to volunteer to
work on the 1999 Vermilion River Race. He
particularly cited a need for someone to take
charge of registration.

Trip reports: John Kobak reported having
spent two weeks sea kayaking, diving, and
camping in the Virgin Islands. His description
of difficulties paddling through stormy weather
and having to walk 45 minutes to the nearest
gourmet restaurant failed to arouse much
sympathy.

Chuck Singer announced that the Yough is
currently running at 5½ inches, which is its
lowest level in recent history. It is runnable, but
very scrappy, especially at Cucumber.

Matt Muir noted a Slippery Rock trip last
Saturday. Despite warm, dry weather, the river
was up to 0 because of a rare dam release.

Evening program: Christmas celebration,
including food, conversation, photos, and
videos of world-class whitewater.

Call Some Friends

By John Kobak

Here is a list of some of old friends who forgot
to send in their dues. Give them a call, ask
them to send their \$15 today and I'll keep them
in the yearbook and they won't miss out on all
the great trips planned for 1999..

Dennis Birch Oberlin, OH

Jim Bozdog Hubbard, OH

Ed Brabender Woodmere, OH

Scott Brieckle Kent, OH

Robert Catchpole Youngstown, OH

Denny Cilensek Mentor, OH

Joe Dawson Sterling Hts., MI

James Eaton Vancouver, WA

Beverly Faragher Chagrin Falls, OH

Jeff Farr Cleveland, OH

Karl Friedrich Mentor, OH
 Hal Goodwin Aurora, OH
 Jeff Greiner Aurora, OH
 Dan Groth Chagrin Falls, OH
 Boze Houck New Riegel, OH
 John Howald Freeport, IL
 Gregory Huth Cleveland, OH
 Blaise Jacobson Painesville, OH
 Peter James Worthington, OH
 Bill Jones Cleveland, OH
 David Kanning Hudson, OH
 Mark Kasinec Cleveland, OH
 Ken Kmiec Parma, OH
 David Kuceyeski East Canton, OH
 Fred Lemke Cincinnati, OH
 George Linn Norwalk, OH
 Marinko Marijolic Eastlake, OH
 John Maroney Elyria, OH
 Charles Mason Franklin, PA
 Rand McFarland Grand River, OH
 George Metz Newbury, OH
 Eric "Max" Metz Kent, OH
 Ronald Poirson Chagrin Falls, OH
 George Qua Beachwood, OH
 Scott Rhoades South Euclid, OH
 Chris Rognon Huron, OH
 Dave Roush Highland Hts, OH
 Brian Sammon Seven Hills, OH
 Tom Sheridan Fairlawn, OH
 Jeff Simcox Silver Lake, OH
 James Smith Madison, OH
 Darlene Snider Huron, OH
 Donald Speller Cleveland, OH
 Kevin Sullivan Westlake, OH
 Mark Sykes Hudson, OH
 Phil Thompson Lisbon, OH
 Steve Troyer Waterford, PA
 Andy Tubbesing Grafton, OH

CONSERVATION UPDATE

By Anne Kmiec

NATIONAL

The MAI Threatens U.S. Environmental Laws (MAI- Multinational Agreement on Investments)

From *Sierra Magazine*

The MAI purports to "liberalize" the rules for international investing. Since 1995 representatives of the world's wealthiest nations and corporations have been working on the MAI in France. The ostensible purpose of the MAI is to protect the rights of international investors. It would achieve this by giving foreign corporations equal standing with domestic ones, in effect guaranteeing them the right to directly sue national governments when a "lost opportunity to profit from a planned investment." For example, a foreign timber company owning land in the Pacific Northwest could sue the U.S. for damages if efforts to save the salmon prevented it from logging to the waterline. To resolve such disputes, countries would give their

unconditional consent to go before an industry-friendly tribunal of the complainer's choice. Currently under NAFTA the US-based Ethyl Corp. is suing Canada for \$251 million for banning the company's gasoline additive MMT, a suspected neurotoxin. Under the MAI, similar suits could become commonplace, forcing governments to pay dearly for the privilege of protecting their citizens.

Secondly, the MAI would relieve industry of "performance requirements," regulations like those mandating that manufacturers use certain percentages of recycled material. Threatened too would be state laws like those in Oregon and Idaho forbidding the export of raw logs. The US. would be allowed to shield certain environmental protections but only if it agreed not to pass any more such laws in the future, and to phase out the offending statutes.

Thirdly, the MAI would also spell an end to boycotts and trade sanctions against countries or businesses violating environmental, labor, and human-rights standards. For example Massachusetts' ban on buying from firms that do business in Burma, and Maryland's proposed restrictions on trade with Nigeria. For more information contact Dan Seligman at 202.675.2387, dan.seligman@sierraclub.org/trade.

There are almost 50 organizations opposed to the MAI including the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, United Auto Workers, and the United Steelworkers of America.

CLEVELAND/AKRON/LORAIN

From "Cuyahoga Follows Crooked Path to Heritage Designation," by Kathryn Brock. *Sierra Club News*. Nov-Dec 98

Thanks to ten years of hard work by the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP), President Clinton designated the Cuyahoga River as an American Heritage River on 30 July 1998. The American Heritage Rivers program showcases 14 rivers, providing federal support to grassroots efforts to clean up waterways, develop parks, promote economic growth, and preserve historic sites. Ironically in 1969 the 'flaming' Cuyahoga became the symbol for degradation of the environment that inspired the Clean Water Act. The American Heritage River designation

recognizes the Cuyahoga as a symbol of the recovery of urban rivers and credits the hard work of numerous organizations, community groups, and private interests in northeast Ohio. We thank all who have helped the Cuyahoga River through the years. For information on the Cuyahoga River RAP, call Kay Carlson or Jan Rybka at 216.241.2414 or me at 216.671.6512.

From "Hopkins Runway Lengthening Would Sully the Rocky River, by Matthew Englehart. *Club News*. Nov-Dec 98

The Rocky River Metropark Valley lies about 4,500 feet from the SW end of the main runway at Cleveland Hopkins Airport. The City of Cleveland has proposed extending the runway to within 1,300 feet of the valley. What dangers will the park face when the end of the runway is moved three times closer and planes fly overhead at a third of their present height? A little known stream called Abrams Creek helps answer this question.

Abrams Creek lies 1,500 feet from the SW end of the main runway. There are strong parallels between the Rocky River Reservation and the Abrams Creek Valley. Like the Rocky River, Abrams Creek flows between steep valley walls lined with older-growth maples, oak, pine, and the occasional hemlock. The creek's valley is similar in scale to the Metropark valley, being roughly 60 feet deep and 500 feet wide, while the Metropark valley is about 10 feet deep and 1,200 feet wide. Moreover, the present distance between the creek and the main runway is actually greater than that between the Metropark valley and the proposed runway extension. Given these similarities, we can extrapolate the effects of the proposed extension on the Metropark valley by examining the present environment in the creek valley.

Abrams Creek Valley is wholly unsuitable for recreational and biological purposes. The creek itself is polluted with ammonia and glycol, byproducts of wintertime de-icing of runways and planes. This contamination persists year-round, since chemicals absorbed by the ground for the past 50 years leach out during the summer. As a result, dead fish regularly turn up on the banks of the creek further downstream, on NASA property. These fish swim upstream from where Abrams Creek flows into the Rocky River, only to die in the poisoned waters flowing past an

airport that's been in violation of state and federal water standards for years.

Aerospace experts on the Olmsted Falls Airport Committee (www.freelyellow.com/members2/mhh-consulting) have shown conclusively to Cleveland and the Federal Aviation Administration that the proposed runway extension is technically unnecessary. You can express your views to the administrators of the Cleveland Metroparks at 4104 Fulton Ave., Cleveland 44114 or call them at 216.351.6300.

OHIO

From "Who Should Pay To Clean Up Toxic Waste Sites?," Ohio PIRG Citizen Advocate Summer 1998

On March 11, the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved a bill, strongly opposed by Ohio PIRG and other state PIRGs, that would shift much of the cost of cleaning up Ohio's 34 worst toxic sites from polluters to taxpayers and weaken public health standards for toxic cleanups.

Congress passed the original Superfund law in 1980, after a nationwide controversy erupted over the Love Canal toxic site in New York, where children became ill after polluters dumped 20,000 tons of toxic chemicals.

Under the Superfund law, the vast majority of money for toxic cleanups comes from two sources: the polluters responsible for creating the sites and a small tax on the oil and chemical industries.

The tax expired in 1995, however, and with funding for new cleanups running low, the pressure on Congress to act quickly on Superfund is intense.

Chemical and mining industry lobbyists are hoping to use that pressure to win changes in the law that would force taxpayers to pick up more of the costs of toxic cleanup.

For more information to PIRG's Campaign to Make Polluters Pay, visit <http://www.pirg/enviro/toxics/superfund> From "Pollution has Become Ohio's Best-Kept Secret," by Marc Conte. Sierra Club News. Sept-Oct 98

Ohio's new environmental secrecy law, known officially as the "audit privilege" law, went into effect in March 1997. The law allows violators of Ohio's environmental laws to hide the evidence within internal "audits."

Under this law, companies can keep such information secret from law enforcement agencies, the Ohio EPA and the public - even when it could jeopardize our health and safety. The law makes it more difficult to prosecute criminals, and impossible for some Ohioans injured by toxic contamination to learn which chemicals they were exposed to.

Governor Voinovich signed the bill into law, despite opposition from the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Ohio Citizen Action, Sierra Club, Rivers Unlimited, Ohio Environmental Council, League of Ohio Sportsmen., and others.

Why? Because it's the best law money can buy. Supporters, including Timken Company lobbying groups gave over half a million dollars to the legislators who voted for the bill in the 1995-1996 election cycle.

REGION

Excerpted from "Canyon of Hope," by Jim Snyder. Into the Canyon...Friends of the Cheat. Nov 98

The Cheat River is drawing a lot of attention as of late on two fronts at either end of the watershed. First the good news: the Canyon is continuing its apparent rebound. There are promising signs occurring. A Great Blue Heron took up residence near the upstream end of the Canyon for over a month in the middle of the summer. Near the end of his stay a Bald Eagle was sighted in the same area. It was the first Bald Eagle I'd ever seen in the wild. It was quite beautiful with a brilliant white tail and a patient demeanor. He perched way up in an old dead tree across the river for hours. After a while the Heron flew up from the flatwater directly towards the eagle's tree. The Heron started a high circling of the tree near eye level to the eagle. The heron cawed steadily and brought the circles ever closer. Fishing birds negotiating territory that could've been plucked from a scene centuries ago. "Fishing birds" is the key concept here...About a week later someone caught a 20" trout just downstream of Albright.

More good news came from the biologists of the recent National Water Quality Assessment study being conducted by the USGS from Pittsburgh. They identified five different species of fish this summer. The Cheat is poised for a biological rebound. This is possibly attributable to optimal dilution factors in

recent months but also I think the cumulative effect of the State's treatments at the T and T site and Patriot's efforts on Green's Run. There is still a problem with some minerals settling out in the mainstream Cheat. This is largely due to inadequate pond size at the T and T mines. This problem could be addressed in the foreseeable future because of funds created by a recent settlement with T and T, and the sizable yearly fines Paul Thomas pays can go a long ways towards maintenance costs.

At the upstream end of the watershed there is still strife. Allegheny Wood products is mining the mature forest of the Blackwater Canyon for wood. Sever polarization, litigation, and accusations have marked the struggle between the exploitation of a valuable resource and the defense of this treasured wilderness. It is this writer's opinion that Allegheny is a company that could be successfully implored to maintain the highest standards for the biology and visual corridors of the many thousands of tourists who value this destination. The worst pollution of creek valleys I've seen has been from small fly-by-night companies. Allegheny is a very big company who wants to stay in good standing with the authorities in the areas where they do business. It is in their best interest to have a clean operation underway in the heavily watched valley. It would be effective to have the force of law behind the protection and possibly monitoring by non-profit groups. There is talk of a land trade but that is still "talk" as far as I know and what of the new area to be logged? It's all far from settled and common ground will have to be found somehow. The passion of the defense of this special place speaks of its beauty and value. I hope everyone is listening. There is hope for reclamation and preservation. And there is real chance for both. Historically the Cheat has suffered from its encounters with man and yet has found a way to run pure enough for fish and recreationists, right through the year 2000. It's hard to say how the battle upstream will settle out but we are compelled to hope for a best possible scenario. And so the Friends go steadily on, compelled by collective hope.

"Helping Cheat Canyon Raft Outfitters," by Charlie Walbridge. Into the Canyon...Friends of the Cheat. Nov 98

From a high point reached in the early 1980s, rafting on the Cheat River Canyon has declined steadily for over a decade. Bad publicity arising from the 1985 flood and the mine seal blowout on Muddy Creek have contributed to this. Another factor has been that only one company (Appalachian Wildwaters) is actually based in Preston County. Improved boats and gear have allowed New and Yough River outfitters to continue operations at their home bases during spring high water. Much effort has gone into publicizing these operations at the expense of the Cheat.

Today the Cheat Canyon is West Virginia's best kept secret, an undiscovered gem for the early season rafter. The river's vast, undammed drainage means that flows vary widely during the April to June rafting season; the river is never the same twice. Watching spring reawaken the Appalachian hillsides, bringing first the redbud, then the delicate green leaves, and finally the Mountain Laurel in full bloom is especially wonderful when riding a wild river through rapids like "Decision," "Big Nasty," "Maze," "High Falls," "Coliseum." Harder than the Yough or New, but easier than the Upper Gauley, the Cheat Canyon is a "must" trip for any Eastern rafting enthusiast.

In an effort to bring more economic benefits from tourism to Preston County, Friends of the Cheat will be working with outfitters and area businesses to publicize the river. Our first effort: bringing outdoor writers from the entire region to sample the river and area during next year's Cheat Festival. The effort is being led by me, a former Cheat River guide. Anyone with ideas or contacts would call Charlie at 304.379.9002, or through FOC at 304.379.3141 or FOC@cheat.org.

Sign Up Now!

By Sue Ventrone

Do you have friends that are jealous of your weekend activities? Do you have co-workers that yearn for ugly roof racks? What about family members that figure that it is better to join you than sit home pouting? Keep those relationships intact by suggesting that they join you on the water this Spring. Tell them about the information-packed, cost-effective Fundamentals of Kayaking classes offered

through the Red Cross! For a paltry sum, they, too, can obtain kayaking basics and determine if they would like to join you on the open sea or down that raging river some day. Winter classes include:

Sundays January 17 - February 7 from 4:00 - 7:00 at Lakewood High School

Sundays March 7 - March 28 from 4:00 - 7:00 at Lakewood High School

To sign up, call Lorrie Beatty (216) 431-3081 at the Red Cross. Tell your friends now - before Spring rains havoc on your relationships!

CHILLIN' ON THE GAULEY

by Paul Lang

It is a question of need. I find my spirit severely saddle-sore. I think it's from riding a sort of mutant tyrannical monster - a beast that has been carrying me along on a surging wave of lost humanity, widely known as the rat race. I need to find a better, wetter ride. I need to chill. In short, it has been too long since I paddled some good whitewater...

The promise of perfect late November weather combined with adequate flow out the Summersville Dam is all the incentive I need to e-mail the scheduled trip leader, John Kobak and ask what his plans are. John's initial response is something to the effect that unless his head cold clears up the only paddling he'll be experiencing is at the Kobak Homestead. Later e-mails confirm that John is still remarkable in his ability to bounce back from adversity -- he now is good to go, but the Corps has cut the release back to 800 cfs -- he now does not know what he wants to do. But John is nothing if not persistent, and much to my delight his persistence pays off. His Friday afternoon call to the Corps reveals a Saturday release of 1200 cfs.

The trip is on! John is driving down accompanied by my new friend Stu Koster, a bakery operator from Michigan, and we may meet up with other tag-alongs on Saturday. Even better, my wife JoAnn, the Sweetest Shuttle Bunny I know, has agreed to come along.

Saturday morning dawns clear and crisp. John and Stu arrived late Friday night. Just like old times for John and me, except that in the old days our ever-gallant companion had always been the redoubtable Day Glow David Boyd, a.k.a. Cat-in-the-Hat. All we need for a truly realistic reenactment of the old days is for Stu to don a bit more colorful kayaking garb and to... , to.... Ah well, a Stu-da-Baker or a Cat-in-the-Hat; a third is a third, I'll leave it at that.

As we are getting ready to shuttle, another of my new friends and soon-to-be hero, Josh Kaufman shows up. Josh has brought his

video camera with him, and that makes him everybody's hero.

The trip is good. The trip is cool. If you'd been able to come along you'd witness yours truly doin' some serious chillin' in the Room of Doom. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

By the time shuttle is set, the day has progressed from frost all over to warm as toast. A number of other boaters are milling about, ready to put on, including a group from the D. C. area and a couple of Pyranha paddling locals. On the first surfing wave I comment to Stu and Josh that I feel overdressed. Josh responds that we should always have such Thanksgiving-weekend problems.

Stu is paddling a new boat, a Wave Sport Godzilla. I ask him how He likes it.

*With a purposeful grimace
And a terrible sound
He pulls the spitting
High tension wires down...*

Stu says he likes his new boat fine. Me, I cannot get that darned Blue Oyster Cult song out of my head.

We play our way down to Initiation. A less experienced boater from Indiana, also named John, is a little unsure of what to expect from the river at this level. He seems also to be a bit unsure of the order of the rapids, so we informally shepherd him and his friend on down.

The first of the big rapids is Insignificant. At today's level I feel confident I can do the boof move near the bottom on river left. So does one of the locals. We both are a little less than aggressive in our efforts in making the move to get left. Our reward for our lack of effort is the same. We both piton on the rock we are trying to boof, and we both flip. Those who choose the more traditional line are rewarded with drier sinuses, although they miss a great view of the fish.

In the first rapid below Insignificant the undercut rock on far river left that caused a bit of mayhem back on Gauley Fest Weekend is quite apparent. And it's quite apparent that this is a good place to avoid at any level.

Indiana John is showing some lack of Gauley knowledge when he asks if we are at Pillow yet. That's OK. I like people who aren't afraid to ask. No, we are now at Iron Curtain, a big wave train. John Kobak later attests that this is the only rapid he has a problem with all day. I'm lucky to be right behind him -- I get to see all of it - it being the bottom of the Kobak Pirouette.

The next rapid of consequence is Pillow Rock. Pillow, ah Pillow, how you've been degraded. Once considered a Class V+, American Whitewater now considers Pillow a mere Class IV. But Pillow Rock still has one salient feature to confound the unwary: The Room of Doom.

Back on a similarly beautiful Memorial Day weekend, at similar flows (850-1200 cfs), I watched my buddy Rob Hammond attain the Room and make it seem effortless. So I similarly attempted to attain the Room. One small problem with my attempt: It was not similar. I flipped on the pillow. Not wanting to swim and unable to paddle roll on my onside due to being right up against Pillow Rock, I let go of my paddle and hands rolled. This is great! Well, it seemed great until I watched my paddle get sucked way deep into the crack in the Room. Unwilling to risk life and limb for a mere piece of fiberglass, I abandoned my paddle and continued downstream with a friend's breakdown. (I did get that paddle back, but that's another story).

Not unlike this past spring, I run Pillow while my buddies scout. On my first run I attempt the splatt and get what I always get for this sort of effort -- trashed. I spend the next 10 minutes or so attempting enders at Volkswagen while watching others run. In the meantime Josh has made his run and with video camera in hand, is set up on Pillow Rock. After waiting and waiting with John and Stu yet to run even once, I figure what the heck, I'll carry up and run again. This run is good fun. My attitude is decidedly casual. I get stern squirted in the middle of the run and for once actually get something resembling a splatt on Pillow -- all on video!

*...Oh no! They say he's got
To go. Go, go Godzilla!*

John and Stu have completed their video-recorded runs ahead of me and have gotten out on river right to eat lunch. Lunch really isn't part of my itinerary, I don't feel like carrying up to run again, and doing enders at Volkswagen Rock has proven mostly fruitless. So, what to do? If idle hands are the devil's workshop, then bored paddlers are the paddlesnake's workshop. This bored paddler decides that attaining the Room is kind of looking like fun, especially since there's gonna be time o-pletely...

*Oh, no! There goes Tokyo
Go, Go Godzilla!*

Some people just never learn. I have little trouble paddling up and onto the Pillow. I find I am leaning aggressively onto the Pillow. I find that the proper technique is to aggressively lift the upstream thigh. Unfortunately I find this bit of enlightenment only after flipping. Deja Vu all over again. Out of breath after a couple of unsuccessful roll attempts methinks, "Well I'm not losing my paddle to that infernal crack again". So I pull the rip chord on the ejector seat.

*...History shows
Again and again*

*How Nature points up
The folly of men.*

Now for the Chillin'. 'Twas a good thing that the local Pyranha boys are doin' some herbal chillin' up on Pillow Rock. Cause yours truly is doin' some bodacious chillin' in the Room. 'Tis an even better thing that our video boater has put his camera away. But the best thing is that our video boater has the only throw rope on that side of the river. My dear friends eating lunch on river right are of the attitude that if you can't help, 'tis a grand thing to sit back and enjoy the show.

And a show it is. Swimming in the Room of Doom with a boat and paddle to play tag with is easy. At least it's easy compared with trying to swim out. After I have completed a few round trips of futility, someone has the good sense to yell for a rope. Yes, I could have been respectful to life as I know it and gotten the hell outta there first, but that would have left some poor slob of a kayaker (namely me) without any paddling gear. So I tied my paddle to the rope. Eureka! My paddle is saved from that accursed crack.

I again try to swim out with my boat. My boat has other ideas. Next step, tie boat onto rope. By stern. By stern 'cause that's the only way I can be sure it won't come loose. Of course this leaves a ton of water in the bow. I hope those gents up there got some stout arms if they think they're gonna pull this thing straight up Pillow Rock. Although pulling straight up doesn't work, pulling upstream does.

My boat and I are good friends. My boat and I part company. I sadly miss my boat. Perhaps the separation anxiety would be lessened if someone could have produced another throw rope the instant my boat was taken away. Because at the moment the only thing I am missing more than my boat is my ability to consistently keep my head above water. I yell for a rope. "Sorry dude, the only one we got is tied to your boat." They say patience is a virtue. At the moment virtue takes a back seat to sundry other concerns.

A rope, a rope! My kingdom for a rope! I have no kingdom. Can I please have a rope? At last my hero, the video king Josh, throws his rope to me. I can see it's not easy for him to pull my lard butt around that big rock, so I'm patient until I see the rope clear the top of the rock. When I get around the rock myself, I see Josh is fairly spent with reeling me in and is having all he can do to keep pulling. My answer is to pull hand-over-hand. The water is not terribly unpleasant, but I just hate to keep hogging it all to myself. I stumble ashore glad to be a land animal once again, look across the river, and give the thumbs up to John and Stu.

After drying out a bit on the rock, I find I still have a boat to empty. I also have a rapid to run again. My third run was exceptionally clean. I just wish I had taken it before and instead of attempting attainments.

But at this point the fact that I had actually been chillin' escapes me.

At the bottom my friend Stu asks me if I am cold. Before I can answer, Stu interjected that I must be, 'cause I sure was chillin' in The Room. That Stu -- what an imagination! Albert Einstein, another one of my heroes, was once quoted, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." With that kind of philosophy, a decided mean streak, and the gift of hyperbole Big Al could have landed himself a hell of a job on weekday afternoon talk radio. Then again he could just as easily been the select subject on weekday TV talk shows. I can see it now: "Men Who Leave Their Families to Marry Their Cousins". Alas, poor Albert, if only you knew... But I digress.

At the surfing wave just downstream of Pillow I decide to do a little tandem surfing with my Kayaking Lord and Master, Mr. John Kobak. John's concern for me is quite touching. While side by side on the wave he asks me if I am cold. I answer that I am much warmer as I am now so close to my #1 Hero. With this show of affection I am once again treated to those tender mercies so unique to my Kayaking Lord and Master: A quick paddle blade to my chest and John is no longer troubled with having to share a surf with a serf like me.

The river below Pillow Rock is composed mostly of Class II-III until it gets to Lost Paddle. Just above Lost Paddle the Meadow River adds its flow to the Gauley. I have never paddled any section of the Meadow, although I'd like to someday. In my head, thoughts of the Meadow and its uncertain fate due to a proposed power line crossing merge with the song about The Original Wrathful Environmentalist.

*With a purposeful grimace
And a terrible sound
He pulls the spitting
High tension wires down...*

*Oh, no, there goes The Meadow
Go, go, Godzilla...*

*History shows
Again and again
How Nature points up
The folly of men.*

We arrive at Lost Paddle. I like Lost Paddle at this level. It's not as pushy as at full release, but it makes up for it by being a lot more technical and creekly. The D. C. paddlers, the locals, and the Keelhaulers all seem to run this long rapid at about the same time. And we all do fine. Same for Ship Rock, only by now the locals have gotten way ahead of us for who knows what reason. Perhaps they are performing some sort of smouldering sacrificial ritual for what is coming up -- Iron Ring.

Iron Ring at this level is one mean-lookin' mutha. If you've never seen it at low

water, I would highly encourage you to stop and scout. If you were so hapless as to be too casual about your approach in the top part of the rapids, where a nasty hole lurks, then heaven help your dermal layer in the left side of what's below. Because what's below is Woodstock Rock. Go right of the rock and the worst you can probably expect is an abrupt round of ego downsizing. Go left, through a half a boat length wide, horseshoe-shaped defile created in the olden days by loggers blasting the riverbed and, and, ...well it ain't gonna be pretty.

Those of us who get out to scout find this sight inspiring. Those who don't -- the locals -- have found their inspiration elsewhere. The scouting crowd is impressed with their daring-do. They both attempt to boof over the top hole, only to stall, fall in the hole, backender, and flip. At the time, methinks that that only one thing kept them from being washed over to the nasty spot on the left -- some providential water sprite intervening on their behalf for good deeds done at the Room of Doom. They would later attest that they had seen what they were attempting screwed up so many times with nary a harmful result that the risks seemed minimal. As the lone swimmer, I am a sinner. I long for redemption. But that broken record of a song is still coursing through my synapses.

*...History shows
Again and again
How Nature points up
The folly of men.*

I, along with all the spectators, elect to walk.

The rest of the day is largely uneventful Gauley fare. Because the late autumn sun has long since deserted the depths of the canyon that is the Upper Gauley, we spend little time playing. Everybody runs Sweets Falls. Some are upright at the bottom and some are not. I don't keep score, but I think all the Keelhaulers remain upright.

At the takeout we bid good-bye to my hero Josh. Seems he's got some kind of test to study for or whatnot, so he will not be paddling with us tomorrow. Josh has his priorities. I leave it to you, gentle reader, to judge their propriety -- I am not one to malign my heroes.

Lest the reader get the impression that we kayakers in general, and Keelhaulers in particular, are of a sort that would chafe old Oliver Cromwell's backside, let me say this. While on the river before, during, and after my little escapade in the Room, I must admit that my attitude was decidedly, shall we say, Cavalier. Still I beg the reader's indulgence, for the main purpose of my narrative is to entertain. I leave it to the reader to choose if lean scraps of knowledge are to be gleaned from these scribbles. For later that evening, away from the fun and excitement of the moment, I had time to muse. My introspection led me to ponder my fate had no one been on Pillow Rock

with a throw bag. A number of troubling questions flitted in and out of my mind. Mainly, could I have escaped the Room without assistance? The upshot is that I'm glad I never needed to find out. And yes, Josh, that *does* make you and the locals heroes.

Sunday dawns not too dissimilar from Saturday: Mostly clear and a little frosty, but decidedly warmer. With our Keelhauler paddling group reduced to three, and with one of those three facing a long road trip back to Michigan, we opt for an early start. Hence John and JoAnn have long since been running shuttle before any other boaters even arrive at the put in.

Stu and I talk of various things while waiting. Stu regales me with his newfound knowledge of volcanic vents in the deep ocean known as fumaroles and the weird life forms found nearby them. This discussion of strange aquatic creatures leads, in a free and easy progression, to a discussion of our paddling partner. No, we are not bashing My Lord of Kayaking. In fact our conversation held a touch of awe. I can see the old guy has slowed down a little bit in his playing in the last year or so. But still, he's the only 62-year-old I know who is regularly out there paddling the likes of the Big Sandy, Upper Yough, and Upper Gauley.

As the other boaters begin to filter in our conversation is interrupted by one of the women from D. C. "Hi, I'm T____," she says. I say, yes, I remember, we were introduced yesterday. "Well I don't remember your name and 'Room of Doom Guy' is probably not the only name you'll want to live with." I guess I'll be a long time living that one down, my name is Paul. "OK Paul, while you were in the Room, did you ever think about stemming the crack?" If the reader will pardon my ignorance of mountain climbing lingo, the reader can only imagine where my thoughts might be heading at the moment. Something like 'I know us male Keelhaulers are of a MANLY sort, but sheesh!' I respond that I do not understand. "You know, kind of like wedge yourself in the crack and climb up." Well no, that thought had not occurred to me. I hope I never find myself in a position again where I might test its efficacy.

Not long after this conversation has ended, my Sweetest Shuttle Bunny arrives with her precious cargo. Another day of fun on the river begins. This day is pretty nondescript for the most part. We notice right away that the release has been cut back (to 950 cfs, as I would later find out). We play in a couple of spots above Insignificant, we run Insignificant cleanly; we head on down to Pillow.

John asks, "Hey Paul, gonna try for the Room of Doom today?"

"Hell no!" is my reply.

At this point in our paddling relationship, John and I rarely describe our lines to one another. Not that it would do much good, for unless there is a significant hazard to be pointed out, I doubt either one of us would

listen. Still I have to wonder -- did John really plan on catching that grabby eddy in the Room? I don't ask, I just whoop. John later admits that his line had been something of an improvisation. Like "I'm too far left and I've got two options -- splatt Pillow or eddy out in the Room." I can appreciate eddying out in the Room, but it's too bad we didn't get to see that splatt! I can only hope John will indulge *next* time.

We go through Lost Paddle and point out a few landmarks to Stu. Like the hole at the bottom of Third Drop where the Ratts' & the James' have been known to surf. Also the raft line at fourth drop -- not so gnarly as we run it today, but plenty gnarled with big holes at full release.

John says he wants to grab a bite at Iron Ring. This is cool with me -- I again don't feel the need to eat, but scouting that bad boy sounds enlightening. Stu offers me an orange. I've got other things on my mind. Like redemption. As John and Stu are packing up and getting ready to walk one of them asks, "You running it, Paul?" I respond that I might. I wait until I feel that at least one of my companions is in his boat at the bottom of the drop. I do not follow my line of yesterday. Securing my spray skirt and locking my posture to the 'serious business attitude', I am off.

My plan is to run the center tongue from the top, boof the hole in the first part of the drop, then dodge the steep hole at the bottom. An alternative would have been to take a line more routinely run at full release -- begin on the left tongue and work right. About midway into the approach, a hole that I hadn't thought much of while scouting has me wishing I had gone with the standard plan. It kicks me left. This tidbit of unexpected fortune has me spouting language I'd prefer not to repeat in this narrative. Only one thing to do now lad; dig in and head right with all your might. I am relieved to clear the first hole with not so much as the merest lifting of my bow. The second hole awaits. On my only other run of Iron Ring at this level, the second hole was the one that got me. This makes my redemption today all the sweeter. I am through clean, clean, clean.

Redemption, as Mr. Kobak would have one believe, can be a short-lived water sprite. In some no-name drop below Iron Ring I get flipped -- such are the kayaking fortunes of the oppressed.

One other river highlight not to be missed at this level is the set of surf waves a few hundred yards above Sweet's Falls. At least it's not to be missed by me. John just paddles right on by them -- and this is no surprise. But I *told* Stu about them. His feeble attempt at surfing disappoints me. Stu, your loss is my gain. Back on Memorial Day I remember having to fight my fellow Keelhaulers for a place on those waves. By the time I'm done playing John and Stu have already gone over Sweet's.

It is at this point that I choose to end my tale of Chillin' on The Gauley. Too soon I am back riding the same old monster in the same old rat race. But for one brief and glorious late November weekend another monster – the one in the song -- reminds me of *“the folly of men”* – and to chill.

PADDLING AND THE MEANING OF LIFE: LABOR DAY ON THE LOWER YOUGH

by Rick Feinberg

September 7, 1998

Here I was, sitting at home minding my own business on the afternoon of Saturday, September 6th, when I received a call from Vince Kremperger asking me to paddle the Lower Yough with him and Karen Petit the next day. My wife, Nancy, had just had surgery two days before. It wasn't exactly major, but neither was it trivial, and she was still feeling pretty wiped out. So, as a good husband, I told him thanks but no thanks.

Luckily, my sweetie overheard the conversation, immediately figured out what was going on, and insisted that she'd be OK. She proclaimed that there was little I could do at home to help. Then she added, with her peerless diplomatic skill, that she'd feel better if I'd go away and leave her alone. Truer love and understanding has never been apparent. So off I went, placing myself at the mercy of the master of the guilt trip. Guilt or no, it turned out to be one of the best days paddling I can remember.

The plan was to meet Vince and Karen that evening at the Riversport camp ground. They were on their way back from vacationing in the Carolinas, where they had paddled the Ocoee, the Nantahala, and the Atlantic Ocean (or, anyway, a small part of it). Mark McCord called the ranger station at Ohiopele to reserve six permits for the five of us. Enter Kari Wright, a new anthropology graduate student at Kent State, who had said she wanted to learn to paddle.

Initially, I'd suggested that Kari come out to Brady lake where she could try sitting in my kayak and get her first lesson in rolling a boat. With the change in plans, I asked if she wanted to use our sixth permit; and she jumped at the chance. This, of course, led to the question of what she would paddle and where she would get equipment. My dearly beloved once again came to the rescue, offering her sit-on-top, paddle, helmet, and PFD. (Talk about devotion!! How many wives would send their husbands off with a young lady they had never met on an overnight excursion, and even provide the equipment to make it possible? Clearly, I am married to the woman of my dreams!!)

I picked Kari up at 3:30 on Saturday and met up with Mark, Mark's wife, Barb, and Rick Whitney, all from the KSU Kayaking Club, on the Ohio Turnpike. We got to Riversport Camp Ground about 7:30 and were able to pitch our tents just before it got dark.

Kari is from Colorado and had rafted several times before. She's physically fit, likes the water, and doesn't mind taking a few risks. She's an experienced rock climber, camper, and backpacker. But she had never paddled a kayak. My preference would have been to take her on flat water or something like the lower Slippery Rock first, but there's no water in the Slip, and this promised to be my last chance to paddle white water before it starts to get cold. I warned her that she would be swimming through some waves and holes, and bounce off several rocks before the day was over. She was still game, and with the river running at only 1'8" I wasn't too worried about her safety. So we were on our way.

As it turned out, there were surprisingly few people at the Lower Yough for Labor Day. On Saturday and Sunday, I was told, that the river was like a parking lot; but the combination of stormy weather and the need to drive back home to start the work week seemed to have scared off most of the dilettantes-and even many serious paddlers. Just as we put on, a thunderstorm hit and, after a brief debate, we headed back to shore for about 20 minutes before trying again. While we were waiting at the put-in, we met up with Dave Toothaker, a professor of physical education and kayaking instructor at KSU. I hadn't seen him on the river since my first attempt to kayak the Lower Slippery Rock more than fifteen years ago. We started out paddling together, but after Piddly he went on with some friends and was not to be seen again. It rained most of the day, and the sun only peeked out for a few minutes. For much of the day, we had thunder and lightning in the distance. But the temperature was reasonable, and the water was an unusually warm (for the Yough) 69 degrees. We encountered three or four big raft trips, but for the Lower Yough, that's negligible. And for much of the day we had the river virtually to ourselves.

Barb hadn't planned to paddle, but Vince and Kari convinced her to try. Mark rented a ducky for her, and I was able to get a seventh permit for the 8 to 9 AM put-in window. She did fine, but got tired and a little nervous, so she decided to take out after the loop.

Kari started out a little slow, as it took her a while to figure out-even with our help-how to control her boat. She took a unique route down the far left of Entrance and, at one point, found herself atop a pourover that had no water pouring over. I had her throw me her paddle so that she could push off the rock with her hands, plunge down three feet into the pool below, and

resume her adventure. She got quite a thrill at Cucumber, but came out fine. She did dump a few times, but not in the most difficult or potentially dangerous places, and declared that the day had been "the best time I've ever had in my life." She's now looking for a decked boat and is determined to learn to roll!!

Vince and Karen have become quite capable paddlers over the past year. This was the first time I'd been out with Rick, who seemed to have a lot of fun in his new play boat. And Mark, who a few months before had had his hands full on the Slippery at 0', was much improved.

As for myself, I hadn't paddled since mid-July and was concerned about a build-up of rust; but it wasn't a problem. I was happy with all my lines, and had three successful combat rolls-all while surfing, and two of them at Swimmer's. I did swim once, at Piddly when I got side-surfed, dumped, and discovered that the boat was not about to move from its position in the hydraulic as long as I was inside of it. The absence of crowds meant that I could get into the wave at Swimmer's a half dozen times and had a couple of good surfs there. Tried out the Nancy's Torrent on the river for the first time and found it pretty clunky and hard to control. I attempted surfing in it at Swimmer's, quickly dumped, and found it surprisingly hard to turn back over in deep water. Although I managed a couple of brief surfs at the secondary waves below Swimmer's, I was glad to get back in the Dancer!

With dry top and paddling fleece, the weather was comfortable except for the period when we waited at Railroad for Mark to get back from returning Barb's ducky. No bumps and bruises, and my roll seemed secure on both sides. As is usually the case, my right shoulder was pretty sore after eight hours of paddling. But my left arm was in pretty good shape, at least partly because of a new, improved bracing position.

Good friends, nice day, beautiful river, and no significant accidents or dangerous swims, even for the novices. Isn't this what life is all about?!!??

The Phoenix

by Rob Hammond

How do you make lemonade out of tying situation? That is what David and I faced on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. It was the end of an extended holiday week and time to take David, who is in his freshman year, back to college. David picked an engineering school based on its world class academic reputation, at least that's what I am told. The fact that West Virginia University is in the heart of world class white water, was simply coincidental. Yeeeee, as I was saying, we had taken care of the turkey, and it was time to get David back to school. There is no sense in going all the way to Morgantown without dipping our paddle right? Even though things have been pretty dry

this fall, there is one truism white water boaters around here can count on; its the lower Yough is ALWAYS there for you. At least that is what we thought. Let me tell you, when you get to the put in on a beautiful, sunny fall day in the 60s, and there are only 2 people on the sign in sheet at 11 am; there is something wrong! The something was the 5 ½ inch gage reading, no problem, we were only going to run the loop. We even had time to run it twice! Neither of us had run the river this low, and we would soon find out why we won't be doing it again.

The water was crystal clear with a pretty emerald green tint to it. While I was waiting for David, I paddled up to look at the falls, I've never been able to get so close, with as little water as there was coming down you could punch the curtain, or maybe even try and get ends from the cascade. Fortunately, a flashback to an incident I had at the base of Wonder Falls, reminded me, that playing in the curtain of a falls, can give you an appreciation of a window shade's lot in life!

David and I headed down to Entrance, taking the usual line to play in the first wave, when I suddenly ran out of water. After spending 5 minutes pushing my way off of the big flat rock that almost had enough water to float a leaf, I concluded that I would have to pay attention to where I am going, instead of relying on traditional lines to guide me down the river. It would take a keen eye and some fast salmon moves to keep in the channels of water and not get left high and dry on a pile of rocks. Running the lower at 5 ½ inches is like running a different river, it was even difficult to recognize some of the rapids. Camel-Walrus, with all of the rocks that popped up, looked like eddy turn! What amazed me was that a 6-inch difference in level at the put in made a 3-foot difference at some of the rapids. Below Cucumber you could see water marks on the rocks from the normal summer levels, and they were a good 3 feet higher then the water level. I guess when you think about how wide the river is at the put in, and then how it narrows down at the rapids, you can understand the physics of a few inches of flat wide river gets magnified in narrow, rocky channels.

When we came to the loop take out, we both agreed that a second run was out of the question, it was just too much work! Having said that, it was a very interesting to see how the river changes at low levels. You have to look ahead more than usual to find a channel to stay in. It is easy to go down a small drop and find yourself on a pile of rocks, meanwhile, the small the channel of water you were in took a quick turn to the left. Pinning opportunities were everywhere, so between running out of water and having water pin your boat against rocks, the run was an interesting challenge.

Without places to play we were off the river in record time, so we thought we would take a trip up to the dam to see what the lake looked

like at low levels. This was more interesting then the river. First of all the lake was almost empty, it looked like a small puddle in an 80 to 100 feet deep lake. There is a big inlet for the dam that is normally about 40 feet below the summertime water level. This thing is a tunnel 30 feet high and 15 feet wide with a strong steel grid in front of it. The lakebed was so dry that cars were driving on it. We drove from the boat ramp for about a ½ mile before the lakebed became too steep to drive on.

After that adventure, we stopped at Riversport's new store, located adjacent to the new route 281 bridge over the Yough. We talked to Bob Ruppel, the owner and took advantage of his off-season prices. He encouraged us to check out the other end of the lake by route 40. Sunday was a beautiful day, and this brought out a hoard of locals to see a sight that they seldom ever see. The traffic was backed up at route 40 and there were few places to park.

The Yough dam was built during in the 30s and finished in 1944. In the area of the lake, they simply cut down the trees, re-routed state route 40, and then let the river fill the new lake. They left buildings and the old route 40 bridge in place, to be preserved by a lake that would only occasionally let non-gill breathing species to see and enjoy. And Sunday, we did enjoy a beautiful piece of old architecture, it was the single lane, stone, three arched bridge. This bridge is usually under 30 to 40 feet of water, but today people could walk down the old route 40 road and over the original bridge. Bob told us, President James Madison dedicated the bridge. Under the bridge ran the mighty Youghiogheny River. It looked anemic today with maybe 30 to 60 CFS of flow, down from the usual 500-600 CFS. The new route 40 bridge stands guard about 200 yards south of the old bridge and towers 100 feet above a quaint old bridge, from a time before motor vehicles. Looking up from the old bridge was a curious sight of barren hills with floating boat docks strewn about the dry hills, almost like a giant had taken a box of tooth picks and flung them across the countryside. The lakebed was not at all what I expected, it is completely barren of any vegetation, it is gray-brown in color, and consists of finely broken shale. When you walk on it you sink in a few inches, like you are walking across a beach of very course sand. The aquatic life can find nothing to eat on the bottom of this lake. Bob Ruppel told us that that they have to stock the lake with small feeder fish to keep the bigger fish alive.

The next time you see Youghiogheny Lake, with the power boaters and skiers whizzing by, think about what lies under the surface, and wonder when the next time the old route 40 bridge will arise from the depths!

Slip on Feb 20
Slip on Feb 27
Slip on May 30
Middle Yough on July 18 Only
Middle Yough on Sep 18-19
Upper Yough April 3

If there are other trips with other dates which you would be willing to lead, please let me know. I would prefer email at

gsherck@worldnet.att.net

WANTED!!!!
TRIP LEADERS FOR THE OPEN
DATES BELOW

1999 Tallulah Release

Applications accepted Starting January 1.

The town will host a festival on April 3-4, 1999. Great cooperation among Georgia State Parks, Georgia Power Company, American Whitewater, local boating groups, and the boaters ensures the agreement over a 30-year period will continue in effect.

Tallulah Gorge is an advanced/expert whitewater run involving Class IV and V rapids. In addition, it has severely limited access in and out of the canyon in case of accident, and is further restricted due to the fragile nature of the gorge and the existence of several federally endangered species, including "Persistent Trillium."

If you are unsure of your whitewater skill, do not attempt the Gorge. Boating accidents are always unwelcome, but are even more unwelcome during such limited releases. Besides hurting yourself, you may jeopardize future whitewater releases in this incredibly beautiful canyon.

Tallulah Gorge State Park is administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Access is limited to 120 boaters per day, in groups of no more than three. The permit system has been changed slightly to better serve the needs of the boaters. Please follow all instructions exactly when making your application. Call American Whitewater at 301-589-9453 for further information.

PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS. FAILURE TO COMPLY MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION OF THE APPLICANT'S PERMIT REQUEST.

1. Only persons paddling qualified whitewater craft will be permitted to paddle Tallulah Gorge. Qualified whitewater craft are defined as follows: Kayaks (one or two person); whitewater canoes or open hard boats; decked canoes, including C-1s and C-2s; and qualified inflatables. Determination of eligibility will be made by American Whitewater's representatives, according to established DNR guidelines.

2. Permits allow access for both days of the release weekend. Each permit holder, or one of two alternates listed on the application, must check in by 12:00 noon on Saturday, or the permit will be released to those on the waiting list. Change: if the permit holder does not check in by noon on Saturday, the permit is cancelled for both Saturday and Sunday. Change: a permit allows a **maximum of three people** paddling qualified whitewater craft.

3. An applicant may apply for a permit for each of the scheduled release weekends. The dates for 1999 are **April 3-4**, April 10-11, and November 6-7, November 13-14, and November 20-21. A separate request must be submitted for each scheduled release weekend.

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4. Requests may be submitted after January 1, 1999 for the 1999 season. The drawing for April permits will be held on Monday, **February 1, 1999**. The draw for November permits will be held on Wednesday, September 1, 1999.

Mail your requests at least ten days before the drawing.

5. Permit holders will be notified of a successful draw by mail from Tallulah Gorge State Park. You are encouraged to confirm that the scheduled release has not been postponed or cancelled due to adverse or emergency conditions. Call 1-888-GPC-LAKE to note whether a postponement or cancellation message has been added to the recording.

6. Camping for boaters is available at the state park campground. The charge is \$3.00 per person per night. Call the Park at 1-706-754-7970 and identify yourself as a boater to obtain the special rate; you will be directed to the special boater camping area. Boaters arriving in RV's or motorhomes will be required to pay the regular overnight fee of \$12 per night; call ahead for reservations.

7. The Boater Parking Area is not a campground; do not put up a tent or build a fire. Dispose of trash properly. Be discreet about your choice of beverage.

8. Each group and boater must check in on each day of the release at the Boater Registration Table. This table is also used for sharing reminders, rules, lost and found articles, and so on.

9. Walk-ons: The rules allow 20 walk-ons each day of the release on a first come, first serve basis. The line starts at the Boater Registration Table. Additionally, names will be taken for cancelled permits on a first come, first serve basis, and will be made available at noon on Saturday and again on Sunday. This means that all 120 slots can be filled each day.

10. Boaters are reminded that much of Tallulah Gorge State Park is extremely rugged and potentially hazardous. It is also an environmentally sensitive area. To protect the visitor from the gorge, and more importantly, the gorge from the visitor, all regulations and laws are strictly enforced. Remember that polite, responsible and safe behavior is expected.

PERMIT INSTRUCTIONS

I. All permit requests must be mailed in a legal-size envelope.

II. The outside of the envelope must contain the following:

A. The applicant's name and return address in the upper left corner.

B. The date of the permit requested and the number of people in the group, including yourself (maximum of three), in the lower right corner.

C. Adequate U.S. Postage for First Class Mail (reminder: the rates go up in January 10, 1999).

D. The correct address: Tallulah Gorge State Park Boating Permits, P.O. Box 248, Tallulah Falls, GA 30573.

III. The envelope must contain:

A. A legal size return envelope bearing the applicant's name and return address, and adequate U.S. postage for first class mail.

B. A 3 x 5 inch index card containing the following information:

i) the applicant's name, address, and daytime phone number;

ii) the name and daytime phone number of another member on the permit.

iii) the date of the scheduled weekend release being requested; and

iv) the number of people in the applicant's group (not to exceed three, including the applicant).

IV. A person may apply for one permit for each weekend, but each request must be made separately.

MORE Classified ADS For Sale

Windsurfer - Good beginner's Board "86 O'Brian Board and 5.4 sq m soft sail \$ 200 Don Manson 330-923-7856

Perception Mirage, Red, with spray skirts and Air Bags \$250 cash/trade Ken 216-941-0795.

Wanted : Used RPM. Please contact B. Watkins at SPOT XD @AOL.COM, or 330-922-0672.

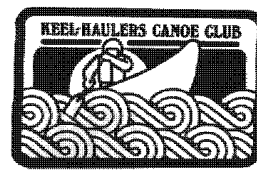
Purple Corsica Overflow, Good Condition - \$450. Sue Strumble -216-741-4405.

Perception SuperSport: good condition, \$350, Ann Corey, 330-869-6549

Wanted

Used Necky Looksha II, III, or IV. Used Eddyline Flacon 18. Double Kayak by either Necky or Eddyline - prefer glass or Kevlar Paul Vacceiriells 440-285-3196

Keel-Hauler's KaNews May 1999



For Complete details consult the Yearbook

North Branch of the Potomac and Savage River The 1999 NB release schedule is as follows: May 15, 16, 29, and 30. See page 32 for more information.

Steve Ingalls ... (216) 371-8250,
sti@po.cwru.edu

Sometime in May...Salt River, AZ

Marc Pender...(440) 729-7318

May 1...Slippery Women's Trip, PA (13/21)

Cathy Schilling...(330) 686-8924

May 1-2...Forks of the Cheat, WV (Class III-IV)

Steve Ingalls...(216) 371-8250

May 1 or 2...Grand River (6)

Gary Tucker...(440) 357-7890

May 5...Sea Kayaking at Huron River

Jill Lauren...(440) 366-6255

May 8...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

Kurt Reno...(330) 335-3610

May 8...Sea Kayaking at Fairport Harbor

Dave Stevens...(440) 461-2067

May 8...Lower Cuyahoga, OH (6) River Day

Join us for a day of river cleanup while we take a run down this Ohio river. Please call ahead for the meeting place and time.

Chris Kiehl...(330) 869-6549

May 8-9...Cheat Forks, WV (26)

The weather should be nice so come join us for a run somewhere in the Cheat Forks. Water levels will determine where we paddle so call ahead for the meeting spot.

Sherie Sanzenbacher...(216) 381-0599

May 8-9...Middle Fork and Tygart, WV (29/28)

With any luck, water levels will be right for another run on these great rivers. Please call ahead as plans may change at the last minute.

John Fralick...(216) 321-7494

May 11...Meeting, Middleburg Hts. Recreation Center

MAY MEETING, 5-11-99: JOHN KOBAK will present the club trip to Ecuador's most beautiful whitewater, while CHUCK SINGER will narrate the adventure in Peru. We anticipate an interesting look into these

cultures and the logistics involved in paddling in these special places.

May 11...Sea Kayaking at Gordon Park, Cleveland

Dave Stevens...(440) 461-2067

May 15...Sea Kayaking at Sandusky Bay

Bob Zehe...(440) 835-8256

Bill Heuser...(216) 549-4748

May 16...Little Beaver Canoe Cruising

Dean Norman...(216) 251-1389

May 15-16...Yough Weekend, PA(12/23)

Lower: Bill Weeber...(216) 228-7936

Middle: Carl Kudrna...(440) 835-0222

May 15-16...ARC Whitewater Weekend #2

Pam Oliver...(216) 431-3323

Steve Ingalls...(216) 371-8250

May 14- 16...ODNR / ACA Swiftwater Rescue Class

Steve Ingalls (information)...(216) 371-8250 (sti@po.cwru.edu)

Dianne Conley (registration)...(614) 265-6534

May 15-16...ARC Basic River Weekend #3

Pam Oliver...(216) 431-3323

Steve Ingalls...(216) 371-8250

May 15-16...North Branch, Potomac (19)

Gary Smith...(216) 518-9666

May 16...Sea Kayaking at Lakeview Beach, Lorain

Bruce Horrigan...(440) 892-0368

May 22-23...Sea Kayaking at Alum Creek State Park

Michael Blair...(440) 885-3020

May 22 or 23...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge.

Call ahead to confirm.

Ann Corey...(330) 869-6549

May 28 - June 5...West Virginia Rivers Week (19-33)

John Kobak...(440) 871-1758

May 29-31...Memorial Day Weekend in the Cheat Canyon (26)

Steve Ingalls...(216) 371-8250

Summer Months...Cheat Canyon (26)

Steve Ingalls...(216) 371-8250

June 1, 15, 29...Rolling Practice at Nimisila Reservoir

Matt Muir...(330) NOT A FAX

June 4-5...Upper Yough, MD (32)

Ritch Kovacic...(440) 298-3727

June 5-6...Canoe Sailing on Lake Pymatuning, OH

Jim Botamer...(440) 998-8580

KEEL HAULERS CANOE CLUB MINUTES

DATE: April 13, 1999

New members and guests: There were two new members, one of whom lives in Akron and one who has moved back to Cleveland after an absence of many years.

Treasurer's Report: Current balance of \$4093.76.

Final accounting for the Vermilion River Race is not yet in, but it appears to have been a money maker.

Chair Reports.

Instruction: Cathy Schilling reported that the Camp Beaumont session went off very well. ARC Whitewater Weekends 1 and 2, covering basic river skills, are coming up on April 25-26 and May 15-16, respectively. Steve Ingalls added that there will be a middle Yough instructional session run out of Riversport. John Kobak called attention to the fact that the club's web page also has information on training sessions.

Program: Today's program is the new safety video. Next month, program chair Carl Kudrna expects to have John Kobak and Chuck Singer narrate a slide presentation on their recently-completed trip to Ecuador and Peru.

Membership: John Kobak reported that we now have 242 paid members. That is the most the club has ever had in April.

Library: Ron Whitney announced acquisition of a new video.

Safety: Chuck Singer called attention to the danger of elbow injuries. He recommended use of pads when paddling shallow water, and especially when running water slides.

Skateboarding pads work well on elbows and knees. They are inexpensive and readily available at large discount stores.

Vermilion River Race: The race was very successful. There were 72 racers, one of whom raced twice. The water level, reported to be negative three inches, was judged to be perfect. It was high enough to provide an enjoyable run but low enough to require skill in paddling and reading water.

Old business.

None.

New business.

None.

Trip reports.

The annual Southern Rivers Trip was recently completed. The weather was warm and sunny. Water levels were low but runnable on most rivers. Approximately 25 participants made this the best-attended Southern Rivers Trip in club history. The group was treated royally at the Chattooga campground, which appears to have some very ambitious plans for facilities development. Club members had some problems at another campground but emphasized that the problems were not their fault! There were a lot of injuries on this trip, including a black eye, broken ribs, a couple of bashed elbows, and a head gash. Sue Strumbel's boat disappeared for a week beneath the Chattooga but eventually turned up in good shape. Matt Muir and Ron Whitney left to group early to mount a gorilla attack on the Green Narrows. After the Green, Ron and Sue paddled the New for three consecutive days at levels ranging from one-and-a-half to three feet.

Closer to home, Matt reported having run Tinker's Creek last Saturday at zero.

Rob Hammond led a trip on the Slippery Rock the same day, at four feet. Nine people were in the group, for several of whom this was the first time out of the season. Rob reported having lots of rescue practice.

New Services for Keel Haulers

By John Kobak

I've added a new service to our Web Pages for those paddlers looking to get together on weekdays to paddle whitewater or sea kayak. It is a new menu selection called Weekday paddlers or go direct with:
<http://pages.prodigy.net/keelhauler/khcc/weekday.htm>

If you E-Mail me all the information in the order shown, I will add you to our growing list

Name
Phone
E-Mail
Days
Class
Boat
Remarks

So there are now 4 ways to get out there and paddle.

1. 1999 trip schedule - Biggest & Best ever
2. Telephone Hot line - Tell people you are paddling or looking to paddle
3. Message Board to post messages to other members
4. NEW - Weekday paddling list - Call/E-mail someone who may be available.

John Kobak
keelhauler@prodigy.net
Keel Haulers Canoe Club
<http://pages.prodigy.net/keelhauler>

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

*But since I lack the picture, I will spare you the
Thousand Words and settle for 282*

by Cliff Wire

As some of you may know, Steve Ingalls has long enjoyed pulling my leg about my choice of car for paddling (VW Jetta, 4dr, large trunk). Well, this recent weekend on a forks of the Cheat trip turned Stoney Creek, a chance rejoinder occurred. It started the previous weekend on a Slip Trip. I had car pooled with Sabine Iben. I drove. For Steve's trip, Sabine wanted to break in her brand new car, a VW bug with less than 2000 miles. So we took her car. We arranged for me to drive to the put-in so Steve would see me driving. As it happened, Sabine and I got there before Steve, so I am sitting in the drivers seat (it is drizzling and 37 degrees). Steve pulls up and parks, we all get out to say hello, and I start with "Steve, I finally took your advice and bought a car more suitable for boating. What do you think?" **Gotcha!!**

Hook, line, and Sinker! *Hand over mouth, eyes open! Bite your tongue, don't say what you are thinking!* You could just see it written all over Steve's face.

He thought it through, and deciding I hadn't gone over the deep end any further than I already have, figured it really was Sabine's car.

The Bug is a lot of fun to drive. It handles well with two boats on the roof. Plenty of room for two people with the back seat tumbled.

I will make this concession though. We paddled the Upper Big Sandy on Sunday. Had a great time. But taking my Jetta to the take-out would be, shall we say, *interesting!* At least on that day. But I would try it!

First Paddle

W. R. Heuser

Just to let you know that the Keel Hauler Sea Kayakers had their first scheduled paddle of the season. They had eleven people show up for the paddle and a few others that stopped by just to say hi. We put in at Lorain. The lake was like glass. We went out for about an hour or so, had a gab session in the parking lot, and then went out for coffee. Bob Zehe brought his new boat that he built over the winter. He did a nice job on the boat. Bob has built two boats from kits and is always glad to share his knowledge.

TO SEA KAYAKERS

by Les Berke

The sea kayaking season is here again, although for some it never left, enjoying Lake Erie during Winter months just the same, wisely or unwisely. The attached (shortened) report about the accident we remember from news paper accounts last year follows (original is on the KH web site).

Sea Kayaker magazine contacted me at that time to help them to get in touch with the Cleveland Coast Guard for their accident report. SK just sent me a rather poignant report written by a kayaker who knew the victim (their current June issue also has an article on a fatality at

Greenland for lack of rolling skills). Please respect big water because of the potentially larger distances from shore that you could negotiate safely by swimming if all else fails. Going alone is a well known hazard. It is your decision whether you have the skills, or you are over confident, like this Navy man was, to go alone. Big water can turn from best friend to worst enemy in a very short time.

Closing my own remarks I just say that instinctive rolling is just as important to sea kayakers as to river rats who are superb experts at that. Sea kayakers should become superb experts at it also instead of blind trust in the stability of the wider boats. Rolling is the quickest way out of a potentially deadly situation. Set up your boat for rolling!! Practice it every time you are out on water, it is a nice way to cool off too in Summer heat, I use it as my climate control. See you on the Lake.

FATAL LAKE ERIE ACCIDENT REPORT

by Jack Martin

On Saturday, 28 November 1998, Thanksgiving Day weekend, Captain Tom "Rhino" Hancock died on Lake Erie off Cleveland, Ohio, where he had spent the holiday with family. "The Rhino" was an old Navy buddy of mine, and had taken up paddling only during the last year.

For a brief review, Rhino went out on a solo paddle to "the crib", a highly visible structure about three miles offshore that serves as an underwater inlet for Cleveland's water supply. The day of his death, he was wearing a blue dry suit, a yellow type III PFD, skirt, booties and gloves, and was found three quarters of a mile east of the crib, separated from his new Necky boat with his paddle attached to the boat by means of a paddle leash. The water temperature was 45 degrees F. Winds were light and there was only low chop. The boat was found at a considerable distance from the body.

So what went wrong? We can only speculate that Rhino was overheating because, at some point during the paddle, he unzipped his dry suit at the top, leaving an opening six to eight inches long. When he capsized - reasons unknown --- he was met with the cold shock of 45 degree F. water on his face and unprotected head followed immediately by a rush of numbing water into his unzipped suit. The Coroner's report states that Rhino died of "immersion hypothermia and drowning". From some familiarity with cold water paddling, we can assume that hypothermia resulted in a loss of physical control which then resulted in drowning.

Earlier suggestions of cardiac arrest were, apparently, incorrect. He became hypothermic and eventually drowned. What went wrong? In this case, there are a few things that jump out. - Rhino was a relatively new paddler, he had only one year's experience and was paddling alone, offshore, in "cold water" conditions. Whether or not we choose to see that as significant in general, it was a specific

contributing factor in Rhino's death. Had he been with a partner, an assisted rescue might have been attempted; ambient conditions were generally benign, other than the water temperature.

- While he seemed at least partially equipped for cold water paddling - the new Necky kayak, a dry suit, a skirt, appropriate PFD, gloves and booties --- he was not wearing head protection. His dry suit was not fully zipped closed, he may have felt that he would have time to zip it, but perhaps his PFD riding up high made it impossible for him to close his suit.

- Even if the zipper on his dry suit had been closed, the lack of thermal protection to his head and neck --- where a swimmer loses the vast majority of body heat in any event - and the apparent absence of thermal insulation under his dry suit would have induced hypothermia and resulted in death by drowning almost as quickly as it probably did in this case. Conversely, had he had his dry suit fully zipped, had he been wearing a hood of neoprene or functionally equivalent composite material, and had he had appropriate thermal insulation under his dry suit, his capsizing under the existing environmental conditions could easily have resulted in a self rescue or a survivable float until assisted rescue could have occurred.

The bottom line: I joined a few hundred people - family and many friends - to bury an old Navy buddy at Arlington National Cemetery on a cold, bright morning last December. The ceremony was impressive - the flag-draped casket on a horse drawn gun caisson, an honor guard, a band - with full military honors and taps called away by a bugler. But it was an unnecessary trip to Arlington. It could have been prevented by the buddy we went there to honor.

If something good ever comes out of incidents like this, you've read about a preventable death of a fellow sea kayaker, and maybe you'll build the contributing factors to the event into your preparation for your next trip. Thanks for reading this note - I hope it wasn't as much of a terrible use of time for you as listening to that bugler was for me.

Costa Rica upside down

By Sabine Iben

Tired of snowstorms and icy roads I left Cleveland on a Saturday morning in mid-January. I was actually afraid if the plane would be able to take off because of all the snow- but amazingly we left in time at 6 am. What I didn't anticipate was that we had to divert to Dallas to get fuel since we were circling over Houston waiting for some fog to dissolve. I actually made the connection to Costa Rica since I can run pretty fast when I am about to miss a plane- unfortunately my bags were not as lucky (it took them three days!). In the plane I met Drake for whom it was already the third trip to Costa

Rica- he reassured me that we were going to have a great time with Costa Rica Rios Aventuras (CRRRA). He usually paddles a C-1 and this time wanted to try a kayak. It turned out that we were the only participants in our intermediate instruction and river running group since there was another large (13 people) group from Georgia arriving the next day who wanted to stay together. On the first day we met the CRRRA guides in Turrialba- Marcia, who is Ray McLains (the owners) daughter and was going to be taking care more of me (low intermediate) and David who wanted to convert Drake into a kayaker.

Originally there were several rest days planned (beach, hiking) within the nine day trip but we soon decided to paddle every day, since we both planned to spend more time travelling after the kayaking. The first day we went to the lower Pejibaye- a 5 mile section with nice pool- drop rapids, clear water and lots of locals hanging out on the river banks on a Sunday (of course I flipped and swam on the first rapid in front of a big audience). We were working on technique- ferrys, braces, rolls etc. (very important after a 3 month winter break). I really had a good pool roll but unfortunately I was usually in a state of panic when upside down floating down the river. I rarely was able to roll up at that point unless in totally calm water (where I usually don't flip). The next two days we spent on the middle section of the Pacuare river (between the take-out for the upper and the put-in for the lower section). The Pacuare is a beautiful, unspoiled, remote jungle river with clear, green water and great rapids- in the middle section mostly class III. We went twice per Drakes and my request and again were working a lot on technique and some playing. Of course I kept the tradition up of swimming on the first rapid (why do those have to be the most difficult ones?), a little bit excused by the fact that I was in different boats every day- until I stayed with the Crossfire. Of great concern for me was that Marcia (whom by that time I had named "slavedriver"- I mean it in a nice way, she was a great instructor and wonderful person) threatened to not let me paddle the lower Pacuare section unless I hit my rolls. That trip of a 17 mile class III-IV section with about 50 rapids was planned for day #5 and supposed to be the highlight of the trip to Costa Rica. The next day we went to the powerhouse section of the Reventazon- mainly for the big water since the water quality in this dam controlled river is more than poor. The first two rapids are the most difficult ones (solid class IV) with large pourovers and steep drops - as I was told since I put- in below those rapids for a continuous run of class III whitewater with HUGE wavetrains. Actually on the first rapid I hit my first combat roll! I was really motivated since there was no end of the rapid to be seen and I was told to prepare for a very long swim in case I decided to exit the boat at any time. Guess what- this was the end of my underwater panic and there

were no more swims for the remainder of the trip!

For the next day on the lower Pacuare we joined the group from Georgia- most of them very experienced paddlers in kayaks, open boats and C-1's. The less comfortable members of that group decided to take the trip in a raft with Marcia's husband Rene being the raft guide. The deal for me was that I was supposed to take the kayak on the easier rapids and switch with Marcia in the raft for the more difficult ones. Since I had my tradition of flipping at the first rapid and it was a class IV she was going to paddle that one and then switch. I must say I had never been in a raft and after that rapid I was pretty determined to paddle the whole thing in my kayak- that raft scared the hell out of me! As it turned out I really had a good day, ended up hitting all my rolls and staying in the kayak (Marcia, of course also enjoyed the time with her husband). The scenery was spectacular and there were supposed to be a lot of animals around (I was far too busy to spot them). The river is so long that there is really no time to play- there were numerous rapids, the more challenging ones with boulder gardens and steep drops with pushy water. There are two highlights as far as scenery is concerned: a 150 foot waterfall plunging directly into the river and the Dos Montanas Gorge cut perfectly straight into steep rock walls with no rapids (unfortunately a dream for hydroelectric engineers). Just below the water fall comes the toughest rapid- Lower Huacas (solid class IV). Most of us (certainly me) portaged that rapid, David ended up side-surfing for several minutes in the middle of a boulder garden (where I saw no escape) until he was able to get out of the hole. There were a few more rapids after Lower Huacas, I was run over by the raft and ended up with yet another bruise- a black eye (I knew you can't trust a raft!). At the time of the take-out we were all VERY exhausted but happy about one of the best days in Costa Rica. We had made friends with the Georgians and celebrated a little bit with the local beer (Imperial, Bavaria and Pilsen) before we separated and headed for La Virgen where we spent another two days on the Sarapiquí river. We paddled the lower class III section characterized by multiple gravel bar rapids that have this really annoying tendency to terminate in a direct shot into vertical walls. I got some more bruises this time hanging on upside down through one of the rapids scratching along the rocks and when I made my first roll attempt finding myself pushed against one of those walls- I came up on my second attempt though!

For the last day we went to Fortuna which is known for an active volcano with a perfect cone spitting fume and lava all the time and HOT SPRINGS! On the night of arrival we were in culture shock- it was a weekend and Tabacon Springs overflowing with tourists. We found the bar pretty quick and made ourselves comfortable in a natural pool of hot water where we spent the entire evening (and the next, and

the next). A friend of mine also arrived that day since we planned to travel the following week together. There was still one day of paddling left- the Peñas Blancas. My friend Stefan also found something to do- after being unsuccessful finding a ducky for him we had a good alternative- a raft trip with eight Argentinean girls (he really enjoyed himself, I think). What is remarkable about the Peñas Blancas is that there are some very long class III rapids with very short pools below. Nothing real difficult, but long. Further down it splits in multiple channels which makes the eddies below when it joins back together quite squirrely. Again, lots of play spots and nice scenery. This was the end of the kayaking part, we ended up staying for two more days in Fortuna waiting for the volcano to show up (we never saw it- it was always clouded over). The first day we hiked to a nearby gorgeous waterfall. On the following day Stefan and me went for a swamp tour to Cano Negro near the border to Nicaragua while Drake actually decided to paddle one more day with the group from Georgia that had arrived in the meantime. It did rain (or should I say pour) for more than 24 hours continuously before that second trip to the Peñas Blancas. That can change a river remarkably! From what I heard from the bruised and scratched Drake who was paddling an open boat that day, the pools were pretty much gone, there were no eddies either and the river was one continuous rapid. All the open boaters ended up swimming including Ray McLain.

Drake joined us for the rest of the trip. I talked him and Stefan into taking the fastest route to Monte Verde which has one of the last existing areas of primary cloud forests in the world. By bus it takes an entire day to get there from Fortuna including lots of dust and dirt roads. The direct route involves a boat ride on Lake Arenal (I actually saw the lower two thirds of the volcano) and a 3 hour horse- back ride ascending about 4000 feet. I had a lot of fun, I don't know about the others. Hiking in Monte Verde was a great experience, we saw lots of different tropical plants, birds including a quetzal, monkeys.

We ended the trip at the ocean in Manuel Antonio National Park- Rainforest and dream beaches with lots of animals (among them very tame capuchin monkeys that enjoy the many tourists that leave their food there). It was a great trip, I highly recommend it and plan to go back!

Adventures Under the Water

by Monica Keil

As most of you probably know if you've ever paddled with me, despite multiple years in this sport, I still don't have a bomb proof roll. However, this is not a tale of what it's like doing the river upside down but a different sort of water tale to broaden your horizons. Water's water, so what the heck...this is a tale of purposely swimming under the waves. It's

about scuba diving in the British West Indies-at Grand Turks.

What, you've never heard of Grand Turks (the Turks and Caicos Islands are south of Florida, east of Cuba)? Hey, neither did I until I started to surf the internet looking for a new dive destination. Tom Berneike, my diving partner, was thinking of the Honduras area, but after reading account after account of the fleas and mosquitoes I said count me out. Not one diver mentioned those little pests in all the messages I read about Grand Turks (rated one of the top 10 diving sites by Cousteau).

With all the prep work done (mostly by Tom as I'm just getting to know my way around the internet) we took off on March 10th. Who do we meet at the airport as we're waiting for our flight but Jane Andraka, coming in from Baltimore to work at Mount Sinai (I'm sure she would rather have switched places with us). That was a pleasant surprise.

After spending a somewhat boring, unplanned day in Florida (the connection from Florida to the Island was cancelled) we finally arrived on the 11th (missed a day of diving). Since we left in a bit of a snow squall, bright sunny skies, a cool, tropical breeze and a lovely turquoise ocean were more than welcome. I believe it was probably somewhere in the high 70's to low 80's-actually a bit cool for diving even with a couple of layers on.

I must admit I only have limited experience diving in the ocean. My last trip was in Cozumel so I'm not able to do much of a comparison but Grand Turks had much more beautiful beaches that were virtually deserted. Unlike Cozumel which is very tourist oriented, this was not; however, if you don't dive (or like to sunbathe) this is not the place for you as there are no malls or much else to do. I believe the island is only about a mile wide and about 7 miles long. There are probably less than 10 small hotels (ours had only about 7 rooms) in total and about the same amount of restaurants. Food is very expensive (Cozumel on the other hand has quite inexpensive food and depending on how much you want to spend on a hotel room...inexpensive accommodations too). There is some biking on the island-remember only 7 miles! There is also one small museum about the island.

Well, enough said about that, now to the diving. One of the main reasons I wanted to go to Grand Turks was that whales pass by it on their way to the Dominican Republic to calf. You start your dive on a boat that picks you up at the beach and goes out about 250 feet (don't trust me for distances). It's anywhere from about 30-50 some feet where you go overboard. About 2 sec. west it drops to 7000 feet. Thus, your chances of seeing "big critters" is high. Not for us though...several of the boats got to see whales up close and personal...the closest I got was back here in the states at the Omnimax Theater at the Science Center.

What did we get to see though...it was mostly wall diving so there were all kinds of beautiful

corals, fans, arches...as to aquatic life we saw several turtles, a seahorse, angel fish, damsels, large groupers, lots of barracudas, eels, and yes a shark. It may have only been a nurse shark, but a shark is a shark and they all have big teeth. Tom chased it around so no one missed it. The variety of life, color and beauty under the water is truly awesome (much better than what I see upside down in my kayak anyway). On the night dive, the group saw octopus and lobster I believe (I opted out as I was just a little too cold-I did do a night dive in Cozumel though and it is an experience you want to do as night dives are quite different from day dives).

We dove with pretty much the same group every day which really turned out well. There were 2 couples from Vermont who had dived a little more and were great fun and daily dinner companions. We also dove with a gentleman from Iowa I think it was and his 13 year old son. That kid already had 50 dives under his belt in just one year. I guess his dad did well in the markets (Mark Poljak-maybe he'll come and talk to your class) and this was their third or fourth diving vacation that year. Our dive master, Smitty, was a trip. He could carry 6 tanks by himself. If you've ever carried even one tank you'll know this was an amazing feat. On one of the dives he spent a short period of time about an inch off the bottom. We thought he was looking at something interesting-heck no, he was taking a nap. He said one time he did that and when he woke up there were several dolphins curiously watching him. (We didn't see any dolphins this trip although in Cozumel we did.) Our first dive was about 100 feet. The generally varied from 60 or so to 80 some feet. The less depth, the more time you have to explore as your air lasts longer.

Well, I could probably go on forever but I guess I'll stop here. I know several members of our club dive. If you don't you might want to consider doing so. I can't tell you how beautiful it is under the water. It's brighter than you can probably imagine, full of wonderfully colored fishes, unusual formations and and...you don't have to make your roll! So, why not try a different water vacation next time and enjoy the view from under the waves.

Visiting The Boys

By Matt Muir

February 6, 1999. Ron Whitney and I had to visit a few friends. We hadn't seen Mr. Wonder, Mr. Zoom, the Island Brothers, or the Splat Brothers in several months. And we missed them. We'd tried to visit them in January, but they'd met us with an icy reception. This time, the invitation had been received; we were invited.

I hooked us up with David Hammond and three TRPC boys: Craig Wood, Dave Woten, and Dave's nephew, Chris. We'd met the first two at the Moose. As with the Moose trip, Craig was bringing his Popularity Enhancer. You want to

ensure that people invite you on paddling trips? It's easy, really; just shell out \$699 for the camcorder and \$82 for a Pelican case; cut a big-ol' piece of foam out of the back of your boat, and... presto! Instant popularity! You'll make friends as easily as a Libyan Olympic boss in Salt Lake City!

Not that I was thinking of his camcorder when I emailed Craig; but I was thrilled when he responded that he'd be bringing the toy. A Big Sandy Virgin, he was pretty psyched, too.

We met at Little Sandy's in Bruceton Mills, as is our wont, and began shuttle. The level had risen from a scrappy near-minimum of 5.5' to 5.7, which is quite passable. Three of us began hauling boats down to Rockville while Ron, David, and Craig ran shuttle.

Halfway down to the bridge, a friendly guy with a truck offered us a ride. We loaded five boats atop his vehicle and another atop a following truck. The guy in the following truck was TRPC's Jeff Knechtel. The friendly guy who packmuled five boats was JB Seay, whose name I recognized from rec.boats.paddle. In our small community, it's easy to meet people you know or know of.

We were joined at the put-in by Rick, a Columbus boater who knows David Ranson and Dave Thurgood. No idea where those two were on a fine Sandying day. But we were off!

Chris was also a Tinker's Virgin; Dave was the Experienced Hand among our TRPC guests, with two runs under his skirt. He didn't claim to know the whole river, but he seemed to hit the lines well.

After about a mile of III warm-up, we came of course to Wonder Falls. AWA rates this a IV-, but only because of the approach, which is a twisty bit of ledges, holes, and chutes. Chris and Craig, still nervous, were still hanging back. I'd have preferred if each of them had followed someone, but they ended up following one another much of the time. Many of us ran the rapid and waited in the flats above the Falls. Dave flipped in the final hole of the approach, and Craig followed his example. That had to do Wonders for Chris' confidence. He came through upright and got out to scout.

Ron showed us the line—not! He went about 6 feet too far right. Lucky for him that the river wasn't 6.5', because he landed right in the spot that tends to recirculate swimmers long enough to get worried. At low water, he was able to roll up in the Stuff and paddle to safety. Unfortunately, Craig's battery was sklitzked, so Ron's trashing didn't make it to video. Craig loaded a spare battery and we were in business.

Ron had to run it a third time, as he blew his brace at the landing on his second try. My second try was simply a mug for the camcorder. Chris didn't like what he saw and chose to walk it.

Zoom Flume. This is truly a scrappy rapid, and Chris was jazzed once again. Ron told him, "Okay, you *have* to run this rapid. Because the next rapid is Little Splat, and it's as hard as this, and there's no walking it." I don't normally condone taking control and "making" someone run a rapid he's nervous about, but in this case, Ron's wisdom was unassailable. (If you're not running Zoom Flume, you have no biz on the Sandy; besides, Chris had two Upper Gauley runs under his belt; anyone who's run Lost Paddle should be able to handle the Zoom.) For Ron's second run of this rapid, he had Chris right on his tail. Both came through without incident; the video footage should be more to Ron's liking than the first time he ran this rapid, back in '96. Suffice it to say that his handroll wasn't too solid back then.

One after another, the lemmings followed down Little Splat. Nobody got rolled, nobody got offline, nobody came near the pinning rock at the bottom. No problem.

That sets one up, of course, for the Big Kahuna. We all went left, as Craig figured he'd get better footage over there; plus which, everyone wanted to get a view of the approach rapid.

David gunned it, not waiting for the vidman to set up and film the approach; Ron followed. Too bad, as it would've been nice to have some footage of an *in-control* run. Me, I went for the wrong eddy, got spun around, into the flow, and had to work like a demon to catch what Gib calls "Hyperventilation Eddy," above the main drop. Ron, waiting in the *right* eddy, peeled out and took off. He grinned his evil grin at the camera...and dropped, again, about six feet too far right. He said he didn't roll in the slop below, but he walked up to get a better line. My line was a boofin' fun time, so I sat in the eddy below, content. David found a line that ski-launched him, seemingly with little effort. The "boof!" was audible as far as Morgantown. Rick, who'd run the approach, must've had a good line, as I don't remember it much.

After the other three brought their boats down, we showed Craig and Chris the nasty rocks to look out for below the right-side put-in and were on our way. I love the boogie-water below Splat. We all had fun, following one another on down.

At some rather insignificant rapid, we had one of those "incidents." Ron went to splat a rock, and quickly regretted it. When Dave and I came onto the scene, he was lodged but good. Apparently, there was a small crack or rockjam on the upstream side, about two feet under. Said crack cradled the pointy stern of Ron's boat, and it warn't letting go nohow. He was stuck, bigtime. Dave got out and got onto the rock, while I wrestled with my skirt and tried to extricate my geeky long legs from the boat. Dave grabbed Ron's bow and shoved it to the side, freeing the boat. Ron rolled and continued.

The haste of removing my skirt had given me a boat full of water. With skirt still off, I tried to make it to the hole everyone was playing in, just to see how a full-boat surf would go. Perhaps I was apprehensive, or perhaps the full boat messed up my ferry line; whatever, I didn't make it into the hole, and I instead went to shore to empty the boat. My feet were a bit numb (and therefore uncoordinated) from the February water, and as my boat finished draining, I stumbled at the bank. I didn't see the point in fighting the inevitable, and David, who was looking in my direction, was treated to the sight of: first, my stumbling and falling, literally face-first, into the foot-deep water at the bank; and second, my big-ol' heavy Cruise Control teetering and then following me, coming on down and slamming right on top of my head. As they asked if I was okay, all's I could do was to push my head above the surface, boat still riding my back, and grin at them. (This is why I wear a helmet.) It's too dangd bad that we didn't get *that* on video.

First Island is the next biggie. David showed us a cool slot, which I promptly messed up. It looked rather pinny, but it let me through all right. I had been taking the sweep position all day, so I hadn't gotten to Craig to warn him of the deceiving nature of the rapid. It looks like a straightforward move to boof right and avoid the pinning rock at the bottom. However, a strong eddyline and some strong flow conspire to send you to the left, so you have to commit hard to pointing right. Craig didn't work hard. We saw him get turned around and run left of the rock, looking inelegant but upright and safe.

The only other rapid worth mentioning is Second Island. Right of the island is a fun little III+ rocky thing. Left of the island is a gnarly, tight V line. To top it off, we'd had warnings that there was a log in the left side. David, who'd run it the day before, assured us that the log was down in the runout of the rapid, easily avoided after the hard stuff. Rick was kind enough to head right of the island, leading Craig and Chris through the standard line and freeing the rest of us for the hair line. The hair was fun, as always.

It was a nice day to see the Brothers Splat and their colleagues. Play by their rules, and they can be a good bunch of guys to visit.

PADDLING / SKI VACATION by Vince Krempenger

Four days of paddling interrupted by seven days of skiing. Well it took us 3 days of OK snow to get to Durango. We skied Cuchara, Taos, (Karen was the renegade at Taos due to her snoboard tendencies) and Wolf Creek. Finally in Durango and Four Corners Riversports. The gang at the store was great to us. Karen tried out an Infrared and Fly while I used a Phat. Fun (little) boats on a fun little stretch of the Animas that runs through town. Affectionately

called the Lunch Run or Racecourse.

Approximately a mile and a half long, we had, on two successive days, three-hour "lunches" under beautiful Colorado blue skies.

Then back to skiing, three days at Telluride and one day at Monarch (finally a powder day). While skiing at Telluride we stayed in Ouray. A place called Riverside. Nice, clean, reasonable prices and owned by guys (Erin and Quentin) who run a kayak school, as the San Miguel is their back property line. They hold outdoor roll sessions at the natural hot springs pool!

Then on to Salida and a store called Headwaters. These folks were recommended by a woman we met at the Monarch ski area (pub). Midge, as it turned out, was a part-time employee at the store, when not skiing or paddling. Karen tried out the Wave Sport X and I tried out the Z. Short, flat bottoms with a planing chine these little suckers made the 9 miles of under 300 cfs section of the Arkansas from Pinnacle Rock to Parkdale, just above the Royal Gorge, fun and challenging for me in particular. While most of the 12 to 15 sets rapids were class 2+, 4 or 5 of them could qualify as 3- due to their length and technicality (read maneuvering around rocks). I managed to get upside down on day one at a place called 5 points at the bottom of the rapid, when a rock grabbed and wrenched my paddle out of my hand, jamming my thumb. Somehow I re-acquired it and rolled up-I think it was because we had spectators. However, on Day Two, at a different rapid, I continued my streak of sampling the water on every river I paddle. Karen was "fearless leader." We scouted a couple of the rapids from the road (Rt. 50 runs next to river) including one that the book called a class 3-4. The book called it Three Rocks; however, the locals call it Three Million Rocks at the level we paddled. And we did get out of our boats and look at another rapid known as Five Points. The scenery was massive and majestic, the water clear, cold and fast, and the Bighorn Sheep interesting. When we startled one group with a young one the ram took a couple charging steps our way and postured up next to the little one, very cool to see from the security of the river and boat. Due to the time of year and low water Karen and I were the only boaters. A few fly fisherman, and sparse traffic on the highway made for a quiet float.

We paddled Thursday and Friday on the Arkansas and flew home Saturday arriving home at about 1 AM. We hung up our still-damp gear and went to bed 3 AM. Sunday morning Colorado blue skies followed us!!! Still one day of vacation left start calling!!! Called Bill Miller and Cathy Needham, we are off for the Slippery Rock (the Slip at zip) Gauge 0. That's OK for us because it is their first paddle of the season and we had the river to ourselves.

From the third day of our trip on we asked for and used recommendations from boaters as to places to eat and sleep we were not disappointed and did receive some special deals due to the name dropping. Most notable was in Salida at the Redwood Motel, which was suggested by the Headwaters gang. While talking with another couple staying at this motel we found they were paying about \$12 a night more.

We met a lot of friendly helpful people while on tour: Andy, Andrew and Mike

of Four Corners; John a designer for Prijon; Tim Samson of FIBARK* and Hummingbird Paddles (beautiful wood paddles); Ray and Hank from Headwaters. Also we went to Colorado Kayak Co. in Nathrop, CO. I believe they are the Stoholquist Mfg.-what deals on gear !!!

*FIBARK-first in boating the Arkansas. Down river racing 1949. The club is apparently in resurgence. It appears to be operated like a yacht club with a club house, commodores, races, and boat storage, right next to the river. I hope to have more info on the club in the near future, as I am interested in possibly supporting their club and its interests. SAVE THE ARKANSAS!!!!

Mucho Agua in Ecuador

By John Kobak

This winter's adventure trip was a great experience for twelve Keel Haulers who traveled from across the USA. It was an advanced whitewater trip along with a nature lover's tour of the Galapagos with some touring of the mountain towns to shop for arts and crafts thrown in. The trip varied from one week to 2 months, with everybody on their own schedule.

Peggy and I were having a tough time deciding where to go this year. I asked our travel buddy, Chuck Singer, what he was doing. He said he was going to Ecuador and Peru for two months. I thought, why not South America, we pretty much toured most of Central America on our previous trips.

As usual, I hit the internet to try to find a good plan which would include kayaking, diving and exploration. I found that most of the US based kayak outfitters wanted "mucho dinero" for an 8 day trip. I figured with a little work I could probably do it for half as much and add the flexibility that makes these trips work for everyone. Beside I hate organized tours and if we had a lot of options more people could come on the trip.

I found an outfitter in Ecuador, Yacu Amu Rafting who was willing to provide kayaks, guide, transportation, food, drink and lodging for \$100/day. Steve Nomchong, the Australian owner, was very flexible and took care of all the arrangements along with airport transfers and booking a yacht for our 8 day tour of the Galapagos Islands. He hired Dave a Canadian whitewater guide who also accompanied the trip. The trip was sort of an exploratory trip for all of us since they had never attempted to lead a large kayak group. They usually just rent out their kayaks to the US outfitters.

Speaking of renting out boats, none of us brought our own except Carl Homberg, a C-1 paddler. Although Steve assured him he could locate a Cascade C-1, like Carl paddles, he struck out. Carl would have to bring his own boat. When Carl checked the airline regulations, he was told no boats, they need to go air freight which would cost \$500. I checked with Continental Airlines and found they would take wind surfers for \$75 as long as they were under 115" and less than 75lb. The weight was no problem but Carl's boat is 132" long. Chuck agreed to try to get it on his flight with my assistance since he was leaving a few weeks before Carl. I bagged the boat and marked it WIND SURFER. Who knew the ticket clerk would try to measure it. Luckily she used a yard stick with my help. I assured her that I just measured it at home and it was only 113" long, she said OK and wrote 113". It was going to make it, Carl was one happy person.

We ended up with a strong group of paddlers and a few that would just go on the non paddling portion. Chuck, our Spanish interpreter, Pete Cornelison, an old member who now lives on the East coast, Carl and Donna Homberg and myself would do the full trip, Bob Nicholson would do only a one week kayak portion. Judi Cleary and Casey Kaskey and Thury O'Connor came for three days of paddling on some of the easier rivers. My wife, Peggy, came for the Galapagos trip with Marty and Shirley Kopp.

Ecuador is extremely beautiful. I felt the capital Quito was more modern and cleaner than San Jose, Costa Rica, and the country seemed fairly prosperous compared to Honduras and Guatemala. Quito is at 9400', and even though it is nearly on the equator it is quite cool. High's were in the 70's, low's in the 50's with frequent showers. The most scenic part of the country is on the Eastern slopes of the Andes mountains called the Orient region. We paddled on rivers that eventually flow into the Amazon river. We paddled from 6000' altitude down to as low as 1500', so the rivers were cool in the high elevations and jungle like in the low elevations.

On our first day we headed for Tena. The elevation is about 3000' and has a much warmer

climate. The town has several nice hotels and restaurants and is the hub of whitewater boating . Air and water temperature are also much more pleasant here. 80's & 60's. If you bring your own boat to Ecuador this is the place to go. Rios Ecuador is a gathering place for kayakers. They help work out shuttles with the local taxi drivers who know all the put-ins and takeouts. You can easily find someone to paddle with. However, if you don't have your own kayak you may have trouble renting one here.

We ran three rivers in the area. The Upper Misahualli (30)*, Lower Misahualli (32) and the lower Jondachi (35). Luckily Donna decided to take a rest day when we paddled the Jondachi. It was the most beautiful yet most difficult river I have run, when you take into account its remoteness and length (26 mi.). We got off the river at twilight. I believe everybody except Peter swam at one time or another. I lost my pelican box containing my prescription sun glasses.

* Keel Haulers River Ratings

The Upper Mis. was like the Tygart's Middle Fork and the Lower was like the Gauley. The Jondachi was like the Upper Yough but long and remote. I wish we would have spent a few more days in this area. However, the trip must go on so we headed back up the mountain to El Chaco lodge which was near Baeza. It was at 6000' so a little cooler. The lodge had the best food on the trip but the accommodations were a little Spartan. They had a swimming pool with no water, rustic rooms and hard beds. Better than camping. They had just oiled the floors, using diesel fuel, which had a dreadful odor.

On our way to the lodge we ran the Papallacta and Upper Quijos (27), a short stretch with easily read rapids. After the three tough long days we really enjoyed the easier run. The next day we ran the Consanga (33) which runs into the Quijos. At this point the rain had started and the river was starting to get fairly pushy. We had several more swims. I recommend that you plan rest days into your schedule. Unless you are young and strong you will be mighty tired after a few days of these rivers.

We took the next day off as a rest day and this was the end of Bob's week of paddling. Bob headed back with our guides. A footnote to this, Bob had two days in Quito before flying home. He must have eaten some bad chicken as he became extremely sick when he returned home to Bowling Green. He was hospitalized with dehydration

It had been raining for 30 straight hours as Judi and Casey arrived for their paddling trip. The rivers of the Oriente region were all in flood. This was fine for our rest day. We were driven to the highest falls in Ecuador (San Rafael) on the Quijos river which was now running about

50,000cfs. They were spectacular to say the least.

When our guides returned that evening they informed us that paddling the next 3 days in this region was not an option and it was still raining. (Mucho Aqua) I guess the rainy season has come early. Seems like the only difference between the rainy and dry season is that it rains every day during rainy season and it rains every night in dry season.

We headed back to Quito. Got delayed on the mountain pass for 3 hours by a landslide but arrived in time to say goodbye to Bob and pickup Peggy, Thury, Marty and Shirley. We then headed west of Quito to the Rio Blanco area, since those rivers were high but not in flood. We stayed at a new resort hotel (La Cascada) which was an architectural masterpiece integrated into a natural waterfall. It had a beautiful swimming pool, sauna and a good restaurant.

We ran three different river sections (24) which Yacu Amu typically runs for their raft groups. They were wide open rivers with good waves and holes that traverse through an agricultural region. They were not as clean or jungle like as the rivers in the Oriente region. Judi, paddling a Shredder raft, found them to be very enjoyable.

We headed back over the Western mountains to get back to Quito where we fly from to go to the Galapagos. Everything in Ecuador was quite inexpensive. A nice hotel with full facilities in Quito cost from \$20 -\$35/night. Chuck stayed in a small hostel for only \$10/night in a convenient section of New Town. I'm not sure what is happening to US prices since the economic crisis in March. The Sucre (Ecuadorian currency) went from 7000 to a dollar to 11,000/\$.

Galapagos

The islands are 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador. These islands explored by Darwin in the 1800's are a nature lover's paradise. You cannot set foot in the Nat'l Park islands without being accompanied by a trained naturalist. We chartered a 75' yacht (Seaman) which carried 16 passengers and a crew of 8 for our 8 day cruise. It had a very good itinerary that covered a wide range of islands. We rented a 2 person sea kayak to bring along with us and the yacht was set up to do scuba diving as well as snorkeling. Each evening we would motor to a new island and each day we did 2 island walks and 2 snorkel trips.

Only 5 of us decided to scuba dive and we went for 3 dives each. They had warned us that the dives were difficult. The dives were all drift dives, since there was some current. We saw big sharks, sea lions, sea turtles and giant manta rays as well as the usual fish, eel and marine

life. The water temperatures vary considerably during the year. In February it was 74 °F, fine for a shorty wet suit.

The island wildlife was unique and quite tame. We walked among sea lions, iguanas, and nesting frigate birds and all kinds of boobies. Mocking birds sipped water from our hands. Flightless cormorants and small penguins were a big surprise. The National Park controls the numerous tours, not allowing more than 18 persons to go ashore with a naturalist guide. Our guide spoke excellent English and really made the trip enjoyable for all.

The Galapagos trip is a little expensive. The air fare to the islands, yacht charter and guide was \$1250/person. We all felt it was well worth it. The air fare to Ecuador from Cleveland using a consolidator was only \$650/person.

When we arrived back in Quito the weather had finally cleared up and the end of our trip was sunny and warm. We were scheduled to head off to the mountain towns that create great crafts and leather goods, but we were informed that there could be a transportation strike and they couldn't provide a driver. Things calmed the next day so off we went. The Otavalo Saturday market, the largest in the country, was fantastic. Bargains galore, alpaca sweaters, woven goods and lots of crafts. We traveled to Cotacachi, the leather town, and I bought myself two beautiful leather jackets for only \$60 each.

For most of us the trip was ending. Peter stayed on for 5 more days to take a Spanish language class and Chuck was off to Peru for his next adventure. Peggy and I spent Sunday touring Quito. It has a modern new city and a old colonial portion (Old Town) with beautiful Spanish cathedrals and government buildings. The parks had a large art show as well as many native craft artisans.

As I reflect back, the thing that really made the trip great, beside the fine Keel Hauler friends, was Steve Nomchong the owner of Yacu Amu rafting. This was his first large private kayak trip and he catered to our every need.. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend his company to anyone. If you have a group of at least 4 paddlers., he can supply everything you need and do it for half the rate of the US companies. I'm sure most of us will eventually go back for more river paddling. Compared to any of the other tropical countries that I have visited Ecuador has more variety, beauty with the added attraction of the Galapagos islands.

Winter in Florida

By John Kobak

After we returned from Ecuador we took our motor home and canoe down to Florida until it got warmer in Cleveland.

We paddled on several new rivers for us. Along the Tamiami Trail we ran Halfway Creek Canoe Trail. It narrowed to a 5' swath through overhanging mangroves until it opened up into the bay near Everglades city. Next time we will try the Thompson Trail.

We ran the Peace River from Fort Meade to Bowling Green. Water was low but it was a nice trip. Saw lots of river otters and one big black snake.

We ran the Lithia river downstream of Lithia Springs a county park near Tampa. It is a crystal clear spring fed river with some easy riffles.

We paddled in Tampa Bay from Ft. Desota Park to some of the islands where we did some shelling.

We paddled Rainbow Springs east of Ocala, a new Florida State Park. The river is deep and crystal clear and is popular with divers who float a mile from the springs down the river.

Florida has lots of good rivers for canoeing. As usual on the river trips I threw my bike into my canoe and when we finished I peddled back to get my RV leaving Peggy with the canoe to enjoy a book.

Black Eye, Broken Ribs, Bruised Elbow and Lost Boat ... another fun Southern Trip. By John Kobak

Twenty-six paddlers came on this year's trip. Most paddled the four day weekend. Some paddled for the entire 8 day trip. A list of all the participants is at the end of this report. Elliott Drysdale came out of retirement and accompanied me and Syd Reames in my motor home while Peggy borrowed Syd's car to visit her sister in Atlanta as usual.

This was a year of records; The number of paddlers, Warm weather, injuries and even a lost boat. We started out as always on the Nolichucky. It rained the day we got there bringing the river up to about 2000 cfs. We hoped that the Watauga would stay high enough for us to paddle. The weather took a turn for the better, sunny and warm on Good Friday morning. Calls to the Gages revealed that the Watauga was too low and unless we got more rain the Tellico would also be too low. It never rained for the rest of the week and temperature went into the 80's.

Twenty Five paddlers plus a small group of paddling buddies from RBP (rec.boats.paddle - Internet newsgroup) showed up. By the time we launched the river went down to 1700cfs, a perfect intermediate level. We broke up into 3 groups on the river so I didn't get to see the

action at quarter mile rapid. Shelly (Faba) Schmidt flipped and did an face plant on a rock. Wow, what a shiner. All she needed was a few missing teeth to go with the hockey shoulder pads she wore, to look like a NHL player. I think she was the only swimmer on Friday.

Dave Hammond and his friend Matt Hopkins had shown up a few days earlier (Spring Break) and were camping downstream of the campground to save a few bucks. I guess this agitated the campground manager. When we arrived they dropped by to say hello, the manager wanted them to pay a visitors fee, which they politely refused to pay and left. On Friday when we got off the river he again spotted them in the campground, now he was serious about being paid. I sent Rob Hammond down to see if he would take care of it. Not exactly. After Rob would not pay for Matt, the manager blew his stack and told us all to leave. Luckily we had decided that since the only good water was at the Chattooga that we should drive down Fri. night to get an early start on the river Saturday..

We decided to try a new campground at the Chattooga. Craig & Mary Ewing are in the process of building the "Paddle Inn" just off the section four shuttle road. It won't open until this summer but they agreed to allow us to be their first paying customers. No water, toilets or showers as of yet but I had electricity for my motor home. The campground is along Long Creek and is very quiet and secluded. They eventually expect to have a restaurant, cabins and include room(camp) service.

The rain had brought the Chattooga up to over 3' but it was falling fast. We would have three different groups running on Saturday. Seven persons went to run the Tallulah Gorge which requires a permit. Luckily Ron Whitney & Barry Adams both got permits. The Tallulah is a dewatered section below a huge dam. It has been dry for 70 years and due to AWA's help, the power company has agreed to release enough water for paddlers on four weekends per year. Last year twelve Keel Haulers got to run the gorge which contains a 55' runnable falls (Oceana) and several class V rapids.

This year we had a few accidents at Oceana. Ron Tomallo flipped and somehow reinjured his ribs which he had broken, motocross racing, last year. He paddled a few more rapids and finally realized his problem. He couldn't paddle anymore and he wanted to walk out. Ron Whitney, Matt Hopkins and Dave Hammond agreed to get his boat to the takeout by running it though the rapids. Ron T. didn't know about or couldn't get to the foot path that comes in near Bridal Veil falls, so he waited until they turned off the river later in the day to walk back up the 890 stairs to the put-in. First timers Erin Bethea, and Wayne Carey had no problems although they did walk Oceana..

Our second group of six paddlers headed for section 4 of the Chattooga which was running at 2.2'. Charlene Thompson (Cheeta -RBP) did a good job of leading them down the river. A

little rolling action in Corkscrew, for Greg Lewis. All ran right Crack to the right into the eddy except Matt, Rick & Cheeta, who took the far right creek route. Matt and Rick made it successfully, but Cheeta got pinned, hit her head on a rock, scratched her helmet & got sucked out of her boat. She recovered quickly and went on to an uneventful finish to the day. No race across the lake.

The third group of eleven paddlers opted for Section 3 of the Chattooga. I haven't run this section in years and it was at a decent level so I figured we could do the whole run from Earl's Ford to Bull Sluice. We had lots of bad lines at Dick's Creek Falls but only one swimmer. We made good time even with taking some time to run Bull Sluice. Everyone except Shelly shot the Bull. At this level you can go just to the left of Decap. Rock which is completely covered with water. It is an easy line. Below 2', most people run to the right of the rock and punching the hydraulic becomes trickier.

On Easter Sunday morning Dave Becker prepared a big pancake breakfast for everyone. The time change caused a few late sleepers to almost miss Dave's great homemade maple syrup. We again broke into three groups.

Six headed for the Tallulah. Ron Whitney had to patch his eyebrow after a little tangle with the rock wall in the eddy at the bottom of Oceana. Rob Hammond also flipped, he tried a few roll attempts against the unforgiving rock wall in the eddy and bailed. Turns out that he had banged his elbow in Oceana which quickly produced a large bump the size of an orange. He intends to wear elbow pads the next time. The river was VERY pushy at about 825 cfs. Definitely a challenging level that required the group to stay focused on the river.

The remaining 15 paddlers split into two groups to do section 4. It was interesting to watch Chuck Singer's group come down through Seven Foot Falls. Chuck came first, misjudging the line and flipping on a rock just left of the right hand sneak route. he slid down the sneak upside down, momentarily pinned on a rock and self rescued into an eddy. Others did variations of his theme, with Sue coming to rest upside down atop of the pinning rock. A real circus. Of course our group all did perfect boofs down the seven foot drop, NOT.

Mike Duvall did a repeat of last years swim at Corkscrew, complete with a throw line rescue by Ron Whitney. The next excitement started at Jaw Bone. Our groups were helping each other out at this point with throw lines. I thought they had already setup a line below Jaw Bone so I headed over to the staging eddy immediately above the drop. To get here, you must punch a good size hole. I didn't explain this move to Luke Thompson and didn't expect that he would follow me. He missed the eddy and flipped while dropping into the start of the rapid and swam. As I pulled out to chase him, Cheeta whipped out in front of me and went down to rescue him, however she flipped and also swam, so I had two swimmers heading for Sock-em-

Dog and realized that the throw rope had not yet been setup. Scott Debalski followed me but the best we could do was to get Cheeta into the eddy. I prayed Luke would be OK as he held on to his boat and went over Sock-em-Dog just right of center. Scott quickly dropped down the Puppy Chute and found out that Luke had made it OK. This was the first time we had anyone swim over the Dog. Cheeta, anxious to redeem herself for the swim jumped back into her boat and attempted to run Sock-em-Dog. Slightly off line she ended up in the bottom hole and took another swim, Oh well it was not her day.

On Monday, the group usually starts to fragment. Six people headed home. Two new paddlers joined the group Brent Laubaugh, who was taking an NOC class and Terry Markoff paddling an open canoe. This gave us fourteen paddlers which we split into two groups on Chattooga 4.

The trip went really well until First Falls. Sue Strumbel started a little too far left and got surfed in a hole. She rolled and barely had time to get to the right and again flipped as she dropped into the pool above Corkscrew. Safety boaters pulled her and her paddle to shore but her kayak kept going. I told Ron not to bother chasing it as I wanted him to set a safety rope up below Cork Screw before the groups paddled down. I explained that the boats always either stop at the bottom of Crack-in-the-Rock or end up in Dead Man's pool below Sock-em-Dog. Sue started walking.

The rest of the runs went fairly smoothly and I made sure to set up a throw rope below Jaw bone before the group headed down. Cheeta flipped again in Jaw Bone, this time she kept trying to roll. Moral of the story is that you should only try one roll below Jaw Bone. When she bailed out she was already out of range of the throw line so over the Dog she went, it was starting to get to be a long weekend for Cheeta.

Matt Muir (Riviera Ratt) figured that if Cheeta could swim it twice and almost run it once he ought to give the Big Dog a try. Brent and I set up throw lines next to the big hole and anxiously watched. Matt's line was perfect, right over the Rooster Tail but a little too slow. He didn't get far enough away from the hole and was quickly sucked down into a vertical position. I guess the Dog had the Ratt's tail. He remained in this position for at least 5 seconds and then slipped into the hole sideways. I hoped, could this be the Ratt's first swim in three years? I shouted back paddle, but he was quickly sucked forward into the deep part of the hole and disappeared. He reappeared upside down but free of the hole, a couple of roll attempts and he was on his way.

Now where is Sue's kayak? We searched upstream and downstream, nothing. It was gone. Luckily a raft trip offered her a free ride across the lake to the takeout. She got a call 4 days later that a paddler from Atlanta found her boat in Dead Man's Pool. Where it had spent the last four days was beyond me.

Lang, Becker & Lewis left to run the Blackwater at 3.3' on the Davis gage on Monday. Lewis reports "The level was definitely on the high side. It was an awesome run, almost as exciting as the Tallulah (but without as much gradient). It was one long rapid with small downstream flowing eddies. No swims, but a few rolls in critical spots. We all walked Crackatoa, the first main rapid because of a river wide keeper. I walked the falls, but Becker & Lang found enough water to run it (it is rarely runnable). The rapid just after Rock & Roll and just above the Slide was tough. I got spun around in the first drop and ran the 2nd drop backwards. I subsequently flipped. Due to its constant nature, the river seemed to never end, no rest for the weary."

Ron and Matt headed over to do the Green Narrows with a few NC friends. I heard they had good runs at 100% dam release. Later in the week they headed up to the New river and Sue bought a used RPM kayak. They paddled the New at several different water levels.

The rest of the group decided that since there was no water in the Obed-Emory system or the Big South Fork, that we would head up to paddle in WV.

On Tue, Mike, Brent and Terry ran the New river at 1'. The rest of us took off for a non-paddling day. On Wed. the seven remaining paddlers along with a couple we met from NY (Steve & Deb O'Keefe) paddled the New at 2'. It was a fun level. Water levels were now falling fast in WV, we decided to go up to the Cheat. Mike went home and eight of us ran the Cheat at 2.5'. Big Nasty looked too nasty for anyone to play in. Elliott convinced Steve & Deb to join the club.

On Friday our plans were to do the Upper Yough. I checked with Roger at Precision Rafting who informed me that the Mon/Fri releases do not start until 4/15 and the water was a little too low for a fun run. We decided to paddle the Lower Yough which was running at just over 3'. The rain started to fall in buckets by the time we got to the river. We put on early and were off by Lunch time. The river crested at 11' that night. Most of us planned to be home by the weekend so water or not we said goodbye to our fun week of paddling. We all enjoyed the early season warm weather.

Next year Easter will be three weeks later, it should really be nice by then.
SYOTR.

Participants

Adams, Barry	Lang, Paul & JoAnn
Becker, Dave	Laubaugh, Brent
Bethea, Erin	Lewis, Greg
Boyce, Bob	Markoff, Terry
Carey, Wayne	Muir, Matt
Debalski, Scott	Reames, Syd
Drysdale, Elliott	Schmidt, Shelley
Duvall, Mike	Singer, Chuck
Gross, Keith	Strumbel, Sue
Hammond, Rob	Tomallo, Ron
Hammond, Dave	Thompson, Luke
Hopkins, Matt	Thompson, Charlene

Keel-Hauler's KaNews Oct. 1999



Nov. Deadline: Oct. 24

For Oct, Nov, and Dec meetings we are meeting at Fairview Park library.

7:00pm to 9:00pm.

Directions to Fairview Park Library

From 480: Exit at Grayton Rd. and go south to Brookpark. Turn right (west) onto Brookpark and go 2 miles. Turn right (north) onto W. 220th and go about 3 miles to Lorain. Turn right (east) on Lorain and go several blocks. The library will be on the right (south) side of the street just past W. 214th.

From 90: Exit at Columbia Rd., go south through 3 lights (Detroit, Hilliard, and Center Ridge). At the fourth light make a left (east) on Westwood and proceed to W. 214th. Make a right (south) on 214th and go about 1/2 mile until Lorain. Make a left (east) on Lorain, the library will be on your right almost immediately.

Membership dues are now due for the new fiscal year.

Mail check for \$15 to: Keelhaulers Canoe Club, 1649 Allen Dr., Westlake, OH 44145-2506

There is no need to fill out another application and waiver unless there has been a change in yearbook information. app/waiver will be printed in the October newsletter.

The clubs fiscal year ends 9/30/99, it does not end on Dec 31th. Club membership year runs from October 1st to September 30th. Your last newsletter will be the December newsletter.

This is your chance to make a donation for conservation. Any monies you send above the dues amount(\$15) will go to conservation. Clean Rivers and Lakes are important to us all!!!!

Note the updated application on pg. 9 You can list your type of boating activity.

Oct 2...Slippery Rock Creek, PA

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Cathy Schilling...(330) 686-8924

Oct 4...Penn Cup Race #4 The Fiddler's Elbow Slalom, PA

See the Pennsylvania Cup series, Sept 4-5. Contact Rob Hammond or the Canoe Club of

Greater Harrisburg. This is a class 1 slalom race, at Swatara Creek, Hershey, PA.

Rob Hammond...(216) 292-5618

Oct 2...Sea Kayaking at Fairport Harbor

Dave Stevens...(440) 461-2067

Oct 2- 3...Upper Yough, Upper Gauley (32/33)

The upper, upper weekend will be a challenging fun filled weekend. We will run the upper Yough and then the next day move over and run the Upper Gauley. Please call ahead for the plan.

Paul Lang...(330) 896-3468

Oct 6...Sea Kayaking at Bradstreet Landing, Rocky River, OH

Jill Lauren...(440) 366-6255

Oct 9...Sea Kayakers Picnic Emerald Necklace

Marsha Wacker...(440) 356-0987

Oct 9...Ottawa National

Five-mile walk to see wildlife and migrating birds in this area of marsh on Lake Erie. The refuge, located 15 miles east of Toledo, Ohio, contains remnants of a vast marsh that once bordered western Lake Erie. However, eagles and dramatic flights of migrating birds may still be seen.

Dennis Plank...(216) 228-4926

Oct 9-10...Penn Cup Race #5 The Bellefonte Slalom, PA

See the Pennsylvania Cup series Sept 5-6. Contact Rob Hammond or the race organizer Penn State Outing Club Whitewater. This is a class I+ slalom, and pot luck dinner. The Penn Cup awards will be awarded after the race, at Spring Creek, in Bellefonte, PA

Rob Hammond...(216) 292-5618

Oct 9-10...Gauley River, WV (26/33)

Please call ahead for the plans.

John Fralick...(216) 321-7494

Oct 10...Ocoee Rodeo, TN (24)

Ron Whitney...(216) 481-1080

Oct 12...Meeting, Location Fairview Park Library

Oct 16-17...Moose River, NY (III-V)

This is the weekend of AWA's Moose River Festival. Located in Old Forge, NY, the Moose has two sections: the Lower (III-IV), and the Bottom, which has some solid V drops. This Adirondack river has a completely different "look and feel" from the central Appalachian rivers we're accustomed to.

Tom Cronin...(518) 473-7340

Oct 16-17...Sea Kayaking at Mosquito Creek

Jackie Otte...(216) 371-1674

Oct 17 or 18...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We will hope for a fall foliage trip with enough water.

Kurt Hass...(216) 321-1763

Oct 16-17...Yough Weekend, PA (12/23)

This is our traditional fall color appreciation Yough trip. The only guarantee made for this weekend is that the scenery will be great, with fall colors peaking around this time. The weather could go either way, so be prepared for cold wet weather but hope for the best. Call the Yough trip organizers early if you are interested in paddling on this weekend. **Please read page 42 for important information.**

Lower Yough trip organizer: Sherie

Sanzenbacher ...(216) 381-0599

Middle Yough trip organizer: Brian

Thies...(440) 331-4216

Oct 18-22...Cheat Canyon, WV – Fall Colors (26)

Kurt Reno...(216) 321-1763

Oct 23 or 24...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Tom Taylor...(440) 969-9711

Oct 23-24...Russell Fork above The Breaks, WV (22-26)

This is the last weekend of the 1999 recreational releases. I'll camp at the Breaks Interstate Park. I'll have paddled there the previous two weekends also; one of them as co-leader for a TSRA trip we've been running for 5 or 6 years. Five miles from Pound River dam to Garden Hole on Saturday. Three miles from Bartlick to Garden Hole Sunday to facilitate travel. Trip will be cross-listed with TRPC in Pittsburgh and WVWA in Charleston WV.

Cecil Tickamyer...(740) 593-8453

Nov 6...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

John Fralick...(216) 321-7494

Nov 9...Meeting, Location TBA

Y2K Trip Schedule Planning...

Nov 13...Cheat Canyon, WV (26)

Let's hope this fun river is running in the cold. Call to confirm levels.

Matt Muir...(330) NOT A FAX

Nov. 13...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Tim Taubert...(440) 256-2506

Nov. 20...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Kurt Haas...(216) 321-1763

Nov 26-28...Gauley or WV Rivers (19-33)

Water levels will determine where we go so please call in advance for the plans.

Stu Koster...(248) 652-3241

**KEEL HAULERS CANOE CLUB
MINUTES**

DATE: September 14, 1999

Owing to the demolition of the old Middleburg Heights Recreation Center, this meeting was held at the Peninsula Library in Peninsula, OH. Vice President Rob Hammond chaired the meeting in the absence of Cathy Schilling, who was at a wake.

New members and guests: There were seven new members, all whitewater boaters. Several of them were from the Kent State Kayak Club; one was a recent immigrant from Utah who is looking forward to paddling in something other than fresh snow melt.

Treasurer's Report: Rob Hammond reported on behalf of Treasurer Dwight Arndt that the club's current balance is \$3470.68. A donation of \$330 was recently made to conservation organizations.

Chair Reports.

Instruction: John Kobak and Rob Hammond reported that the Red Cross has four introductory-level classes coming soon in this area. In addition, a swift water rescue class is planned in the near future. These events are listed on the Internet.

Membership: Current club membership is 367, about the same number as last year at this time. Membership Chair John Kobak reminded members that this is a good time to pay dues and, while you're at it, make a separate contribution to the club's conservation fund since the club's donations to conservation activities is drawn from a distinct budget pool.

Library: Ron Whitney reported that the club has not purchased any new videos recently, but he expects to be getting one within the next month.

Safety: Chuck Singer was inspired by John Kobak's recent mountain bike experience to talk about crashing. This can take many forms. All paddlers occasionally crash and swim (with one exception, whose perfection gnaws at many of us). You

should plan your swimming strategy before you get into a situation where you will need to use it.

Old business. None.

New business. It was reported that the Peninsula Library will be unavailable for the club's October meeting, so we will meet in Fairview Park a month earlier than originally planned.

Launch permits purchased by the club for this summer's Lower Yough trips have generally not been used by members, who either have season passes or tend to put on before 8 AM. This has resulted in a substantial waste of club resources. There was general agreement to reduce the number of permits that the club purchases for Lower Yough outings in the future.

In addition, several club members spent their own money reserving campground space for Upper Yough paddlers who did not show up because of this summer low water. If you have lost money in this way and would like to be reimbursed by the club, please contact one of the officers.

Trip Reports. Five local paddlers joined many others from the eastern part of the country at the Beaver River in the Adirondaks for Labor Day weekend. The weather, water, and scenery were all exquisite, and Karen Petit enjoyed her first Class V run. Karen and her daughter, Angie, were credited with the first mother-daughter descent of the Eagle section of that river.

John Kobak did not make his expected appearance at the recent Gauley weekend, but claims to have orchestrated events from afar. Without John on hand to maintain order there were several interesting incidents, including a little problem at Insignificant and a synchronized roll by four boats at the same rapid on the Lower section.

Rob Hammond reported the biggest Keel Hauler turnout ever for the races at Riversport on the Middle Yough. Lisa Strong took fourth place in her division, and Rob proudly announced having taken second in the geriatric-oops...I mean Master(!)--class.

Evening Program. A video called Twitch.

Here is an update on American Red Cross courses:

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Cuyahoga Community College Metro Campus

October 25 to November 15, 1999

Mondays 6pm to 9pm (four weeks)

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Lakewood High School

November 14 to 28, 1999

Sundays 4pm to 8pm (three weeks)

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Lakewood High School

January 23 to February 6, 2000

Sundays 4pm to 8pm (three weeks)

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Lakewood High School

February 20 to March 5, 2000

Sundays 4pm to 8pm (three weeks)

Annual Canoe & Kayak School

Fundamentals Courses, Basic River, & White Water Courses April 7, 8, & 9, 2000

Call (216) 431-3081 for Mike Darrah, or email darrahm@usa.redcross.org with questions or to register.

Roll Sessions at Orange HS.

The dates for roll sessions right now look like Saturday, 1/8-3/11-2000, 4pm-6pm except for 1/15. There may be other exception dates due to high school swim meets, but that won't be known until November sometime. Rest assured the time is reserved for the Keel Haulers. Fees and info will be the same as usual.

Eastern Boater Boy Meets Big Western Water, Part I

By Rob Hammond

Yep, I know what you are thinking, you read the title, and figure: oh good, smart-ass Hammond goes out west and gets spanked on the BIG water! Now of course the sophisticated readers will surly say "SIR I do not take pleasure in someone else's misfortune!". But please, let me defend my cynical view of boaterkind! It was just this spring I was boating the Upper Gauley. After elegantly negotiating Pillow rapid, one of the more notorious rapids on the river. I casually got out of my boat to take some pictures of my boater colleagues. I clambered down the boulders, came upon a wet, slippery rock, and faster than an upstream lean, I went into the drink, camera and all. Of course, there was the obligatory kidding about this

boater's equal opportunity clumsiness whether on land or water. Now, if you are thinking, "yea so what!", then you can imagine my surprise when on the very next day, I met up a group of Keelhaulers on the Cheat river, and was treated to the rumor that "Hammond swam Pillow". So I know that there are people out there who would delight in a good spanking story!

My Western Rivers trip started off on a Sunday in May by telling John Kobak, the trip organizer, that there was no way I could take off to come on his Western Rivers trip, and the way things were shaping up for John, no one else was going either. Things were really too crazy at work for me to take off any serious amount of time. On Monday things changed for the better, this government project that I had been working on, finally came through, and what-da-ya-know, it just happened to be in Idaho. I travel a lot for my company, and they are pretty good about accommodating a little side trip now and then. However, outside of a few sleazy bars, I can count on one hand, the times, in the last 25 years, that I have been able to squeeze some fun in while on the road. Oh yea, there was the topless beach in Australia. But that is by far the exception, the typical destination is more likely to be Peoria, with a lot of 10 and 12 hour days. But this time, I might pull off an excellent boating opportunity, with company paid airfare, and a few vacation days.

John was planning on hooking up with an old paddling buddy and X-Keelhauler, Chuck Pezeshki. Chuck, who John referred to as "Opie" had a couple of extra boats, and would be happy to lend me one his big boats for a few days. The next weekend on the New River, I hooked up with Mark Steinmetz. Mark, from Columbus, mentioned he was going to be backpacking in Missoula Montana, at the same time I was in Idaho, and he would love to do some boating while he was out there. Some email exchanges, and we set it up, that I would pick up Mark in Missoula, he would share the rental car expenses. Now sharing expenses, makes the hart of this ole cheapskate go aflutter!

Idaho is an interesting study in contrasts. The Government job site was a place called Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL). It is located in the desert about 60 miles from

the nearest town. It covers about 900 square miles and is the home of some of the first nuclear reactor experiments. The first reactor to generate commercial electricity is there, along with training reactors for nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. There is around 60 reactors on this site including the ones for the prototype of first nuclear powered air plane! Yea, back in the 50's, visionaries with their pre Chernobyl foresight, thought it would be cool to have a plane that could stay in the air for 30 days! Fortunately, the planners lost their funding before the flying calamities hit the airways! I am not sure why they stopped the program, maybe they figured that it was cheaper to improve the baggage handling systems at the airports!

Anyway, this place is definitely a hot dry desert, as far as the eye can see there is nothing but stage brush, a reactor or two and some dormant volcanoes. Any trees you see are imported. But underneath the desert is one of the largest aquifers on earth. The Snake River Plain Aquifer holds about as much water as lake Erie. So, all a farmer has to do is poke a hole in the ground, sprinkle a little water around, and voila, potatoes can be grown for as far as the sprinkler can reach!

With the work done in southern Idaho, I headed up to Missoula to pick up Mark. We met at a local Whitewater shop to rent his boat. I am from the old school of paddling where we used big, your father's Buick sized boats, when they brought out this little thing called a Redline, I thought they must be kidding, we weren't going to a rodeo, we going to boat the BIG water. Mark asked for something bigger, but alas, that was all they had. Mark had a look of concern on his face, and he asked me, his older and presumably wiser mentor, what to do. I thought about the big boat that Chuck was bringing for me, it was big enough for a galley and sleeping quarters! This was a "sticky wicket", if I told Mark that he was going to get munched in that skin tight excuse for boat, he would go nuts with worry, or possibly even worse, use good sense and pass on the boating. So if I tell him the truth, I risk losing his contribution to the car expenses. But if I lie - no! after all, I am an officer in the Keelhaulers Canoe Club, and therefore I'm held to highest standard of ethics! Oh what a dilemma! Sometimes when I need guidance I look to my role models, and our

leaders. With the inspiration I needed, I told him "don't worry about it, everybody's using these boats now!". Hell, Ken Star is busy, and I wasn't even under oath! That was the push that Mark needed! We loaded up his rented boat, his boating gear, and headed to the Clearwater National Forest.

If there is something that Northern Idaho has in common with Southern Idaho, it's desolation. For as flat and arid as the area around Idaho Falls was, the Clearwater was mountainous, and chilly with snow in the mountains. The forest is in a road-less area, so there are few roads, towns and people. As we drove out of the urban-ness of Missoula, the road was quickly becoming more remote. But there was something familiar up ahead. As if on queue, John Kobak's motor-home came out of nowhere to lead us through the Wilderness to our campground. John was coming from Yellowstone National Park, and we met in the continuum of time on Idaho Route 12, kinda spooky huh? On the way to the campground, Route 12 follows the Lochsa River. The guide book said that this part of the Lochsa was "technical". In the east when they say a river is technical, we talk about bolder choked streams, blind drops and slalom practice. But this stream was wider than anything I have ever boated, with relatively few rocks, and nothing that looked like a blind drop. I smugly said to Mark "these Western Boaters don't what real technical boating is" (now if that remark doesn't instigate a spanking, I don't know what would).

At the Campground we hooked up with Chuck, and another Keel-Hauler, Betsey Youngman who is now living in Phoenix, she was joined by two friends from Boise Idaho Elise Williams and Stan Powell. You wouldn't know it by talking to Betsy, but she was in three Olympic games as a down hill skier. From her boating skills, I would say that she could also compete in the Whitewater Slalom. For a change of pace, she was training for a Triathlon in China of running, biking and boating. Chuck is a Mechanical Engineering Professor at the Washington State University. As a professor he gets a lot of time off in the summer to pursue his passions of Kayaking and protecting in the pristine watershed of the Clearwater. Chuck wrote a book about the ecology of this watershed, called "Wild

To the Last". This is an interesting book about how logging, dams, and other encroachments of mankind have corrupted this beautiful watershed. The book talks of his kayaking experiences in the Clearwater, and the causes for the watershed degradation. He explains the poor choices that politicians, bureaucrats, timber companies, and landowners, have made, to contribute to this degradation. For our newsletter, I hope that Chuck will share with us an article explaining what is going on in this watershed, he spent three days trying to educate me, but I can't do the subject justice. The ecology issues in the western watersheds are significantly different than the issues that we face in the east, Chuck has a way of putting the politics, culture and the watershed into perspective. For those of you interested in his book, you can contact with him at his email address: pezeshki@mme.wsu.edu.

Our camp site was right on the Lochsa, so we could put on right from our camp site. Chuck brought his Prijon Hurricane for me to use, this was my kinda boat, Big really Big! On the first day we decided to do the lower section, this section is a little easier than the upper. I would say that this was probably a class IV run at this 8,000 CFS level. But, the amount of water and the speed of the water would make this a very different kind of class IV for me. I was a little apprehensive about big water, I have always preferred the challenge of a technical creek to the pushiness of what I thought was a big river, like the Gauley, at 2,800 CFS. But the immensity of the Lochsa made the Gauley look like Slippery Rock Creek. It didn't really hit home how big the river was, until we put on, Kobak was already on the on the opposite side of the river, and so far away that I had a hard time seeing him and his boat. There he was, directly across from me about a 150 yards away, he and his Pirouette looked so small, that he was almost lost in the river features around him. The river current at the put in was moving along at a fast clip of about 8 miles per hour, that's the speed of a fast walk, or maybe a slow jog. The other observation that stuck me (two simultaneous thoughts is my personal limit) is how John's boat was bobbing along on the waves, like a cork on an angry sea. The river was completely oblivious to us and had no more knowledge or concern about our presence than an that of an elephant, to a butterfly on its back. The

river had a mission, it knew where it was going and what it had to do; we could join it for the ride if we liked, but if we got in it's way, it wasn't going to give us a moment's thought.

Chuck, who was intimately familiar with the Lochsa, would lead us down the river. He cautioned us at the put-in; that you simply can not swim in this river, you need to hit your roll, no matter what! With the fast current, in a large and congested river, rescue was very difficult. A mile long swim in this cold river was not hard to envision. The water temperature of about 40 degrees, which is what you expect for water, that the previous dozen or so hours, was snow. A long swim here is definitely something to be avoided. Mark was getting a little more than concerned, if Kobak's big ole Pirouette was bobbing like a cork, what the heck was his little shoebox going to do? He asked me if I wanted to trade boats. "Mark" I said, "I would, but, I've got this bum leg that gets all cramped up in those little boats". I hoped that he wouldn't notice how my nose was growing!

As soon as I was on the river, I knew that this wasn't your father's lower Yough trip. No, this was the size of the Ohio River, but with some serious attitude! Yep, all of the same skills that we use on the lower Yough apply here, but you better pay attention, a casual stroke here or there wasn't gonna hack it! The water was bulldozing its way down stream at a force that commanded respect! My first concern was: could I get where I wanted to go and be there when I needed to be, the power of this river pushed me around a lot more than I was used to, it took over half of the trip to get the hang of things.

The scariest part of these rivers, was the size of the holes. A house floating down this river could get re-circulated in these holes! I suppose boaters get out of these holes, but I could visualize myself caught in a hole until the summer drought. The good thing about these holes is that they were so big, that they were easy to spot, and there was plenty of room to go around them.

The next mind altering feature was waves. These waves were huge, they were so large that they were breaking at their crest! just as a wave in the ocean breaks for the surfers. The breaking at the crest was not

big enough to surf, but it was big enough to slap your boat off your line. What was scaring me about the waves, was how do you tell if they are a fun wave, or a really, really nasty, bone crunching pour-over. By observing the survival rate of the boaters in front of me, I decided to try a wave. The crest of this wave was "only" about 8 feet above the river surface. Now Mr. Dolan, my high school science teacher, taught us that if the peak of the wave is 8 feet above the water, then the trough is 16 feet below the peak. When I got to the top of the wave and looked down, I had the same sinking feeling in my stomach that I get on the first drop of a roller coaster. I've gone over water falls that were not as high as this drop, but what a thrill! Just like we learn to recognize a wave in a wave train, from a pour-over on eastern rivers, you do the same for big western water; but, the big Western waves are just way more fun!

The run was 10 miles, but the water moves so fast, and there was so much action that the trip seemed like it was over in a "New York Minute". At the takeout, Betsy, needed to get back into the training mode, so she decided to run the 12 miles back to camp, what a great asset she would be on those days you can't find a shuttle ride! The weather was great and all of us had a fantastic day. Oh, there were a few flips into the frigid waters, but no swims or unintended rides in one of those house eating holes! Mark, did great, once he got used to his maneuvering his little sports car around the Mount McKinley size waves, he started enjoying his experience.

The next day we decided to run the upper Lochsa. This section had the reputation of being a technical river, with some surprise holes that needed to be avoided. The road runs along the river, so it was easy to stop and scout the holes that we had to avoid. After putting on the river I understood why the guidebook called this a technical river. No, the river was not boulder choked, but it was hole choked. Although the run did not require the tight maneuvering that you might expect in an eastern technical river, there was still plenty of opportunity to tune your slalom skills. In place of rocks where all manor of holes to be avoided. Some were house eating size, others that just did not have a friendly welcome mat out in front of them. About half way through the day, I was feeling much better about my boating skills in the big water. I was

hitting my lines, and I was feeling confident that I could maneuver in the pushy water, and get to where I needed when I needed to.

One of the more striking things I noticed about the Lochsa, was how clear the water was. The water was cranking at a very high level with no cloudiness in the water, or sediment on the river bottom. It was as clear as a mountain lake. Chuck explained that this was due in large part to the work that he and his fellow environmentalist have done in minimizing the logging in the Lochsa Watershed. Since the area we were boating through had still not grown back from a forest fire from the 1920s, I asked him what the difference was to the watershed between a forest fire and a logging operation. Chuck said that one of the most destructive practices of logging, are the roads that they build.

I don't want this story to end without any carnage! On the second day, Stan became the unwitting volunteer. He unexpectedly backended, he flipped, he tried to roll, he tried to roll again, he freaked, he swam! The chase was on to rescue him and his gear, fast actions, and about a 1/4 mile chase by our crew, reunited Stan with land and gear. But not before he floated past a photographer who memorialized the event for posterity. At lunch, Stan was punished for his deed, with his new handle - "Cover Boy". We thought long and hard about his new name, and agreed that the photographer's picture of Stan, needed to be on the next cover for American Whitewater. Chuck reminisced about the local practice of humiliating a boater after a swim or a bad choice. He asked one of the local boaters why they were so merciless on fellow boaters, the young boater's response was: "DUUDE it's to keep you SAFE man!!".

Stay tuned for next months conclusion about our adventures on Colt Killed Creek and the Spanking!

Can you believe this???

*By Keith Clarke (posted on
rec.boats.paddle)*

I thought you might like to hear an unusual (at least I hope it is) story.

On Wednesday (9-1-99), one person in our group (of Keelhaulers sea kayakers) was stopped by the East Cleveland police for

speeding (a fact our friend admits to). On top of the ticket for speeding she was also cited for reckless operation. When asked to explain this charge, the police officer explained that because she had her kayak mounted on top of her car, if she were involved in an accident, the boat could fly off and injure someone. We all found this absurd. She has a Yakima rack system installed on her car with the standard two straps attached at the bars. She also ties the bow and stern down. In addition, she had a security cable and lock attached. With this attitude, anyone using their vehicle to transport bikes, luggage, ladders etc., would be prone to being stopped for reckless operation.

She is going to contact Yakima for any information they might have regarding this problem.

8 Miles of Fun on the Beaver

by Matt Muir

I was all set to hit the Lower Yough, despite predicted low-water conditions, but on Friday afternoon just before Labor Day weekend, two things happened: 1) a NY'er friend called me a "wuss" for not wanting to do the drive, and b) Vince Krempferger told me I was in danger of dropping off his "A List" of Preferred Paddling Pards. "Well," think I, "let's see how desperate Vince is for good paddling." I told him that they'd be releasing on the Beaver.

In the Black watershed, in the region that sports the Moose and Fish Creek and probably other runs, sits the Beaver River. A couple of years ago, Chris Koll, an American Whitewater Director who loves to pester dam owners into scheduling whitewater releases, secured an agreement for releases on this river on September weekends. With September releases on the Beaver, October releases on the Moose, and easy releases on the big-water Black, this region is fast becoming a decent destination for NE paddlers to consider. For us, it's a good seven-plus hours away, so it can take some coaxing.

Vince had no idea what Karen Petit would be up for; he was also going to invite Angie White and Dave Broer. I went home, secured grudging permission, and started packing in a hurry flurry. When Karen got home, she accepted Vince's hypertensed suggestion, as did Angie. The four of us piled into two cars and drove. We were hoping that Dave (who was

expecting Angie in Youghland on Saturday) would be able to catch up with us Saturday, following his class.

We crashed our caravan at a Red Carpet Inn in Syracuse, the kind of hotel that defines "seedy." Red Carpet? They oughta rename it "Various Shades of Brown and Sickly Green Carpet." The swimming pool was a mass of torn-up concrete, weeds, and a chain-link fence suitable for recycling. But we were desperately tired at 1 AM, and \$54 split four ways is pretty good.

We were up early and drove North. Our plan was to get to Belfort, NY, and find the cars with the boats atop. This turned out to be raaaather easy, as probably a couple hundred people showed up to camp in a small, primitive area.

Taylorville—How not to Boof

The first drop of the Taylorville section is fast and a little bit technical. The higher you put in, the higher the fun factor. It culminates in a big pourover that's best avoided by catching a diagonal tongue. Vince either didn't read it that way, or chose to ignore it. The result was some inadvertant surfing time, in a hole that swam at least one Class-5 boater who hadn't gone boatless in two years. Lucky for Vince, Angie came plowing in on top of him, bouncing him outta there.

The next drop is kind of an easy version of Swallow Falls: a long, shallow slope culminating in a hole. People were running it everywhere, some doing donuts all the way down. I ran it three times, handpaddling it and slamming the hole for the last run and my first roll of the month.

Then came a very nice technical drop. We saw one guy get shoved against rocks upside down, another Upper Yough'er out of his boat. Vince walked this one, to his credit. Karen, Angie, and I carried up to run something called "Thumbcrusher," a narrow turbulent slot which was fun and photogenic.

The last drop in this section is big and steep, with multiple routes available. I ran the sneak, then carried up to run a funny-ugly slot on the right. I saw Angie miss the boof and run that slot without meaning to, getting flipped. I saw Karen make the boof in great style, so I went for the boof.

I guess I read it wrong. I got too low and spun around at the boof. Went through the funny-ugly slot backwards, and got

promptly rolled. It's really shallow in there. *Really* shallow. I clocked my head and elbow at high speed; hit my head so hard that it jarred my neck. I was thinking "cervical collar" and wondering whether I'd be up for *any* more paddling. That might mean passing on the Class-5 Eagle Section.

Eagle—a Vicious Predator

Well, I remembered my elbow pads as we drove for the Eagle Section. Let me tell you, this is yet another impressive bit of whitewater that I've been privileged to witness. "One section drops at the rate of 475 feet/mile," say the Beaver promotions. They ain't whistling. It's narrower than the Narrows of the Green. Eagle Falls, its signature drop, looks practically unrunnable. It's 50 feet long, ten feet wide, with a curler on the right followed immediately by a curler on the left. Woe be unto the paddler who gets flipped by either curler; at that speed, broken bones would be the likely result. So I wasn't too keen on running this.

But I talked with some people. Turns out, the water is *so fast* that the curlers don't have the force to do anything to you. It feels like an incredibly fast slide with a stop-you-dead hole at the bottom. Mmm-mmm-good. I give credit to the guy who had the huevos to first-descent that puppy!

After watching several dozen guys run it, trying to memorizing the lines for that and the other drops (each of which is impressive, Class 5), I walked back up to my boat. Somewhere along the way I ran into Duarte Morais, heading down. He ran Eagle Falls several times, showing that he was "*once...twice...three times, Manly.*" Me, I steeled my nerve and started bringing my boat down. I saw hairboater Bobby "The Mann" Miller running the slide that is the dam release, and it looked kind of straightforward, so I gave it a go. It sends you down at good speed into the hole, spitting you into an eddyboil just upstream of the pourover. Boof the pourover, and head for the first move.

The first drop slopes down for a good vertical 20 feet. The converging flows look ugly. The key is to catch the eddy at the bottom. Many went for the river-right eddy, but I went left and let everybody, including Bryan Koster, probe Eagle Falls for me.

When it was my turn (everyone looking upstream, nobody else in my or the other eddy, *no excuses*), I peeled and committed to Eagle Falls. The approach contains some fast stuff and a small pourover hole, which caught me, turned me a bit sideways (Vince says I turned 90°, but I believe he exaggerates), and backended me some. This concerned me, but I quickly straightened out and plunged.

Some fast stuff in there, just as it seems. Stopped by the hole at the bottom, some backendering, into the eddy, and lay in a serious war whoop!

I carry a throw bag and a knife and all that, but the bit of "safety" equipment that I most often employ is my breakdown paddle. Some poor slob broke his Werner at the base of the blade, so I lent him my beat-to-crap, homemade breakdown. By the time I got back into my boat, I couldn't rightly recall the line for the next drop, another chaotic, sloping 20-footer with a hole at the bottom. Umm...I think you boof it right, or left, or something. I asked Angie, who was watching, to refresh my memory on the line. She yelled, but I couldn't hear. She gesticulated, but I didn't follow. She yelled again. Eventually I shrugged and peeled, figuring I'd know it when I hit the lip.

I did. Over the top, through the boil, down, down, to the hole, through it, and into the rocky eddy across the river! Yee-hah! There was one drop left, a relatively easy 10-foot vertical fall with a tricky approach. I nailed it and carried back up to watch everyone else.

Angie, seeing my run, decided she had to do it. We waited forever, but I was looking for a different helmet (she wore three, that day) and thus missed the op to get her run on camera. Karen managed to catch her on film, though.

Of the dozens of runs of Eagle Falls that we witnessed that day and the next, including missed eddies and unintentional hole time, nobody flipped in the critical points. Either everyone's a durned fine boater, or the rapid really is much more forgiving than it looks.

Saturday evening, sitting around the campfire, we were pleased to see Dave roll in. This wasn't a "Fest," as there were no vendors, no t-shirts, etc., but it was a "Rendezvous," which means a big party. There was a disco going on at some motor

home; some people, working the crowd, dropped by our site, chatted some, and drifted on. I moseyed over to Tom Cronin's Capital Gang site and chatted with them; managed to embarrass myself, Tom, and Keel-haulers in general while I was there, but the Capitallers were nice. Tom hung at our site for a while, too, and his poor black dog, Gorka, got stepped on a couple of times in the dark.

That evening and the following morning held an unexpected treat for this New England expatriat: loons on the lake! Four of them were hanging out there, making their spooky noises and generally sounding as crazy as Corran Addison.

Moshier—Karen Plays BumperBoats

Sunday morning held the Moshier release. This is considered the jewel of the Beaver. Not as hard as the Eagle, it's the longest section, has two easily runnable 15-foot waterfalls (the second of which has at least two lines, so everyone walks back up to rerun them), and ends with a bang — the long, twisty, knee-knocking, Class-5 Moshier Falls. But we'll get to that, in good time.

One drop had a nice boof toward the right. The more boof you got, though, the more the little eddy would grab you and try to feed you into a munchy hole. I did the boof, then signaled it to everyone else. When Tom ran it, he got grabbed by the eddy about as much as I had; it was fun, watching him strain and work to get out of there in one piece.

Downstream, there was a pourover thang. Tom didn't give it due respect and got surfed in there. Following too closely, Karen joined Tom in the surfin' safari. They were demonstrating the Buddy Surfing Upside-down Rodeo to perfection. Just downstream in the eddy, I did what any responsible boater would do: I grabbed my camera and snapped a picture of the inverted boats. Soon, as the two were swimming, I did give chase, like a good boy. Karen's boat did not make it to an eddy, which resulted, in part, in a broken security loop on her boat. Her cockpit was misshapen, as well, but she was able to bend it back and continue.

The next playspot saw Karen surfing and me getting fed into the hole by the funny eddy. Karen's second instance of bumper-boating was my fault, but we got out okay.

The denouement of the Moshier section is...Moshier Falls. This beautiful Class 5 rapid is long, narrow, technical, complex, and dangerous. A few hole-punching and eddy-grabbing maneuvers lead to a small eddy directly above a tight slope-hole combo. Now, the hole does let the unfortunate paddler out, but (s)he had better roll up right away, because not far downstream is an ugly steep convergence of white and hole. Walking up to run it a second time, Stu Koster told me it had "SPF: Significant Pucker Factor."

While we were there, we witnessed some carnage of the decidedly unfunny variety. One woman got a cut above her eye, possibly requiring stitches. But the truly haunting episode involved a guy who didn't pop his immediate roll. He floated through the last drop upside-down, and everybody present cringed (some audibly) when we heard the dull thud near the bottom. The throw rope was right there for him to grab; ten minutes later, people were gingerly touching his limbs and waving hands in front of his face to test his state of alertness. I don't think I've witnessed a scarier beating on the river.

Karen, Angie, and Dave hadn't run Moshier Falls by this time. Seeing it gave Karen a bit of the Willies, as you can imagine, and she stood there looking at it forever. I was getting antsy, as I was returning home that day, and we had the Eagle section yet to run. If I'd known how much the SPF was going to slow down her decision to descend the rapid, I'd have walked up and run it again. When Karen finally got going, her run went fine. She hit the crux boof just fine and learned the Peril of Premature Celebration, as she let out a war whoop and immediately flipped.

Last year, Tom ran only the final two drops of Moshier, exercising caution in the face of the difficult approach. This year, he was going for the whole kahuna. He flipped in the entry, but rolled right away and caught the small eddy above the flipping hole. The flipping hole did flip him, but he hit his roll and got himself a very nice boof.

I got into my boat and headed for the "one-more" drop of Moshier without scouting. I figured I'd read it as I approached it. I went for a hard river-right boof, which felt like the right move, but which still allowed the hole to grab my stern and give me a quick flip before kicking me out. The same thing happened to Angie, except that it also blew

her sprayskirt, slowing up her roll. We turned to watch the rest.

Well. Some poor woman was being worked in there. When she appeared to be released, Vince gave Karen the go-ahead. The woman got sucked back into the hole. Vince gave Karen the "hold back" sign, but she was committed and had no choice. She landed practically on top of the poor other woman, and the two of them did some nice bumper-bashing before the hole kindly let Karen out. Some seconds later, the other woman got out under her own power. I told her that I was very impressed with the way she'd hung in there. If things work out as planned, I should be getting a copy of the video of this tasty little piece of carnage.

Recooking the Birdie

We left Tom, who'd run the final drop backwards after missing an eddy, to chat with his friends. Hopefully they gave him a ride back to his car; I'd hate to think that he's still there. But we had the Eagle Section to run, and I had miles to go. I asked Angie to run it with me, if only for moral support. She had enticed me into it by calling me a decidedly ugly name when I'd announced my intention to head home after Moshier; I needed to protect my manliness, but I also felt she bore some responsibility. So, without scouting and with a hazy idea of the lines from the day before, we entered the river.

We remembered the lines well enough and ran it with Karen and Dave watching our lines. I thanked Angie for the moral support, we shook hands, and I headed downstream to the takeout. Angie had to head back upstream to run it with Karen and Dave.

I don't know everything, but I bet Vince has it right when he asserts that Karen and Angie nabbed the first mother-daughter descent of the Eagle section of the Beaver that day. On the drop after Eagle Falls, Vince reported that Karen got washed into some shallow rocks upside-down and self-rescued. Vince? Well, he had an incident. Apparently trying to get a good view of what was going on, he slipped on the slopy rock and landed in the water, *in his street clothes*, no PFD, no helmet, no nothing. He said he broke two fingernails clawing his way onto the rock. Two fingernails are nothing compared to the skin he would've lost had he swum any of the drops on the Eagle.

The four of them ran the Taylorville section the next day and headed home. Me, by that time, I was snug in my bed. I had driven, round-trip, 940 miles — for 8 miles of whitewater. That 100-1 ratio might seem ghastly, and I may not want to take it on each year (much less every *weekend*), but the wealth of pictures (and video??!) that we amassed says unequivocally that it was well worth it.

More Ads

Necky Jive 8'10", red/yellow, excellent condition, \$450.

Noah Aeroquatic (AQ), magenta, good condition, \$250.

Dagger Vertigo, red, not-so-good condition, \$175. Also willing to trade for a squirt boat. Jay Kelly 330-922-8326 or 330-677-1816. jmkelly@kent.edu

Demo it! Want to try a Necky sea kayak? Free demos are available on Monday nights through the Lakewood Wilderness Shop.

Rent it! Rent sea kayaks on Saturday mornings through the Wilderness Shop's east (440) 357-6114 and west side (216) 521-9100 locations. Call for details.

New Wave Sleek with back band.

Average Cond. 2 yrs old, purple, white, and black. Boat can be seen at River Sport, Confluence, PA. Asking \$375. Steve Bateman 330-337-9444. Michele Bateman 330-793-7458

Keel-Hauler's KaNews Nov. 1999



Dec 99 Deadline: Nov. 28

Directions to Fairview Park Library

From 480: Exit at Grayton Rd. and go south to Brookpark. Turn right (west) onto Brookpark and go 2 miles. Turn right (north) onto W. 220th and go about 3 miles to Lorain. Turn right (east) on Lorain and go several blocks. The library will be on the right (south) side of the street just past W. 214th.

From 90: From East; Exit at Hilliard Rd., go West on Hilliard, make a left on to W. 210th and proceed South to Lorain Rd. Make a right (East) on Lorain, the library will be on your Left almost immediately.

From West; Exit at Detroit Rd, turn left on to Detroit and right at the first traffic light, turn right again at next intersection. This is W 210th St. Go South as per above.

Dec 4...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Matt Muir...(330) 668-2329

Dec 11...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Cliff Wire...(440) 439-6541

Dec 14...Meeting, Location Fairview Park Library – see above for Dirs.

Trip planning for 2000.

Jan 8...Rolling Sessions Begin

Cliff Wire...(440) 439-6541

Jan 8, 15, 22, whatever...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

Matt Muir...(330) NOT A FAX

Jan 11...Meeting, Location TBA

See Newsletter for program announcement.

Feb 3 - 11th - Paddle in Mexico

Call John Kobak or e-mail at keelhauler@prodigy.net Trip is filling up fast.

DUES

If you address label indicates that you have not paid your Y2K dues, drop everything and do it today. You can use the application on the last page of the newsletter or just tell me about any changes. E-mail: keelhauler@prodigy.net. This year we will be indicating your paddling interests in the yearbook. Indicate WW, SK, FW, CC. If you haven't indicated interest on your application be sure to drop

me a note with your dues check for \$15 **plus a donation for conservation.** Any monies you send above the dues amount will go to conservation. Clean Rivers and Lakes are important to us all!!!!!! Also make sure you list your E-Mail address.

Send check to:

Keel Haulers Canoe Club

1649 Allen Dr

Westlake, OH 44145-2506

KEEL HAULERS CANOE CLUB MINUTES

MEETING DATE: October 12, 1999

This meeting was held at the Fairview Park Library. Since the club is required to vacate the facility by 9 o'clock, the meeting was called for a half hour earlier than usual and started at 7 PM.

New members and guests: There were three new members: 1 sea kayaker, one whitewater paddler, and one bi-paddler.

Minutes: The minutes of the September meeting were read by Secretary Rick Feinberg, and there was one correction. Lisa Strong won FIRST PLACE in her class at the Riversport kayak races on the middle Yough.

Chair Reports.

Instruction: Steve Ingalls reported that a series of classes will be starting on October 25th at Cuyahoga Community College. Another course will begin in November. Steve noted that classes at one or more east side locations are being planned. On October 30-31 there will be a swift water rescue course. Call the American Red Cross for further information or go to clubs web page for complete list.

Library: Ron Whitney reported that the club has a new whitewater video and a new copy of a sea kayaking rescue video. Many items have been out for a long time, and Ron reminded members that they must be returned.

He also reported that the library has a large stock of old books that no one is checking out, and he would like to dispose of them. John Kobak suggested publishing a list of those materials so that interested members can claim them.

Membership: Membership Chair John Kobak reported that the club has 377 paid

members for 1999. However, only about 45 members have paid dues for 2000. He reminded members that **dues are due on October 1st and not the beginning of the calendar year.** Because of printing deadlines, anyone paying after December meeting will not be listed in the yearbook.

Program: Carl Kudrna announced that this evening's program would be Rob Hammond talking about slalom racing. The November program will be determination of the trip schedule for 2000. For **December**, Matt Muir will show some videos of the Moose, Beaver, Big Sandy, Gauley, etc.

Safety: This evening's discussion focused on a recent death on the Lower Gauley. Chuck Singer mentioned that one would-be rescuer jumped in to try to rescue the victim and almost drowned, himself. Chuck emphasized that, as much as we may want to be helpful, our first priority is always to prevent a DOUBLE drowning. There followed considerable discussion of the danger level on the Lower Gauley. The consensus was that this is not an exceptionally dangerous section of river, but paddling any rapid involves some risk. Be careful, stay away from undercuts, paddle with companions who know the river, stay near your buddies, and please don't be embarrassed to walk any rapid you're not comfortable paddling! There was also strong sentiment to avoid going into the eddy above Koontz Flume, where the drowning occurred.

Old business. The new Middleburg Heights Recreation Center probably will not be open before April. At that point, it will be available to us 12 months a year, and not just nine as has been the case in the past. In the meantime, the club will need to find a meeting place for January, February, and March of the coming year. As a second matter of old business, it was requested that if you were a Yough trip leader this summer and have outstanding club money, you should get it to the treasurer ASAP.

New business. Dave Persoja, a friend of Ron Whitney's has made the US Rodeo Team that will be competing in New Zealand next year. Ron requested a small donation from the club and suggested that plans be made to support Dave in other

ways. A motion was made and seconded that the club officially endorse him and that the newsletter should publish an article by Ron requesting donations to a fund that would facilitate Dave's participation as a member of the team. The motion carried, and Sue Strumbel agreed to manage the fund. A second motion, that the club donate \$50 to underwrite Dave's activities also carried.

Chuck Singer announced that Matt Muir is thinking about holding a "rescue rodeo" on the Slippery Rock next June. In response to questions, Chuck stated that he does not know what a "rescue rodeo" is, but warned us that we would hear more about it from the horse's--err, the Ratt's--mouth next month.

Discussion then turned to business cards and stickers. The club agreed to allocate up to \$30 to print four thousand cards, which might be distributed on trips and sent to outfitters in an effort to promote membership. A decision on printing new club stickers was postponed until the November meeting. Cathy Schilling suggested that we may want to put a new logo on these stickers and that anyone with artistic ability should send their suggestions to her.

Trip Reports. None.

Election of Officers.

The new club officers are:

Rob Hammond	(President)
Rick Feinberg	(Vice President)
Marsha Wacker	(Secretary)
Vince Krempenger	(Treasurer)
Cathy Schilling	(Trustee)
Additional trustees:	
Pam Poljak	(Trustee)
Gary Smith	(Trustee)

In addition, Terry Markoff was confirmed as Conservation Chair, Gary Sherck and Kurt Haas were accepted as Trip Schedule Coordinators, and Tim Taubert will be the new Program Chair.

Evening Program. Because of time constraints and a lengthy meeting, the evening program was postponed until a later date.

From the latest (GauleyFest!) issue of American Whitewater:

Over the Falls Day

Ohiopyle State Park, Ohiopyle, PA
Saturday, November 13. For the first time in Ohiopyle Park's history boaters will be legally permitted to paddle over the 18-foot falls as part of a short race course. Entry

Fee \$20 (before Oct. 30) & \$25 (day of race). Mandatory safety meeting at 11 a.m. Race starts at noon. For more information call 724-329-8850.

There will also be an "Adventure Race" that weekend to include paddling, trail running, & biking. Teams will compete for cash prizes in several categories.

We will be putting **next years trip schedule** together at the **November meeting**. I know most people can't attend our meetings but you can sure lead trips. We need lots of leaders so we will have a good program of Whitewater, Sea Kayaking and Canoe Camping trips. Call or write either Matt (Phat Ratt) Muir 330-668-2329 riverratt@aol.com, Gary Sherck, gsherck@worldnet.att.net, Or Kurt Haas 216-321-1763 kurt-hass@nca-vision.com to volunteer to lead at least ONE trip.

The trips are what really brings our members together and we NEED your leadership.

For anyone who lost or wants an extra copy of the 1999 Yearbook, I have a bunch left. Pickup free at November meeting or send \$2.00 extra with your dues to John Kobak and I will mail you one.

Trip Leaders

by Andy Gross

Andy address's a BIG problem that we have had in the past year

Trip leaders are responsible for notifying Club members about changes in upcoming trips they accepted to lead. They can do so by:

1. leaving a message on their answering machines,
2. putting it on the Club hotline,
3. putting it on the Club electronic bulletin board, or
4. calling those back who called in already- or all of the above.

This is just common sense and common courtesy!

Eastern Boater Boy Meets Big Western Water part II

By: Rob Hammond

White Sands Creek - this is the current, Politically Correct name of this beautiful river in the Clearwater area. But originally it was named Colt Killed Creek. The legend is that Lewis and Clark were

exploring in this area, the winter set in, things weren't going very well, and the fast food restaurants had not moved into the area yet. Food was low and times were getting desperate for our party of brave explorers; a hard decision had to be made. The decision did not go well for a young colt that was part of their entourage! But on the bright side, the colt did get a stream named after it! and our explorers did make it back to give us the maps we use today!

We left our adventurous boaters last month on the Lochsa River in the Clearwater area of Northern Idaho. They were 3 Ohio boaters, myself and Mark Steinmetz were virgins on the big water western rivers, John Kobak, our seasoned trip leader has probably boated half of the rivers in the Americas. We linked up with two Keelhaulers who have moved out west, Betsy Youngman from Phoenix, and Chuck "Opie" Pezeshki from Moscow Idaho. Betsy also had 2 friends from Boise Idaho join us, Stan Powell and Elise Williams.

The group starts to break up

After 2 days on the Lochsa, Elise had to head back home, and Betsy wanted to spend some time with her, so Betsy, Elise and Stan decided to spend one more day and do a quick run on the Lochsa. This way Elise could get on the road early enough to get home that night. John, Mark, Chuck and I talked about our options for the next day. Chuck wanted to head back home to Moscow ID, John asked me if I was up for the White Sands, I didn't know beans about any of the rivers up Idaho, so I told him "I am up for anything you are". I am not so arrogant to think that I am a better boater than John, it's just that he has a comfort level with river levels that is compatible with mine. Mark was a little apprehensive, but he wanted to give it a try. Chuck thought that the White Sands shuttle road was still closed due to the snow cover (this is the weekend before the 4th of July). But if the road was open, he was up for it as long as we didn't mind him stopping to do photography for an upcoming book. We talked to a scraggly looking boater at the Lochsa Lodge bar who told us the road the road was open, and that the stream was clear of wood. What he didn't tell us made the trip memorable for this Eastern Boater Boy (EBB).

Peggy's Waterloo

The day started Early, Chuck wanted to get back home because it was Monday and he was playing hooky. Yea! even college profs on summer break have to spend a few days at the daily grind. The plan was to drop my rental car at the takeout, take Chuck's van to the put in, then have John's wife, Peggy, drive Chucks van back to take out, pickup my car and go back to her motor home at the camp ground. It sounded like the perfect plan to all of us boaters! We would have a vehicle at the takeout, we would save two hours of shuttle time on the unimproved mountain roads, and Chuck could get an early start for home! Peggy was just a little skeptical! She has been the victim of her husband's shuttles in the past, the way she tells it, even Glen Miller wouldn't run some of those shuttles. If you have boated in the Cheat Canyon, you know about Glen's standards. But, Peggy is a trooper, after interrogating Chuck on road surfaces, road width, and overall drivability, she agreed to be our shuttle goddess. The shuttle started great, big wide well paved gravel road, after about 2 miles we got the first hint of trouble, "Road Closed One Mile" the sign said. We continued on, the odometer clicked off one mile and we all felt better. "Yea, the sign must be for the winter closure", someone uttered, old scraggly wouldn't have lied to us would he? One more turn revealed the problem. A big old 4 foot diameter tree slid down the mountain, stump, roots and all, blocking the road! Somebody was nice enough to cut the wood out of the way, but the stump covered over half of the road. We came to a stop and the van went silent, Peggy was the first to break the silence, "Sorry guys, there is no way I am driving past that!" We all tumbled out of the van, to check this complication out. There were tracks from a previous vehicle, John paced off the width between the stump and the cliff, his engineering mind calculated that the van could fit, it looked promising. But Peggy wasn't budging, even though we explained that if she, folded the van mirror back and hugged the stump as she drove by, that there would be plenty of room. "There is at least 6 inches of clearance, before you go over the cliff!" we told her, but no, she wasn't buying it - no way, no how! We brainstormed for the best alternative, somebody could hike back, or hire a shuttle driver, maybe boat somewhere else, but nobody volunteered the obvious; one of us be the shuttle bunny! We settled for the

best solution, take Peggy back to camp, and run the traditional shuttle with the rental car.

When we got back to the stump in the road, sans Peggy, all of us except Chuck jumped out to guide him past the stump. No! I wasn't worried rolling the van over the cliff and into the abyss! I was a road guide! it's my story and I am sticking with it! The rest of the shuttle was less traumatic, but no less interesting. These mountain roads close when the snow comes, and don't open up until the snow melts, which in these parts is about the end of June. During that time trees fall in the forest. Do they respect man's intrusion to their home? - NO! they just fall all over the road. Fortunately the road crew had started on cleaning up the road. There were at least 80 places where trees fell across the road. About a dozen of them had trees that were so big, the crews had only time to cut a path in the debris the width of their truck.

The shuttle gave us a feel of how remote we were. We went over Savage Peak an elevation of about 6,000 feet and the river was about 3,000 feet below. There was no sign of humanity for the last 20 miles. This is what Wilderness boating is all about, unmarred natural beauty, solitude, nature at it's absolute best! This also means that we are on our own, there will be no friendly boaters or rafters coming along to give us a hand if we had any "significant events". No, it was us and nature; and nature didn't give a damn about us.

Wilderness boating

When we got to the put in we got an up close glimpse of the river. What first strikes you is the continuous gradient. One section that we could see seemed like was a steep 30 degree slope, it sorta reminded me of a gentle Bridal Veil falls on the Tallulah, except, this thing just kept going, on and on, as far as the eye could see! The river was about the width of Slippery Rock, but the water volume of about 2000 CFS, gave it the attitude of the Upper Gauley. The water was snow, only a few hours before, so it only warmed up to maybe 40 degrees. If you swam, your buddies would work to get you out, but your boat was going to enjoy the ride without you for many a mile. Catching up with your boat would be mountaineering exercise. There was no shore, only canyon

walls, this meant an arduous climb to find your gear! Now if someone gets hurt, figure on spending the night, cause there ain't no easy way out. Roads? forget it, you're in the wilderness now boy! If you think hard enough about what can go wrong, it can become a self fulfilling prophecy. So I made sure that I had my first aid kit with some fire building stuff and took off for our run. Within fifty yards of the put in, the ride begins, I asked Chuck what the name of the first rapid was, he said "They don't name rapids on this river, cause there is only one", he called it 12 mile, cause that's how long it is. I was soon to find out that Chuck was not exaggerating much. I think the first rapid is Six miles long! The river was fast, narrow and steep. The rapids were class IV, but they came at you quick and often. There were not a lot of rocks and the water features were reasonably easy to spot, and there was enough eddies to take a breather when you needed, but there were no pools for six miles! This was not the place to have an out of boat experience!

Rob annoys the Ducks

The scenery was magnificent! We were alone in the wilderness, the river started out with cold gray steep rocky canyon walls. As the gradient mellowed out, the pools became more prevalent, the rapids became fewer and smaller, the walls of the canyon receded, and we could see more of the ancient forest around us. Just before lunch, I was ahead of the group, when I came around a bend, two very skittish Harlequin Ducks, quickly flew off. We invaded their solitude, and they were not going to hang around and share it with us. This Duck species is the reason that there is work underway to ban boating on the White Sands until the end of their mating season, in late June. It is felt that the breeding of these ducks will be impacted if they are disturbed by humans. From their quick exit, it was understandable that they did not like intrusion by beings of our sort, in our brightly colored crafts. At lunch we stopped at a Cedar grove, our adrenaline was still high from the morning of continuous rapids, a contrast to the solitude of the quite lush forest around us. We had probably boated about 8 to 10 miles in about 2 1/2 hours, with much of it a blur as it seemed like we were in a perpetual rapid. But now things were slowing down to a much less intense pace. The last 3 or 4 miles to the take-out were uneventful from

the boating perspective, but the clear pure water, thick green forests were nice companions. Mark and I had a flip or two in the morning, but nobody had any out of boat experiences.

Later in the evening we did some hiking around the takeout. Chuck showed us a trail that took us into an ancient forest where these trees preceded the landing of Christopher Columbus in the New World. But as old as the trees were, they were the product of thousands of years of evolution. An old forest does not start with the current species of trees. A forest starts its evolution with short fast growing scrub trees, that are replaced with subsequent generations of slower growing, taller trees, each generation being hundreds of years, and a forest fire starts the cycle all over again. So the forest that we see today is not a bunch of 400 year old trees, it is a forest that has taken thousands of years to evolve. An experienced forester can look at the tree species in a forest and determine roughly how many years previous that a forest fire wiped out the forest. Although mankind abhors forest fires, nature sees them as a way to renew the earth. By wiping out diseases, and by propagating new, diverse generations of plants and animals. Someone needs to point out to Mother Nature, the economic waste she is promoting with these wasteful fires!(The editor disagrees with this statement. Humans cause the economic waste!)

It's Back Home for me

My boating trip to Idaho was over, but it certainly will not be my last to this special part of the world. John Kobak and Peggy continued on their long hiatus from retirement, I dropped Mark off in Missoula for some more hiking, Chuck went home to his family, and I took a plane back to my hustle and bustle rut of my existence. But the "Rocky Mountain High" lasted much longer than the plane ride home. Although I was only absent from the rat race for four days, it seemed like a month. When I got back to work, I must have floated around the office for at least 6 hours before the daily grind finally deflated my balloon, and brought me back to earth. But that was good! normally upon returning, after a good escape from my hectic rut, I am deflated well before lunch! But what the heck, I met some great people, great rivers, spent time in a great part of the country, and learned a lot.

The spanking!

Now for those of you disappointed readers, who really only wanted to read about this excellent boater, getting spanked on the big western water. I understand your disappointment, but face it, you are not going to hear about this writer getting his come-uppings on the river. No! - it's not gonna happen! and it's not gonna happen cause, when you have the skills and natural talent that I have, you simply don't screw up!

##\$!(*&84khs!; ffffzzzzit !!!

Editors Note:

The rest of this story was abruptly terminated, reportedly, due to lightning striking the arrogant, smart-ass writer, giving him the come-uppings that he deserves!

Thoughts on the Clearwater

By Chuck "Opie" Pezeshki

It's been a long time since I considered myself a Keelhauler-about 15 years at best. But I'll never forget the debt incurred in my teenage years when John Kobak, Dan Winter, Jim Botamer, Rita Tessman, and others tolerated me on their various kayaking trips around West Virginia and Pennsylvania, alternately giving kayaking and life instruction. It was they that gave me that first view of the Gauley River from the Peter's Creek Bridge, and the sense that clean water and a beautiful world were something that I couldn't live without, as well as a legitimate birthright for all of us on this planet. I don't think that they thought that while they were giving my underage persona the illegal beer that I was busy drinking, but that was still the legacy I distilled (so to speak).

To make a long story short, I went to graduate school at Duke in North Carolina, then moved out to Idaho and Washington State to take a job as a professor at Washington State University in Pullman, on the east side of the state. I moved out here to paddle, and paddle I did for the first few years. But then slowly, the notion that I should give something back crept into my brain, and I also started noticing the creeping clearcuts around my favorite places in the Clearwater National Forest where I would go. It's actually easy to miss seeing bad stuff when you kayak-the

clearcutters don't like to take away the viewshed in river corridors until the final cut. Makes the public mad, and that can lead to change. But after attempting friendly input into the typical US Forest Service planning process regarding cutting trees on our public lands, I figured out these folks were bound and determined to cut down the forest in my favorite places.

Now for those of you that don't know, they LOG in national forests. And they don't just LOG. They LOG BIGTIME! For quite a number of years, the national forest system produced 22% of all wood products generated in the U.S. They did this at quite a financial loss-which means that you, the taxpayer picked up the tab for the big timber companies to destroy your favorite places. It's hard to believe, Smokey looking so friendly, after all. But that doesn't stop the truth.

The US Forest Service also got into the roadbuilding business big time. Now once again, we're not talking about building a road so you can take a friendly hike with your family, or maybe drive back to a scenic overlook. We're talking about industrial-level roading. In order to haul logs from far back in the forest and have the logging companies make money, they had to build big roads-roads that would enable a logging truck to travel 45-50 mph. That's fast. They also had to build lots of roads all up and down the hillside-with places reaching road densities of 10 miles/square mile- about the same as a subdivision. And cuz Idaho is pretty steep country, they had to build those roads just about everywhere. When you fly over the western half of the Clearwater NF (the 'roaded' part), the most obvious thing is the huge spiderweb of roads criss-crossing one of the most rugged landscapes that you'd see anywhere. Of course, they did this at a huge financial loss-which once again, means you taxpayers picked up the tab. The timber companies would build the roads, get financial credit for them, then log the trees out of entire watersheds. It has to be seen to be believed.

It wouldn't have been as awful as it is if those roads actually stayed put on the hillsides. But they didn't, and about three years ago, a lot of those roads fell off the mountainsides. And gravity being what it is, all that dirt went into the creeks-and the rivers. Fish out here are used to clean water-Clearwater to be precise. And they can't live in dirty, polluted rivers. The

Forest Service doesn't really care. They just want to keep logging, cuz that's what the local people want, and that's what they want. They have hundreds of people dedicated to building roads and laying out timber sales. If they can't make timber sales, then they'll have to lay those people off. And they don't want to do that—because the power of a bureaucracy is directly proportional to the number of people employed. Regardless if they're wrecking the landscape.

The local governments are in on the scam too. If you have federal land in your county, you receive what's called PILT funds (Payments in Lieu of Taxes), and 25% of all receipts of timber sales off the top. It might not be so bad, compensating some of these counties for the real burden of infrastructure for the federal lands. But the reality is that these funds pay off at 5 TIMES the property tax rate that the counties charge the big timber companies for their privately held timberlands. Five TIMES. Guess who's paying again for the destruction of our precious natural heritage. That's right—look in the mirror.

It goes on and on. Our own legislators are a bunch of kooks and our state government resembles more the government of Zimbabwe than a legitimate democratic government.

Why should you care? Because Idaho has those last big rivers full of clean water, the last hillsides of godawful beautiful mountains that go on forever, the last home for all of those wild critters your babies read about in their children's books. And all this land belongs to YOU. There's still a lot left. But it won't be there much longer if you don't help. The reality is that as the local enviros, my friends and I are the guys fighting the ground war. We're smart, we're mean, we have the law (through lawsuits—the USFS are the folks breaking the law) on our side. We're the best—I call us the SEAL team of the environmental movement. That's why when you come to Idaho, you can be sure IN THE SHORT TERM that those clean rivers will still be there. But we can't keep it up forever. We need you, more than you know, to tell your congressional representatives and senators that you want to stop logging in our national forests. Tell them that you want clean water, wild rivers and big forests without roads, and with lots of critters. It's that simple. Tell them you're tired of the country throwing good

money after bad on logging on the national forests. Tell them you want your national forests wild and beautiful.

You can read my book: "Wild to the Last: Environmental Conflict in the Clearwater" (WSU Press), and you can contact me at pezeshki@mmme.wsu.edu Or write at P.O. Box 3583, Moscow, ID 83843. If you'd like to see pictures of the Clearwater, check out my website at <http://www.mme.wsu.edu/~pezeshki> then go to the hikes.

Your congressional delegation is key to protecting the national forests. Let 'em know how you feel. We're counting on ya. And of course, I'll be out here to take Keelhaulers down these beautiful rivers in my backyard!

Here is an update on American Red Cross courses:

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Lakewood High School
November 14 to 28, 1999
Sundays 4pm to 8pm (three weeks)

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Lakewood High School
January 23 to February 6, 2000
Sundays 4pm to 8pm (three weeks)

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Lakewood High School
February 20 to March 5, 2000
Sundays 4pm to 8pm (three weeks)

Annual Canoe & Kayak School

Fundamentals Courses, Basic River, & White Water Courses April 7, 8, & 9, 2000

Call (216) 431-3081 for Mike Darrah, or email darrahm@usa.redcross.org with questions or to register.

Roll Sessions

The dates for roll sessions right now look like Saturday, 1/8-3/11-2000, 4pm-6pm except for 1/15. There may be other exception dates due to high school swim meets, but that won't be known until November sometime. Rest assured the time is reserved for the Keel Haulers. Fees and info will be the same as usual.

The KSU kayak club offers pool sessions

two nights a week, when school is open. These sessions are **FREE** to KSU club members. If you're interested, e-mail David Knox at: kdavid90@hotmail.com or call

him at 330-677-9134 or just show up. Sessions are 8:00 PM on Mondays in the Kent State gym annex pool, and on Thursdays at 8:30. Cost to join KSU club is only \$15, and all sessions are free, a real bargain. Bring your own boat or use theirs.

Why I got trashed

by Matt Muir

It was Friday, the first weekend of Gauley Season. Before going, I asked My Man, John Kobak, for suggestions on the lines. I'd run it a dozen times, and all, but I knew that this dude had run it many *many* more times than that; plus which, he has a knack for remembering and describing lines.

He gave us (Colins Drozdowski and me) detailed descriptions of the landmarks and key features at Insignificant, Pillow, the drops of Lost Paddle, Iron Ring, and Sweets. He also told us where the cheapest gas station was, and the most notorious speed traps. We were ready!

Coming to Insignificant, we knew the crux move was to avoid the big pourover hole near the top of the rapid. "Just go four meters to the left of the river-right rock," was the mantra that Colins and I were silently chanting.

Colins went first. I followed. I came, happy and confident, to the lip of a wave. Instantly, I saw several things to my abject horror: Colins' face. A big hole. Colins surfing in the hole, directly in my immutable path.

As I considered our fate, I remembered the problem. See, John Kobak is a retired NASA engineer. Yes, he is a rocket scientist, and he's smart and all that, but...well, it's the units, you see. Of course he meant to go four *feet* to the left of the rock.

As I knocked the paddle out of Colins' hand, cueballed him out of the hole and began my own extended surf, the problems of a spaceship some 400 million miles (96 km) away were not my highest priority. My immediate predicament was tops in my mind. Surf, surf, lean, paddle, surf, surf, consider the possibility of a deliber-Ratt flip, surf, try to backender, try to frontender...

As long as we're talking engineering: isn't this sport wonderful? Sometimes it seems as though this flowing, low-viscosity fluid, were as hard as glass. Though there are

quantitative and qualitative differences between solids and liquids, in some ways the differences are simply a matter of degree. Electrons, and even atoms, in solids have some range of motion. Hit the water flat from 25 feet up, and it'll feel pretty pavementish. A parameter in fluid mechanics, the Deborah Number (so named for the biblical Song of Deborah, which contains words to the effect of "and the mountains shall move to the sea"), relates the timescale of the experiment to the characteristic timescale of the material. If the Deborah Number is close to 1, the material has solidlike and liquidlike properties. Moreover, should it be surprising that, in our presence, water often behaves as a solid? We, in fact, are not "solids." We are bags of fluid, with some shape but with a lot of allowed material motion. But...I do believe I digress.

Eventually, the solidlike hole took pity on me and granted my exit. Rarely will I describe an incident as a "trashing," when I stayed upright throughout the ordeal, but I figure the term applies to any unintentional, two-minute surf.

Anyway, it was all Kobak's fault. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. Careful how you accept advice, even (or especially) from rocket scientists.

Moose Fest '99

by Matt Muir

Paul Lang and I drove to upstate NY on Thursday evening before the Moose Festival. We were to meet Ron Whitney, Sue Strumbel, Karen Petit, Vince Kremperger, Angie White, Dave Broer, Stu Koster, and Tom Cronin at the Black River in Watertown on Friday morning.

Paul and I decided to camp at Fowlersville, site of the Moose, to save the hassle of re-packing my tent Friday morning. This 7+-hour drive started late, due to work, and it ended with me trying to read the Delorme atlas in dim light as we drove through tiny one-lane roads with no signs, contemplating an enforced by-the-road camp as Paul's gas gauge crept ever more deeply into the red zone. Eventually we did find our way and settled down, the only campers in an area that was to become popular over the weekend. Paul kindly gave me a hand with my tent, and I crawled into the sleeping bag. The last thing my eyes lit onto that night was my watch reading "2:00."

When we got to the Black, Tom, the trip organizer, was nowhere to be seen. It was running a high 6000 cfs when we hit the putin, and Sue and Vince decided to wait out that day. Ron, Paul, Angie, Dave, Stu, Karen, and I hit

the water. Getting dressed, it was the kind of cool, crisp autumn mornings when you realize that you had *all summer* to stitch up the many rips and broken seams in your paddling gloves, and you kinda forgot. The water and the day got tolerably warm, though.

The biggest Kahuna on the river was Knife's Edge rapid, which has a couple of holes to avoid. The higher the water, the tighter the tweeze if you run the "True Path." We saw some locals run it in style, following two who had some nasty hole-rides. Watching from the bank, Sue almost witnessed the hole-rides, but most of the time she just saw disappeared paddlers in a terminal-looking hole. All of us Keel-Haulers were very happy to sneak, which was a no-brainer line.

Glen Park Falls was as ugly as it had been a year ago. With higher water, I was not inclined to run it, so I joined the crowd that walked it on the other side. Ron was one of the brave souls who tried the rocky, pinny garbage over there. On reflection, I realized that the water level wasn't so high at Glen Park, since they were holding back water at the dam there. I could've run it where I did last year, hopefully past the hole that trashed John Kobak. Next time, maybe I'll trust my own read of the rapid.

There was a nice rapid somewhere down there that gave Paul a good cartwheeling and flipped a few others. I wasn't brave enough to give the hole a whirl, though truth to tell, I'm not sure those people went in there on purpose.

I was disappointed to see that the other Keel-Haulers didn't get out and scout Rocket Ride / Poop Chute. They simply ran the sneaky Rocket Ride. I would've liked someone's example to watch, but nobody was going for the Poop Chute, a converging cauldron which can flip a Class-5 boater and shove him/her up against the Wailing Wall. As they went out of sight, I studied my line and went for it; I concentrated on touching the left edge of the gnarlesque tongue and came through without getting my helmet wet. I'd like to have that line every time!

Heading for the Moose, our caravan of four cars got separated. Some of us were idly looking at Fowlersville Falls, a steep, long, fast slide with more water and power than I'd ever seen it (and a no-question terminal hole at the bottom), when we were met by Angie and Dave. We tried to chat with them about the heinous holes we saw on river-right, but they were preoccupied. "We're in trouble," said Angie, not known for overstatement.

It seems that, seeking an out-of-the-way campsite, they'd driven their 4WD Trooper off what passed for a road far down that hill. They'd spent two hours trying to dig it out, hoping desperately to solve the situation themselves before people like me got a gander and got the idea of embarrassing them with a

trip report. It was no dice. The truck was at a 30° angle from vertical.

Well, we tried. We brought Paul's throw bag, hooked them up to a fairly strong 4WD truck, pulled, pulled, and kept at it 'til we'd snapped the throw rope, which backlashed and gave Dave a nasty bruise upside his wrist. Kinda lucky, I suppose, that it didn't whack anybody worse! There's a lot of potential energy in a stretched-out throw rope.

Paul gave Angie a drive into town, so's she could call AAA and arrange something. Lucky for her, a paddler pulled into the campsite with a huuuuge van and a strong winch, and the extrication took less than 15 minutes the following morning, though not before Brent Laubaugh and Peter Turkaly, who'd arrived late Friday night, got a good laugh at Dave and Angie's expense. All's well that ends well, and I hope Sue's picture of the leaning tower of truck comes out.

Next issue: Mauling at Magilla!

Yough -Over the Falls Race

Nov. 13, at noon, with a mandatory safety meeting at 11 AM. Start times will be staggered so people don't kill each other, but if all works out, next year they may do tandem "race the other guy" type of starts. You will likely get to run the falls 3-5 times. There will be an hour of practice, then run once, then run again. Our scheduled **Cheat trip** is **Cancelled**.

Keel-Hauler's KaNews Dec 1999



Jan 2000 Newsletter deadline – Dec. 26

Directions to Fairview Park Library

From 480: Exit at Grayton Rd. and go south to Brookpark. Turn right (west) onto Brookpark and go 2 miles. Turn right (north) onto W. 220th and go about 3 miles to Lorain. Turn right (east) on Lorain and go several blocks. The library will be on the right (south) side of the street just past W. 214th.

From 90: From East; Exit at Hilliard Rd., go West on Hilliard, make a left on to Wagar Rd (W. 210th) and proceed South to Lorain Rd. Make a right (West) on Lorain, the library will be on your Left almost immediately.

From 90: From West; Exit at Detroit Rd, turn left on to Detroit and right at the first traffic light, turn right again at next intersection. This is Wagar (W 210th St.) Go South as per above.

DUES

The clubs fiscal year ends 9/30/99, it does not end on Dec 31th. Club membership year runs from October 1st to September 30th. Look at the address label on your newsletter. This may be your last newsletter, and your name will not appear in our big 2000 Yearbook & Roster.

This is your chance to make a donation for conservation. Any monies you send above the dues amount (\$15) will go to conservation. Clean Rivers and Lakes are important to us all!!!!

Note the updated application on pg. 9. You can list your type of boating activity and e-mail address.

Dec 4...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Matt Muir...(330) 668-2329

Dec 11...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

We'll meet at 10:00 AM at the 422 bridge. Call ahead to confirm.

Cliff Wire...(440) 439-6541

Dec 14...Meeting, Location Fairview Park Library

Annual Christmas Party. The December meeting is our annual Christmas Party. Please feel free to bring your favorite Christmas Cookie, Cake, Brownie, Etc.

Please inform Sue Stumble what you plan to bring so she can coordinate the refreshments. Matt Muir has promised an exiting video to entertain us.

Jan 8...Rolling Sessions Begin

Cliff Wire...(440) 439-6541

Jan 8, 15, 22, whatever...Slippery Rock Creek, PA (13/21)

Matt Muir...(330) NOT A FAX

Jan 11...Meeting, Location TBA

See Newsletter for program announcement.

Dam Removal

Found by Matt Muir

Yesterday, Popular Science Magazine gave the Edwards Dam removal a "Best of What's New" award for 1999. This is really significant, because it proves that removing a dam at the end of the 20th Century can be as exciting and important for society as building a dam was 100 years ago.

Now, the Edwards Dam removal is eligible to receive a "Reader's Choice Award." In order to continue to bring international attention to the importance of river restoration, we need everyone in the conservation community to cast their votes!

All you have to do is visit the Popular Science web site between Nov. 11 and Dec. 31, 1999 at <http://www.popsoci.com/features/bown/bown99/vote.html> and vote for the Edwards Dam removal (it's at the bottom, in the "Science and Technology" category.)

Please get your friends and colleagues to vote, too. Call Amy Souers at American Rivers, (202) 347-7550 for more information.

For more information on the Edwards Dam removal, visit American Rivers webpage at <http://www.amrivers.org/edwardsremoval.html>.

Y2K Yearbook

By Matt Muir

It's that time again! The yearbook and the Tripp Schedule are two of the cogs in the wheel of the club. The club members are, as always, encouraged to help out in the following ways:

1. Send your photos. Variety is the spice of the yearbook, and I like to get photos of a

variety of boats, paddlers, rapids, situations, locales, and etc. Send them to me at 4470 Conestoga Trail, Akron, OH, 44321-1448. Please enclose a SASE Envelope.

2. Volunteer to organize a Tripp. Call Kurt Haas at 216-321-1763 or email Gary Sherck at gsherck@worldnet.att.net. They can tell you which dates and/or rivers are needed.

The deadline for these is by Christmas of this year.

Trip Leaders Needed

Although I am living and working in Newport News, VA, I told the famous yearbook editor, Matt Muir, that I would assist him again this year with the 2000 Schedule. Most of the effort will be done by email, with the telephone and FAX as backup. We still have a home in Cleveland so I do get back there infrequently.

For this scheduling effort, I will need your help. If you lead a trip in 1999, will you consider leading the same trip in 2000? Or a different trip. You pick the date. Or if you have not lead a trip but went on one or two trips, will you consider helping your club?

Give something back to the club. If you attend club trips then you should lead club trips. Don't always expect someone to do it for you. For those who say, "I don't know what I will be doing 8 mos from now", volunteer to lead a trip and then you will know.

If you know now you will take a trip at before the November meeting, send me an email to that effect. I will acknowledge it, and pass it on to Matt.

If you have any questions, you can email me at gsherck@att.net or call me at work in Virginia (757.838.5368) or my townhouse here (757.591.1890). Or if you want to call my Cleveland home (216.831.4353) and leave a message with my wife, Lee, she will see that I receive your message.

Marsha is getting the 2000 Sea Kayakers Schedule for me, so that, again, is a big, big help.

My goal, which I think we accomplished last year, was to have our schedule pretty much completed by Christmas.

Thanks,
Gary Sherck
1999 Schedule
<http://pages.prodigy.net/keelhauler/khcc/khccal9.htm>

Upcoming Red Cross Kayaking Classes

Fundamentals of Kayaking

Call (216) 431-3081 or email darrahm@usa.redcross.org for more information and to register

Lakewood High School

January 23 to February, 2000

Sundays 4pm to 8pm

February 20 to March 5, 2000

Sundays 4pm to 8pm

Orange Recreation

January 19 to February 9, 2000

Wednesdays 7pm to 10pm

February 16 to March 8, 2000

Wednesdays 7pm to 10pm

Rocky River High School

February 26 to March 11, 2000

Saturdays 1pm to 5pm

2000 Canoe & Kayak School

April 7, 8, & 9, 2000

Located at Camp Beaumont Boy Scout Reservation in Ashtabula Variety of course offerings: Fundamentals, Basic River, and Instructor level courses in Canoeing, Kayaking, and Sea Kayaking.

2000 ROLL SESSIONS

by David Donnellan

Roll sessions this year will again be at the Orange High School Pool. They are sponsored by Orange Community Education and Recreation. 10 sessions are scheduled on Saturday afternoons from January 8, through March 11, 1998. **There are no sessions on January 15, and January 29.** Pool time starts at 4:00 PM and ends promptly at 6:00 PM. We must shower and be out of the building by 6:30. A charge of \$4 per person per session (\$3 for Orange School District residents) covers the use of the pool.

The sessions are unstructured, providing plenty of time to practice at your own pace. There is no formal instruction. However, there are always people on hand who are happy to demonstrate and provide assistance. If you want help with your roll, just ask.

Extra kayaks and equipment are not provided. While it is often possible to borrow other peoples' boats for short periods, it is a good idea to arrange this in

advance. Hand paddles will be available for learning hand rolls.

To maintain a good relationship with the Orange Schools, there are a few rules to observe.

1. All boats must be clean. Remove the air bags and wash the boat, inside and out. Do this at home. Dirty boats are not allowed in the pool.

2. Sessions are open to the general public. Club membership is not required to participate. For those interested, membership forms will be available at the door. Annual club dues are \$15 per family.

3. The roll session is preceded by an Open Swim session. If you arrive early, please wait outside the building with your boats until the Open Swim session ends at 4 PM.

4. Please sign in and pay the lifeguard upon entering the pool. Please bring exact change. No coins please.

5. We must avoid damage to the facility and especially the pool's tiled surfaces. Remove metal rudders from sea kayaks. Do not bring aluminum canoes. Do not launch off the deck of the pool -- enter your boat while it is sitting in the water.

6. The pool becomes crowded. In the interest of safety, neither free swimming nor diving are allowed. Children must be supervised.

The Orange High School Pool is on the south side of Chagrin Boulevard, between Lander and SOM Center Roads. It is two miles east of the Chagrin exit off I-271 (which is just north of the I-271 and I-480 interchange). From I-271 take the Chagrin Boulevard exit and head east. At the Lander Road turning circle stay on Chagrin Boulevard by taking the second road right. The school will be about one-half mile on the right side of the road.

The pool is in the west end of the building. You can see it through the two-story-high windows. Park along the west end of the building in a lot marked for Faculty and Staff. There is a very wide concrete sidewalk leading to double glass doors to the pool. If the west lot is full, drop your boats on the sidewalk and park in front of the building.

If winter driving conditions are bad, the session may be canceled. When Orange Community Education and Recreation is closed this information is typically on local television and radio stations. We will also

try to post closings on the Hotline at 216-556-4659.

Incident Report Regarding the Accident on the Lower Gauley on September 25, 1999

Reported by Barry Adams

While we were preparing our shuttle to do the Lower Gauley in the parking lot above the Dam, Chris Malamisura approached us and asked if he could also get a ride. Chris was from Bluefield, WV and was going to Davidson College. Our group was mainly from Western Pennsylvania. Chris had intended to put on the river and join a group. Someone had given a map to Chris for the directions to the put-in. Note, this was the Gauley Festival weekend and there were literally hundreds of paddlers on the river that day. He then asked if he could tag along with our group because he had not run the Lower Gauley. Others and myself asked him several questions about his ability and other rivers he had run. He indicated he had done several class IV rivers and had no problem. He told other members of the group he had done the New River, the Upper Green and a number of other rivers in North Carolina. Given what he told us, I believe he had the ability to run the Lower Gauley.

We put on at the access point above Koontz's Flume. We spent a little time at the put in and in the riffles above Koontz Flume. Most of the group gathered above Koontz Flume, as did Chris. Our intention was to catch a large eddy on the right above the main part of the rapid. This is not a difficult eddy to catch. Most of the group went to the right of the rock that forms the eddy. Chris headed left of the rock, where most people who catch this eddy go. He flipped above the rock that forms this eddy, coming down near or on the eddy line. He attempted at least four or five rolls. He almost made every single one with each time getting his boat almost completely flat. I believe he was raising his head a little too quickly. He was paddling a Piranha Blade. I was there for a bow rescue at the bottom of the eddy but he either was unaware that I was there or chose to exit. The boat at that time was just beside a good size rock in front of the first boulder. This smaller boulder along with another larger boulder (Koontz) forms the right side of the lower part of this rapid. The rock and the smaller boulder create a slot that flows to the right. Part of the flow goes into a strainer (logs) that are trapped under the first (undercut)

upstream smaller boulder, not “Koontz”. As indicated above, Chris exited his boat just above the slot. Chris went right into the strainer (instantly) and was trapped head first and face down under the water. This is at the top of the smaller upstream boulder described above and a little to the right of it. I immediately, along with other members of our group, got out on the rock mentioned above which is up stream and in front of the strainer. His left arm was free and above the water. I threw my rope to him. It got stuck on the strainer and he could not find it. Another rope was thrown and he grabbed hold (after a couple of attempts I believe). Note, his face was down and he could not see, only feel. He had to reach behind his back to grab the rope. We pulled and he pulled but eventually he let go. He never could get his head above the water. We attempted several more times for him to grab the rope. At this time he did not have his arm out of the water. At that point I felt his only chance was to jump in and grab him. I indicated I was going in and jumped. I tried grabbing him but the current was too powerful and swift. I got swept around the corner and into a log that was an extension of the same strainer. As I went under the log I was fortunate to grab hold and waited for someone to throw me a rope, which they did. The other members of the group continued in their attempts to get a rope on Chris without success. I can only speculate as to how he was entrapped. There were a number of people who arrived at the scene. A raft was put in the eddy below the rock and forced against the strainer where they could get a rope on the body but no matter what was tried the body would not give. They did not free the body until the next morning at low water before the release got there.

These are the facts as I remember them. Several other members in our group have reviewed the above and have added their recollections or concur with the sections they are familiar with.

(Ed. Note: This was the same day as the Matt Muir Gauley R. Marathon. The first of the marathoners came by about 1 hr after the accident.)

First Annual Over the Falls Day *by Matt Muir*

We got some bigtime fun, we got some bigtime carnage.

I arrived at 7 AM in the morning, watched organizer and AWA bigwig Barry Tuscano do the first legal descent of Ohioptyle Falls

in decades, registered, and got set up to run. Matt “MyBoy” Chaney was there. Eventually to arrive were Gib McGill, Ron Whitney, Ron Tomallo, Stu and Bryan Koster, Karen Petit, Peter Turkaly, Barry Adams, Tom Cronin, Michael Duvall, Steve Bateman, Colins Drozdowski, Wayne Carey, and Rob Hammond; also there, but not running the Falls, were Sue Strumbel, Vince Kremperger (who intended to run the Falls, but who kept getting to the putin late), Luke Thompson, Scott Brierly, Chuck Singer, Judi Cleary, David Hammond, Mark McCord, John Mitchell, Colins’ bud Tim Lavender, and Shelly Schmidt.

Whutta mob scene; whutta party. Whutta Lott of camcorders and cameras and cheering spectators crowding every inch of the O-Deck! You never saw so many eager cameras since the days of Princess Di.

As I was watching with a bunch o people during the practice runs, I saw Stu come down. People said he’d been worried about getting too far left. Soooo, he came down too far right. Over there, the hole is ugly, and there’s an eddy which feeds it. He was upside-down, getting pounded by the curtain. He tried to roll, but there’s only so much you can do against that force. Once out of his boat, he was still getting worked by the eddy and hole. The rescue guys, led by TRPC’er Bruce Berman, got to him, and all that, but when he went to run it again, you could see him taking a good, loooooong look at the Falls.

The eddy above the final drop was crowded with boaters, probably about 40 jostling around for position. There was no rhyme or reason to the order; if you got in the center of the pack, you could still be there today. One time I was in the center, looking for a chance to move to the front of the pack, and I saw Recon Ron come down into the eddy. He’d run the Falls while I’d been in the eddy! And I believe he went ahead of me again!

Michael swam in the approach rapids. There are a couple of sticky holes, which caused some unexpected problems; I saw one poor sap with a stitches-worthy slice upside his nose.

I was in the eddy below to witness Karen’s run. She plunged, flipped, and rolled. On video, we have proof of rolls by Michael, Ron T., Rob, and Peter.



Racing Ron Whitney explodes down the Falls. Photo by Marty Lamp of www.WVOutside.com.

I saw Keel-haulers alumnus Jeff Snyder limping around after he landed funny while striding. He did get back into his downriver boat for the race, though. He is a trouper.

During the Freestyle event, I heard Roger Zbel and some of his buds talking. “It’s not the same when it’s legal, and daylight” one pouted. Roger pointed out that your times are best when it’s illegal, because you’re running away from the Rangers.

After three Phatting runs, all of which were pretty much ideal, I decided to take Gib up on his offer of running it in Martin Wick’s Topo Duo. In case you were wondering how nice a guy he can be, here’s the proof: he was willing to take the bow, and give me the relatively dry stern! But my geeky long legs couldn’t fit in the stern, so I took the bulkhead out of the bow, and we started to get in. We discussed rolling, and agreed that if we had to roll, I’d roll on the right side and he’d roll on the left.

We made it through the first pourover jest fine, but on the second—THUNK. There’s a rock, and we pitoned hard. Charlie Walbridge, watching from shore, grimaced. I grimaced, as I felt that hit all through my feet. We continued on down into the Staging Eddy with the crowd.

Since we were in a Big Boat, we were expecting a little accommodation from the boaters, and we got it. We soon started.

Well, you see, this was our virgin run in a Duo. I figured we needed top speed to go off the lip straight. Gib figured he needed to match his stroke cadence to mine. He didn’t anticipate that I’d suddenly go to a fast, staccato, windmilling. The result was that, concentrating on matching my stroke but continually missing his mark, he barely got a stroke in. We got surfed over to the left by the wave above the Lip, and we went off with a little sideways angle and not a lot of speed. I plunged, and we came up on a brace. Pretty soon I was losing my brace as

my blade was sinking, but Gib put in a solid sculling brace and saved the day. He da man!, as ain't neither of us really wanted to test our agreed rolling protocol.

Carrying the boat back up was unpleasant, as I had bruises all over my feet from the piton. Lotsa good photos and video we got from that run!, so it was worth it.

Walking down to run the Loop, Shelly twisted her ankle *severely*. She was howling in pain, and she was done for the day. She mostly relied on others for support as she hobbled around.

I grabbed Rob's brother's glass boat, outfitted for my geekdom, and headed to run it. First ledge—no prob. Second ledge: Bang! Ouch! I hit the *same dang-ol' rock!* I thought I was in a different spot, but...oops. The rest of my run went fine, though I kinda plunged a bit at the base. Paddling to the takeout (the Loop putin, of course), I thought I was aware of some water inside. A look at the bow showed a small crack. Bummer. But then, a look at the *bottom* of the boat showed a crack at my feet that went the entire width of the boat, extending to one of the seams. Ooooooh, Boy. Guess I've got some glassing ahead of me. When I showed it to Rob, he started laughing. I'm glad he had a sense of humor about it. (By the way, the carry was *really* painful on my feet by that time. I tookabreak until the race.)

So here I was. I'd entered the Race in the longboat category, and I was going to be in my 8-foot Phat. Some time I was going to have! Colins offered his Mirage, but I wanted neither to shoehorn my hurting feet into its narrow bow, nor to find a place for yet another boat in my garage.

I was an early start, because I'd arrived early, so I had to hurry. I hobbled the Phat over to the putin, took my thin neoprene socks off so's I could give my pained feet an extra quarter inch of room, skirted up, and got to the starting area a scant two minutes before my time.

They did the 4-3-2-1-Go! thang, and the guy let go of my stern. Slow boat or not, I paddled as hard as I could. At the second ledge, I went right to avoid the rock. Thunk! What, again??? But no harm to the boat, no significant additional harm to my feet, and I kept stroking. Those who weren't too particular about their time in the race still enjoyed one aspect of the race protocol: no 40-boat crowd in the staging eddy. I kept stroking, got a little plungy, but came up

right away, paddle stroking as I landed, and made it to the finish line.

I walked up to Rob. Racer Dewd was studying the lines and didn't notice my approach. He wanted neither a slice of pizza nor a hit of my "coffee," not before racing. Minutes later, we watched his line. He plunged straight down off the Falls, and took two attempts to get himself upright. That messes up your time, I can tell you that. (We have it on video.) One is left wondering, however: Rob took his schweeet time rolling up, and yet he finished ahead of Peter Turkaly and Karen Petit. Wish I had *their* runs on video!

Ron Whitney was one of the first to run the river-left line on the approach to the Falls. He'd come to that decision independently of famous boater Clay Wright, and as I see it, Ron ran the line better; he seemed to get slowed much less by the eddy that those who run that line have to cross.

Famed Upper Yough racer Roger Zbel tried to get the Stu Koster line, getting turned by an eddy line just before the lip and landing almost sideways on the right at the heinous eddy. He got out on his own power, and upright, but I don't think that was winning him any races.

My Boy Chaney didn't do the race, he told me. During the prelims, he'd tried a wave-wheel off the Falls. He got seriously pummeled by the curtain. He tried everythang, but it warn't happnin. When he exited, it took some worrisome time for him to surface. He went back up and ran it again, his sixth run, and ran the Loop.

I got an email the following morn from Gib, telling me that I came in 0.08 secs ahead of him. Considering that I was in a Phat, and he in a Pirouette, I figure that was perty good. He kinda drifted during the approach, conserving his strength for the drop. I figure that hurts your speed and your landing. Ron W. had the best time among the Keel-haulers, a full 8 seconds ahead of me. The race was won by Keel-hauler alumnus Brian Homberg in one of them-ol' long racing boats.

I showed my poor paws to the Lovely & Talented Mrs. Ratt. She shook her haid. Both my big toes are seriously bruised. She says they look like overfilled sausages. There are other bruising and swelling sites down there. (You gotta figure, there's a lot of weight in a Topo Duo, and it all came crashing down on my flesh.) She's not too sympathetic, figuring I'm a major goober. She might be right.

So what do we have here? At least four or five swims, at least four injuries, some trashings, a host of video and photo fodder. It was a great day. I'll certainly be back next year.

'Scuse me. I gotta go put ice on my feet.

Why I got trashed by Matt Muir

It was Friday, the first weekend of Gauley Season. Before going, I asked My Man, John Kobak, for suggestions on the lines. I'd run it a dozen times, and all, but I knew that this dude had run it many *many* more times than that; plus which, he has a knack for remembering and describing lines.

He gave us (Colins Drozdowski and me) detailed descriptions of the landmarks and key features at Insignificant, Pillow, the drops of Lost Paddle, Iron Ring, and Sweets. He also told us where the cheapest gas station was, and the most notorious speed traps. We were ready!

Coming to Insignificant, we knew the crux move was to avoid the big pourover hole near the top of the rapid. "Just go four meters to the left of the river-right rock," was the mantra that Colins and I were silently chanting.

Colins went first. I followed. I came, happy and confident, to the lip of a wave. Instantly, I saw several things to my abject horror: Colins' face. A big hole. Colins surfing in the hole, directly in my immutable path.

As I considered our fate, I remembered the problem. See, John Kobak is a retired NASA engineer. Yes, he is a rocket scientist, and he's smart and all that, but...well, it's the units, you see. Of course he meant to go four *feet* to the left of the rock.

As I knocked the paddle out of Colins' hand, cueballed him out of the hole and began my own extended surf, the problems of a spaceship some 400 million miles (96 km) away were not my highest priority. My immediate predicament was tops in my mind. Surf, surf, lean, paddle, surf, surf, consider the possibility of a deliber-Ratt flip, surf, try to backender, try to frontender...

As long as we're talking engineering: isn't this sport wonderful? Sometimes it seems as though this flowing, low-viscosity fluid, were as hard as glass. Though there are quantitative and qualitative differences between solids and liquids, in some ways the differences are simply a Matt er of

degree. Electrons, and even atoms, in solids have some range of motion. Hit the water flat from 25 feet up, and it'll feel pretty pavementish. A parameter in fluid mechanics, the Deborah Number (so named for the biblical Song of Deborah, which contains words to the effect of "...and the mountains shall move to the sea"), relates the timescale of the experiment to the characteristic timescale of the material. If the Deborah Number is close to 1, the material has solidlike and liquidlike properties. Moreover, should it be surprising that, in our presence, water often behaves as a solid? We, in fact, are not "solids." We are bags of fluid, with some shape but with a Lott of allowed material motion. But...I do believe I digress.

Eventually, the solidlike hole took pity on me and granted my exit. Rarely will I describe an incident as a "trashing," when I stayed upright throughout the ordeal, but I figure the term applies to any unintentional, two-minute surf.

Anyway, it was all Kobak's fault. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. Careful how you accept advice, even (or especially) from rocket scientists.

Moose Fest '99 (continued)

by Matt Muir

The weather Saturday morning was not nearly as cold as the previous near-frost morning, as six of us headed for the Bottom: Paul, Ron, and I were joined by Stu and his Michigander buds, Walt Miller and Mark Ricoy. The very beefy 4.6' level gave the rest of the Keel-haulers freedom to check out the Lower. I had already scouted Fowlersville, so I bypassed Ron as he got into his boat. The hole at the bottom was so powerful that it ripped my paddle out of my hands. (I was to find out that that paddle was of an independent mind that weekend.) My first roll of October, like my first September roll, was hands-only.

Then came Ron. The hole grabbed his paddle, too, and with an injured shoulder, it took three tries for him to upright. Paul's run completed the trio of paddle-free paddlers, but he stayed upright through the whole thing. Stu, Walt, and Mark managed to hold onto their paddles.

Knife's Edge rapid (yes, there's one on the Black, and one only an hour's drive away on the Moose; I don't suppose these NY paddlers have much imagination) was different at this level. The traditional right-side drop just upstream of the rock looked

quite makeable, but juicy. There was a one-move boof just to the left of another rock, but the line was tight to avoid the hole, which has killer potential at some levels. Since it was a one-move thing, we all went for it. For some reason, Walt was at least three feet off-line, resulting in some hole residence. I'm hoping for a copy of that on video, as well as some of the prettier lines that some of us composed.

I got my second flip of the day trying to tweeze some holes on Double Drop. Most of the Keel-haulers went for a line that I considered more straightforward and less challenging. Then we took off for Ager's Falls.

Ager's is the easiest dang 18-footer you ever did see. I ran it twice, tossing my paddle for the second run. (This was the paddle's second out-of-Matt experience of the weekend.) I liked the picture, but not enough to spend \$8 on it. Paul, on the other hand, spent his cash on a picture of him doing a rail grab and mugging the camera. Walt came through the outrun and got tangled up in a strainer before getting loose. Dunno about his river-reading.

Shurform is the next rapid. Since this and Ager's came after a dam, the controlled water level was back to a normal 3.5'. We scouted Shurform, which requires punching a wave to go far left and avoid the rocky mess in the center. For some reason, Ron wanted the rocky mess in the center. He did a rock 360, but I wouldn't want to do that with my boat.

Speaking of my boat, it had started leaking nastily. We noticed an inch-long crack in its bottom. Poor old Cruise treated me well and deserves its retirement.

I don't blame my boat for my scrood-up line at Shurform. I simply attempted the wave-punch too early and wound up in Ron's Rocks, the very same rocks that messed up our hero, John Kobak, last year. Got out of it; no harm, no foul.

Come to Crystal, the Bottom Moose's coolest rapid, the one that, for me, justifies the 7+-hour drive. Ron didn't go for the horseshoe approach, said he got a nice boof at the bottom. Stu got flipped at the bottom. Walt or Mark got shoved right of the rock at the bottom. That's not a dangerous line or anything, but it's kinda rocky and not nearly as cool as running the final 15-foot falls. Me...well, I almost made it left.

Almost, as in, I got myself perched atop the river-splitting rock. Having been 180'ed by the rock, I looked upstream at Stu. He was

waving "bye-bye." Looked downstream at Ron. He was waving "bye-bye." Tried to pull myself forward, so I could go off the falls with some measure of control. They were holding the guy in the eddy back while I sorted me out.

Gaining control wasn't gonna happen. I was rather concerned about a rock at the base of the right side of the falls. Didn't want to hit that mother, which has been known to break ankles. Didn't want to go off that drop backwards with no control. But that, Dear Friends, was the only option I was afforded.

Ron said I missed the rock by inches. He exaggerates, perhaps, but it was closer than comfort. I carried back up and ran the rapid much better, thank you.

Mine wasn't the only goofy line, as Paul got flipped in the final eddy and ran the waterfall upside-down. His thumb was hurting, and he had no interest in running Magilla.

Magilla. Did you think I had a famously bad line at Crystal? You ain't heard nothing yet.

Magilla is the North's answer to Gorilla on the Green Narrows. It's a little easier, though, as its approach is fairly simple and its runout leads quickly to a pool. I guess I took the approach for granted.

Don't take the approach for granted.

There was this little slopey no-brainer dam. Usually I'm good at no-brainers, but this time, I'd met my match. I allowed a little bit of sidestream current to carry me into an extended surf in this dam. Most of this surf was upside-down.

It was surprisingly tough to roll up in the froth. The dam let me out, but somewhere in there, my paddle gained its freedom from my evil clutches. With the help of a shallow rock (I think), I handrolled. Had no idea where I was. Was I heading for the "normal" left line, or was I aimed for the scarier middle? People were yelling at me, but there was no time to react; at least, not in my fuzzy condition. I was in the channel for the left line, upright but backwards and without a paddle. There was no time to turn around, so I hung on for the ride.

It was over quickly. I got flipped by the hole at the base of the waterfall. Upside-down, I realized that my helmet had been ripped from my head. I forestalled the roll for a few seconds, instead covering my head with my arms. When it came time to handroll...well, it warn't happenin'. After my third try, some kind soul grabbed my boat and uprighted me. My good friend, Ron, ol' buddy, was on

the bank thinking “Noooooo! Let him swim! He deserves to swim!” Can’t say I fully disagree with that assessment. They collected my paddle and helmet; some of them gave me a stern but appropriate “What the hail were you thinking?” lecture. (Answer: not very much, it seems.)

Seeing my line confirmed Paul’s opinion that he didn’t need to be doing no Magilla. Stu and Walt, on the other hand, apparently figured that they couldn’t possibly do worse than I had, so they went for it, and I’m sure they were glad they had. It really is a fun little spot of adrenaline.

After we got back to the campsite, Paul and I went over to the bridge at Fowlersville to watch for the Lower group, coming down to the Falls as Brent had planned. The wait for them to get there was nothing compared to the wait once they did get there. After forty-five minutes, the guys at the bottom were getting tired of standing there with throw ropes (not that throw ropes would be of any help to someone who messed up the drop, but that’s beside the point). Finally, Angie and Karen went for it. Angie made us gulp a little by going too far left and almost getting turned around at the pillowed rock. Karen worried us by getting surfed a little toward the center. Some serious stroking, and she was heading for the right line. Whew!

Far be it from me to diss people for refusing to run a rapid, but when someone’s been saying all day that he’s going to run Fowlersville Falls at the end of the day, and he leads his whole group over there, and then backs off after staring at it for three quarters of an hour...the term “Weenie Boy” would seem rather appropriate. You know who you are, Mr. Laubaugh.

While we were watching the Lower Group scout Fowlersville, incidentally, we were graced by a visit from Trip Organizer Tom Cronin. He explained that something at work had come up, and there’d been no way to get in touch with us. I had told Tom that we weren’t dependent on him for guidance down the rivers, so his absence had really been no big deal. We had dinner with Tom at a restaurant in Old Forge.

That evening, my good friend, Ron, ol’ buddy, held forth all over Moose Fest, singing my praises. A typical conversation went: “Hey! How ya doin’? Did you hear about Matt? He had a totally screwed up line at Magilla! Hey! How ya doin’? Did you hear about...” The last I saw, he’d alerted all the major networks, including UPN, and was scheduling a press

conference. Well, I understand his position. I’d have done the same for him.

On Sunday, Stu and his buddies left to run Fish Creek, which he reported as very scrapey. Paul, Ron, and I wanted an early start. Vince reports that Peter ran Fowlersville again, then headed home. Dave, Angie, Karen, and Brent put in at Ager’s Falls and ran it down to Crystal, which they all walked. Vince says that he saw someone run the final middle slot at Crystal upside-down. That thing is rocky, and he got himself hurt. Vince also reports banging his head on a tree limb while walking back from Crystal. Considering this experience and his off-bank experience at the Eagle section of the Beaver, he’d probably be better off just staying in his boat.

Sunday’s level was a little lower than Saturday’s, so Fowlersville didn’t have quite the bite it had had the day before. We took it seriously, of course, and ran it without incident. I seemed to glide over the hole in my new Perception Phat, purchased at the Fest and newly removed from the shrink-wrap. By the end of the day, it would have its first scratches.

Paul had an imperfect line at Funnel, banging his elbow on the diamond-splitter rock. He wears pads, but one had shifted before the unfortunate impact. He finished the day just fine, but he had to take a week or so off paddling to recover.

Paul and Ron were set to run Knife’s Edge without scouting, but I knew that the boof line that we’d run the day before might not be available at the lower level. Ron found that out for himself, as he got backendered in the hole and splatted against the rock face. Paul inadvertently ran the “normal” line, as the water kicked him away from the nonexistent boof. I was prepared to run the normal line, but...

When I returned to my boat, there was no paddle! Apparently I hadn’t secured it when I’d started to scout. Dummy! Dummy! Paul came upstream, but not with a paddle. I shrugged, got into the boat and handpaddled it. I kept looking for it, but there was nothing. This rapid has a lot of potholes and a reputation for eating paddles. I borrowed Paul’s breakdown; at Ager’s Falls, Sue was there to lend me her paddle. Thanks, Sue!

Ron and Paul ran Crystal without scouting; I scouted, wimp that I am. We all ran it without any trouble this time.

Down to Magilla, and attempting to expunge my disaster from the record. Ron

and Paul ran it first, both rolling at the bottom. I paid attention to the approach this time and cleaned the rapid with nary a drop on me.

It wasn’t long after noon. We racked up the boats and headed home. Paul broke all land speed records and got us home at the same time that Ron and Sue got in. This is normally an hour-longer drive. I appreciated his interest in swiftness, the more so because the guy in the passenger’s seat doesn’t get the ticket.

The Time I Was Burned By Lava

*by Jim Snyder, Keel-hauler alumnus
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Message Board*

"Lava Falls" even sounds hot. It can burn anybody, but is particularly searing to those who ask for it. It exists as a riot of frenzied water, carnivorous to the ultimate, deep beyond reckoning. Having the threads of your line unravel there can be as much fun as crawling around on the freeway in a straightjacket. What follows is my account of the one time I nearly gave it my all.

We approached this legend one beautiful sunny morning. As I climbed the scouting rocks on river right, my brother Jeff was preparing for his second run. The Colorado was running about 27,000 cfs and there was a huge hole at the top center of the rapid. The main portion of this hole was a monstrous pourover into an inhospitable holocaust of hydrology. As it extended towards river right it mellowed out into a twelve-foot mountain of foam. There was a large gap to its right but nearly all this water rolled into a six or seven foot tube-like diagonal breaking wave. This was absolutely an inversion conversion, slam-dunk into the turbo zone. I considered it a lesser option. In the distant horizon, just off the right shore, lurked a basalt black guardian of the underworld that would accept any form of ticket. It was all it could do to hold back a football field full of pulsing eddy power. A freight train of liquid madness rocketed past it into an insane war of one world which was beyond any conceivable limit of torque. And then things cooled out for a while.

Jeff knew full well what he wanted to do. He figured bliss lay hidden in the inner recesses of the first monument to the fun god. He vanished with a calm abandon into the bubbly abundance of the wave-like section of the first hole. Several seconds

later, he emerged upright from its downstream side about fifty feet to the right of where he first faded away. He ponderously paddled back to a line which circumvented the swirl-o-gram waiting as the last station on the ride. He missed the whirlpools by at least three feet. I was sure he was flirting too close with those dangerously abysmal suckholes. "That's exactly where I don't want to be", I said, voicing my reservations. He was too near to crossing the fine line between fun and the gun. I was going to play it safe, for this first run, and make sure I cleared well to the left of the jaws of death gnashing away at the bottom right. I knew what I wanted to do; it was so simple; stay smart, stay safe, stay strong and healthy, have fun, and stay away from trouble. Simple happens to be inversely proportional to easy. I was abducted from reality in the same neighborhood that my brother had disappeared. My captors led me swiftly away to break my brain with shock therapy. I'm talking about major voltage of direct current getting loose in the tub; the kind of stuff your mother warned you about. Cloaked in fountainous foam, I reached tentatively for a low brace. I wanted to secure some stability for my exit. A strong forward stroke would've worked better. I cascaded down the back of the first dragon begging for my low brace to hold. It held all the way to the next machine. It put me in a weird situation. I froze in time as the world spun wickedly around my ears. Everybody else thought I did a complete barrel roll around the inside of the tube. My low brace was still there but I think some bad fish was gnawing on it because it wouldn't help at all. I remembered the whirlpool wildness waiting and wanted to at least have a chance to avoid it, so I opted for a quick roll. I rolled up instantly and just in time to get off two last strokes before it happened.

I fell over the shoulder of the guardian rock close enough to touch its crest with my paddle, as it was just washing over with enough water to let me by. I dropped eight feet over its backside and smacked into the eddy so hard I could hear my chest impact the green water. This tilted my boat at an angle where the falls of the eddy wall grabbed my stern and started piledriving me to oblivion. I could feel the underside of the eddy as I was attaining terminal velocity. I realized I was low on air and I was heading to a place where it was mighty scarce- the very bottom of the deepest ditch on the continent. My predicament was bigger than

life. It wasn't a dream. I was screaming towards sure death with my ability to hold my breath as my only escape. I've never been very good at holding my breath, especially under stress. My boat finally leveled out underwater and the real violence began as I was mashed between watery hands. Lava and I were about to redefine "crash and burn". My glasses were vibrating, suspended in currents which were trying to rip them off of my face. They were flapping around an inch or so away from my face so excitedly that my plastic nosepiece was ripped off. My lifejacket unzipped at some point and my helmet was trying to leave so bad the chinstrap was digging into my throat. I could feel the blades of my paddle flexing as I was mauled like a leaf in a tornado. I was so deep underwater there was a tremendous pressure on my ears which was dwarfed by the explosion of gnarl ripping me around like a rag doll. I gritted my teeth with sheer determination to just survive. I became aware that I was at the limit of my breath-holding abilities and still super deep under water- at least fifteen feet. I wanted out real bad. I contemplated getting out of my boat. The river howled with furious laughter. "Please do!" it said, "Which way would you like to swim and how hard?" I decide to stay with my boat for a while and see which way it wanted to go. It occurred to me, then, that my boat knew a lot more about floating than I did. The torment was unrelenting. After being soundly thrashed by the upper portion of the rapid I was now spending the better part of a minute getting hammered like a square peg. I was crushed, chewed, gyrated, jammed, and basically put around badly. I wanted my mommy. This was truly profound thumpage. My boat finally shot through the surface into wonderful air. I had a lot of experience with whirlpools by then, from extensive training at "The Halls of Karma" on the New River. I knew it would be foolish to try to roll and breath; whirlpools never just leave you alone. True to form, I was completely engulfed in the encore performance of this gobbler. The second dose of humble was much harder to take. I was very disoriented and started to suspect that I was trapped in a hole-like structure at the upstream end of the eddy. The pressures were even more intense. I wanted to throw up but wanted to leave a pretty corpse too; what a dilemma. My skirt finally popped and I really started to get depressed. It was time to quit. My boat surfaced level and upright with a perfect angle to exit the eddy and head for the left

shore. The ordeal had paralyzed my chest muscles and I couldn't breath at all, even though I was in desperate need. I was crossing the river and trying to coax my chest into little baby breaths when I noticed I was heading for another eddy line. My boat was full of water and I still didn't have a decent breath. I felt a heavy mystery was at hand. If my boat sank, and it was already two feet under, I would not be able to endure another spin cycle. I would have to swim and I didn't have the energy or breath to survive something like that; I just didn't. I hated realizing that I may have survived the major Maytag to be finally killed by its little sister. My only glimmer of hope was to attain enough momentum to raise my bow to where it would present a climbing angle to the eddy currents and perhaps rise enough to stay near the surface. It worked. Boy, was I relieved.

Continued on next page.