



The Voyageur's Companion

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club
www.rockymountaincanoecub.org

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June 2011 issue

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Jeanne Willson, editor

The View Down River

Bill Ashworth, President

The View Down River - President's Report May 2011

Well, it's been a quite winter on the Front Range, but spring is FINALLY here, the rivers are unlocking and RMCC has a full schedule of trips for the next six months.

Upcoming Trips: Look for a complete list elsewhere in this newsletter. There are nine trips currently posted, but we're always looking for more, especially day trips. If there's a run you'd love to do, let us know and we'll try to put it together. Arkansas? Flatwater? You tell us!

Classes: The Baker-Jarvises will be leading a Beginning Canoe class in mid-July. See the web schedule for complete details

RMCC First Aid Training Rebate Program: Because **river safety** is one of the important goals of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, the Club officers have authorized the use of up to \$500 in club funds in calendar year 2011 to underwrite First Aid training by any of our registered members in good standing (i.e. 2011 dues current). The club will offer a **rebate of 25%** of the actual cost of training (up to a maximum of \$50) for any First Aid course completed by a member. Courses completed since January 1 2011 also qualify. Since the total fund amount is capped, this will be a first come/first served operation. If in doubt, contact me to verify that funds are still available.

Here are the steps:

- 1) Identify a suitable course that fits your schedule and location
- 2) Contact the club to verify that money's still available in the Rebate budget
- 3) Upon finishing the course, send proof of completion and course cost to the President.
- 4) Upon verification, the Treasurer will issue a check to the newly trained member.

Here's a sample of sources of training in Colorado:

Red Cross of Northern Colorado

<http://www.northerncolorado.redcross.org/index.asp?IDCapitulo=Q4Q26NY21N>

Colorado Mountain Club (note: CMC membership may be a prerequisite)

TAKE NOTE!

Basic River Canoeing

- Class will be taught in late July in Denver
- Learn basic tandem strokes, how to read a river, eddy turns and peel-outs, safety skills

Non-members welcome at the class!

DROWNING ... see inside for an important article.

RENDEZVOUS time again. Don't miss it! Check the web site. July 22-24.

Radium Rendezvous: Be sure to have the 4th weekend in July marked on your calendar for our annual return to Radium (July 23-24). Great runs at all levels each day and the Dutch Oven contest Saturday night and Pancake Breakfast Sunday morning.

INDRA going away: With the advent our Member's Forum on the updated RMCC website and the tiny use of the INDRA discussion board, we'll be discontinuing that discussion board in the near future. Look for more information about timing and how to log on to the Member's section shortly.

See you on the river
Bill Ashworth, RMCC President

Paddling 10 Essentials

Bill Ashworth

Hikers have long promoted the idea of "The Ten Essentials," or the 10 or 15 things you should always have with you on a hike. Classically, for hikers the list includes map, compass and/or GPS, sunglasses & sunscreen, extra foot and water, extra clothes, headlamp or flashlight, first aid kit, fire starter, matches, knife, water treatment, repair kit, insect repellent, signal devices (whistle, cell, signal mirror, satellite phone or SPOT type unit, etc.) and tarp plus parachute cord or other emergency shelter.



I surveyed our members to get their input on essentials for paddlers and river camping. Here's the summary of the responses from members about "The 10 Essentials" of Paddling Gear. Of course, there were way more than 10 items in the responses, but based on the frequency of responses, I've listed them as the "10 Essentials" and the "Next 15 Essentials". Also included is a list of Camping Essentials. Keep in mind that this is not a definitive list - just a starting point in creating your own packing lists. Thanks to the following for their suggestions: Denny Adams, Jim Baker-Jarvis, Mat Bozek, Gail Campbell, Richard Ferguson, Eric Hermann, Steve Luttman, and Kathryn Mutz.

Top 10 Paddling Items	Next 15 Paddling Items	Top 10 Canoe Camping Items
Bailing bucket or bilge pump	Carabiners	Cook kit
Dry bag w/ extra clothing	Compass & Map/river guide	Firepan, BLM approved
Flotation & tie-ins	First Aid kit	Animal-proof food barrel or bag
Food	Head net	Head lamp & extra batteries
Helmet (Class II and above)	Insect Repellent	Rain fly (+ poles, ropes, stakes)
Paddles + extra paddle	Rain/foul weather gear	Sleeping bag (in waterproof bag)
Painters, bow & stern (ropes 3/8" min.)	Repair kit (duct tape, wire, tools)	Stove & fuel
PFD (life jacket) + whistle	Spare eye wear	Tent (in waterproof bag)
River knife	Sponge	Toilet, portable
Water (2x liter bottles or equiv.)	Sun hat	Water, extra or Water filter/purification system
	Throw bag	
	Tie down ropes or straps	
	Waterproof can or bag for watches, cell phone, car keys	
	Waterproof matches & firestarter	

Drowning Doesn't Look Like Drowning

Mario Vittone, May 3, 2010



Printed by permission of the author from [Boating Safety](#)

The new captain jumped from the cockpit, fully dressed, and sprinted through the water. A former lifeguard, he kept his eyes on his victim as he headed straight for the owners who were swimming between their anchored sportfisher and the beach. "I think he thinks you're drowning," the husband said to his wife. They had been splashing each other and she had screamed but now they were just standing, neck-deep on the sand bar. "We're fine, what is he doing?" she asked, a little annoyed. "We're fine!" the husband yelled, waving him off, but his captain kept swimming hard. "Move!" he barked as he sprinted between the stunned owners. Directly behind them, not ten feet away, their nine-year-old daughter was drowning. Safely above the surface in the arms of the captain, she burst into tears, "Daddy!"

How did this captain know – from fifty feet away – what the father couldn't recognize from just ten? Drowning is not the violent, splashing, call for help that most people expect. The captain was trained to recognize drowning by experts and years of experience. The father, on the other hand, had learned what drowning looks like by watching television. If you spend time on or near the water (hint: that's all of us) then you should make sure that you and your crew knows what to look for whenever people enter the water. Until she cried a tearful, "Daddy," she hadn't made a sound. As a former Coast Guard rescue swimmer, I wasn't surprised at all by this story. Drowning is almost always a deceptively quiet event. The waving, splashing, and yelling that dramatic conditioning (television) prepares us to look for, is rarely seen in real life.

The Instinctive Drowning Response – so named by Francesco A. Pia, Ph.D., is what people do to avoid actual or perceived suffocation in the water. And it does not look like most people expect. There is very little splashing, no waving, and no yelling or calls for help of any kind. To get an idea of just how quiet and undramatic from the surface drowning can be, consider this: It is the number two cause of accidental death in children, age 15 and under (just behind vehicle accidents) – of the approximately 750 children who will drown next year, about 375 of them will do so within 25 yards of a parent or other adult. In ten percent of those drownings, the adult will actually watch them do it, having no idea it is happening (source: CDC). Drowning does not look like drowning – Dr. Pia, in an article in the Coast Guard's On Scene Magazine, described the instinctive drowning response like this:

1. Except in rare circumstances, drowning people are physiologically unable to call out for help. The respiratory system was designed for breathing. Speech is the secondary or overlaid function. Breathing must be fulfilled, before speech occurs.
2. Drowning people's mouths alternately sink below and reappear above the surface of the water. The mouths of drowning people are not above the surface of the water long enough for them to exhale, inhale, and call out for help. When the drowning people's mouths are above the surface, they exhale and inhale quickly as their mouths start to sink below the surface of the water.
3. Drowning people cannot wave for help. Nature instinctively forces them to extend their arms laterally and press down on the water's surface. Pressing down on the surface of the water, permits drowning people to leverage their bodies so they can lift their mouths out of the water to breathe.
4. Throughout the Instinctive Drowning Response, drowning people cannot voluntarily control their arm movements. Physiologically, drowning people who are struggling on the surface of the water cannot stop drowning and perform voluntary movements such as waving for help, moving toward a rescuer, or reaching out for a piece of rescue equipment.
5. From beginning to end of the Instinctive Drowning Response people's bodies remain upright in the water, with no evidence of a supporting kick. Unless rescued by a trained lifeguard, these drowning people can only struggle on the surface of the water from 20 to 60 seconds before submersion occurs.

(Source: [On Scene Magazine: Fall 2006](#) (page 14))

This doesn't mean that a person that is yelling for help and thrashing isn't in real trouble – they are experiencing aquatic distress. Not always present before the instinctive drowning response, aquatic distress doesn't last long – but unlike true drowning, these victims can still assist in their own rescue. They can grab lifelines, throw rings, etc.

Look for these other signs of drowning when persons are in the water:

- Head low in the water, mouth at water level
- Head tilted back with mouth open
- Eyes glassy and empty, unable to focus
- Eyes closed
- Hair over forehead or eyes
- Not using legs – Vertical
- Hyperventilating or gasping
- Trying to swim in a particular direction but not making headway
- Trying to roll over on the back
- Appear to be climbing an invisible ladder.

So if a crew member falls overboard and everything looks OK – don't be too sure. Sometimes the most common indication that someone is drowning is that they don't look like they're drowning. They may just look like they are treading water and looking up at the deck. One way to be sure? Ask them, "Are you alright?" If they can answer at all – they probably are. If they return a blank stare, you may have less than 30 seconds to get to them. And parents – children playing in the water make noise. *When they get quiet, you get to them and find out why.*

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed by the author are not necessarily those of the Department of Homeland Security or the U.S. Coast Guard

The River Less Travelled

Apr 4, 2011 – Brighton to Fort Lupton

Mat Bozek

Brighton to Ft Lupton was the plan. I'd had a couple of people call about the trip, then change their mind later on. Never know who will show up though, till its time to do the shuttle. I get to the put-in early as usual, and wait for everyone else to show up.

Free; 2 child size PFDs. Labeled as follows: "Youth Type III, 24-29 inch chest." Estimated age of child about 5 to 7 years old. They have 3 foam panels (1 back and 2 fronts) with 3 front buckles. They appear to be quality construction. They are not new but were stored in a dark and cool basement. Delivery could be arranged in SouthWest Metro area. 303-789-1087.

Shuttle launch was scheduled for 9:30 – 9:30 arrives, and I'm the only vehicle in the parking lot. Hmm, might be a bit difficult to do this shuttle, so time for a Plan B. Plan B-b in this case: since there are already strong upstream winds blowing, I'll just paddle upstream of the bridge and see how far up I can get. I know there are a couple of dams not too far up, and would try to get at least up to the first one, and at least get the boat wet. Boat gets cranky if I take it for a ride and don't let it play in the water.

This being an official ACA trip, I gave the obligatory safety talk before launching. Blah, blah, blah, and blah says the Trip Coordinator. Yeah, yeah, we know all that stuff says I. "Troublemaker" says the TC! Always has to be one in the bunch, doesn't there! Well, we finally got thru that nonsense, and I assigned a lead boat and a sweep boat, and off we went. At least the paperwork would be easy for this trip.

The Ft Lupton gage had been running about 250cfs for a week or more when I checked it on Friday, but the river seemed lower than that to me, and seemed lower than any other time I've launched there. I didn't think I could paddle up thru the rocks beneath the bridge so I carried my boat on the gravel bar to above the bridge, and tied off to a big rock while I went back for the rest of my gear. Loaded up and shoved off, making steady but slow progress. The main difficulty was the lack of water, it being not deep enough to get a good paddle stroke in most places. A couple of spots, where I'd guessed at the wrong channel, I just got out and walked the boat up the riffles till I got to water deep enough to paddle in. Two or three times, the wind was blowing strongly enough that I was able to "sail" upriver without paddling.

Overall, I guess I was making about a mile an hour and it was about a mile to the first rock dam. This is just a bunch of big stacked rocks in a long span of probably 70 yards across or more, and the drop is maybe 5 or 6 feet at this water level. There is a boat chute in the center, but it would be totally un-runable at this level – the final tier of rocks was still a two foot drop to the water below the dam. I'd say if the water level was two feet higher, it would be ok to run – in any case, it needs to be scouted if you were going to run it as there were several big rocks at the bottom and you'd need to pick a better line than just dead center. I portaged around on river right – vacant land that according to a sign I saw belonged to some kind of water district or something – the sign did not say "no trespassing", by the way. It was somewhere between 100 and 120 yards to carry to a reasonable put in spot.

Just picking up the boat and carrying it would be the great challenge of the day – the wind was really pushy (I checked the data later, and it was gusting above 40mph most of the day, up to 49mph max wherever they measure for Brighton, and I'll bet it was higher than that often enough in the river corridor). I tried to keep the bow pointed into the wind and low, so the wind would spill off the bottom, and after I turned, I'd keep the stern low for the same reason – that worked more or less ok.

I continued on for another quarter mile or so till I came to the next dam. This is a concrete dam with gated spillways, likely for a water diversion – there are sand and gravel pits to the East there. On the way upstream, I kept spooking a lot of Carp in the shallows, and as I approached the second dam a Bald Eagle flew by low overhead to check me out – maybe 30 yards above me - a second eagle soared way up high. The only other wildlife on the river, other than me, was one Great Blue Heron.

I decided not to portage this second dam with the wind being a pain as it was, and just turned back here after a snack. Going downstream, there was enough water that I didn't scrape bottom anywhere, but not by much. The wind was in my face now of course, and presented a bit of paddling challenge. A few times, I was barely moving forward, and I did get "windpinned" once, when a gust took the bow and turned me crosswise to the current in a narrow spot for a second or two, but I got straightened out soon enough. At the bridge, I choose the left channel, and it was tricky with the wind, but I only hit one rock, and then landed the boat at the gravel bar.

I unloaded the gear and stacked it there while keeping a hand on the boat. Then I aligned the boat with the wind and managed to get it up on my shoulders, and started off to the truck. I think I made about 20 feet before the wind took over, and blew me and the boat sideways to it – which was not good. I knew the boat was going, it was just a matter of whether it would take my head off with it when it did go. I just had time to duck my head against my right shoulder and lift up on the left gunnel, so that the boat went airborne with enough clearance for my head to stay attached. I hung on to the gunnel with my right hand, and managed to grab with the left also as the boat and I both hit the gravel – I really was afraid to let go, or the boat would have gone tumbling up the bar onto some big sharp rocks, or maybe get blown back upstream to the dam – not sure where it would have stopped and I didn't want to find out the hard way. The wind kept funneling up the river channel, and it would just not quit, or even die down a bit. I couldn't get the boat back up on my shoulders, and finally gave up trying. So I just carried it by the gunnel, walking backwards up the bar, fighting with the wind all the way till I got to the bank and could tie it to some brush. That gave me a break, and I hauled my gear back to the truck and loaded it in. Then I went back for round 2 of man vs wind.

This time, getting just a bit of windbreak from the shoreline vegetation, I could get the boat back up on my shoulders and carry it. Again, the trick was to keep the bow pointed into the wind and low, so the wind would spill over the bottom side – not easy, but crab walking, I made it back to the grass near my truck and could take the airbags and painters off now. One last fight with the wind to get the boat on the truck, and luckily there was a bit of break when the wind was a bit less, and I could tie it down for the drive home.

As usual, all the trip participants came up and thanked me for a fine trip, indeed, for a wonderful mini adventure, and all wished to do it again, so I reminded them about my June trip and hoped to see them again for that.

It was 12:30 when I left, so my little adventure only took 3 hours round trip. It was getting colder, so I turned the heater on in the truck, which seemed to turn the rain white - . It stayed white all the way home too.

Next time, I might just toss my bike into the truck, in case I need it for shuttle plan B-a.

Editor's Eddy Lines

Jeanne Willson

Some terrific folks have been helping with trip shuttles; Jerry Nolan and Ralph have smoothed the way for our trips and made them that much more fun. Thanks!

<http://www.rockymountaincanoecub.org/Members/CNRNewsletters.aspx>

Just think! Your photo could be right here!

Safety: Please read the article on drowning several times. This article clarifies why, when we ask if a swimming paddler is OK, we MUST get a verbal/physical response or else we should assume there is a problem.

Skills:

New club members and not-yet club members are especially welcome at our upcoming Basic Canoeing class. We are hoping to put together a potluck get-together for class attendees and some long-time club members to let you know more about opportunities in the club.

Rocky Mountain Canoe Club Information

CLUB CONTACTS

President	Bill Ashworth
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Schedule, Web	Bill Ashworth
Membership	Mark Roberts
Conservation	Jerry Nolan
Quartermaster	Doug Hurcomb

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Website: <http://www.rockymountaincanoecub.org>

Membership: \$20 per year, per household. See Membership section of our website for forms and information.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB

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