



# The Voyageur's Companion

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB

October 2002

Fall Newsletter

## Inside this Issue:

### Members Summer Adventures

Eleven Mile Canyon . . . . .	2
Salmon River . . . . .	3
Quetico, Nopiming, Missouri . 4	
Kids in canoes . . . . .	6
2002 Canoe Nationals . . . . .	7
Saskatchewan . . . . .	9
River Clean-Up . . . . .	9
Big Water in Canoe . . . . .	10
Adirondacks . . . . .	11
Classifieds . . . . .	8
RMCC Trip Schedule . . . . .	3

## Directions to Christ on the Mountain Church

From 6th and Simms (or 6th and Union), go South on Union to W Alameda Pkwy, turn right. Go 1.95 miles, turn left onto W. Utah. Address is 13922 W Utah.

Keep in touch with RMCC on the WEB at:

[rockymountaincanoecub.org](http://rockymountaincanoecub.org)

Temporary Website:

<http://indra.com/~dallured/rmcc/>

Trip Schedules  
News & Information  
Pictures  
Training  
Schedule **Your** Trip

## Wrapup for 2002

Greg and Karen Jankowski, Co-Presidents

### Fall Meeting

**Saturday, November 16, 2002**

**Christ on the Mountain Catholic Church**

**Pot Luck dinner at 6:00**

**Fall Meeting at 7:00 pm.**

This will be the photo / slide show / officer's meeting. So, if you have ever felt there has to be a better way, this is the time to step forward to help make the club a better organization.

Officers who have expressed a desire to stay at their positions are Paul Holscher as treasurer, Ken Bauer as trip coordinator, Liz D'Antonio-Gan as email master, Lyn Berry as Voyageur's Companion Editor.

Officers who would like to move on, but will stay on if no other foo,,, I mean volunteers can be found: Ourselves as president; Dave Allured as webmaster; Our Jim Holloway as conservation officer will be glad to stay on however his feelings wouldn't be hurt if some one else wanted the position.

Officers who have expressed a definite desire to move on after serving the club are Al Johnson as advertising and Laurel Adams as membership.

A hearty thanks to all of these and all past officers who have served the club proudly.

### **Seasons' exploits**

Well this years boating season has been one to remember, hopefully it will be a long time before we can see weird things like the seasonal peak flows for rivers occurring in August for the Animas and during the summer rendezvous for the pumphouse section of the Colorado. With the fires closing many popular and boatable sections of Denver Water's South Platte, while at the same time opening a section that hasn't been done in years. We were told at the put-in for the San Juan that the river was at 284 cfs (avg for date being 5200) and that if we were foolish enough to want to venture past Mexican Hat then any rescue would be our financial and legal responsibility. Needless to say we took out at Mexican Hat. Our trip on Deso / Gray also fell victim to the low water woes. Instead we headed to Montana and Idaho checking out the rivers and hot springs. We will

**Continued....page 2**

# Eleven Mile Canyon

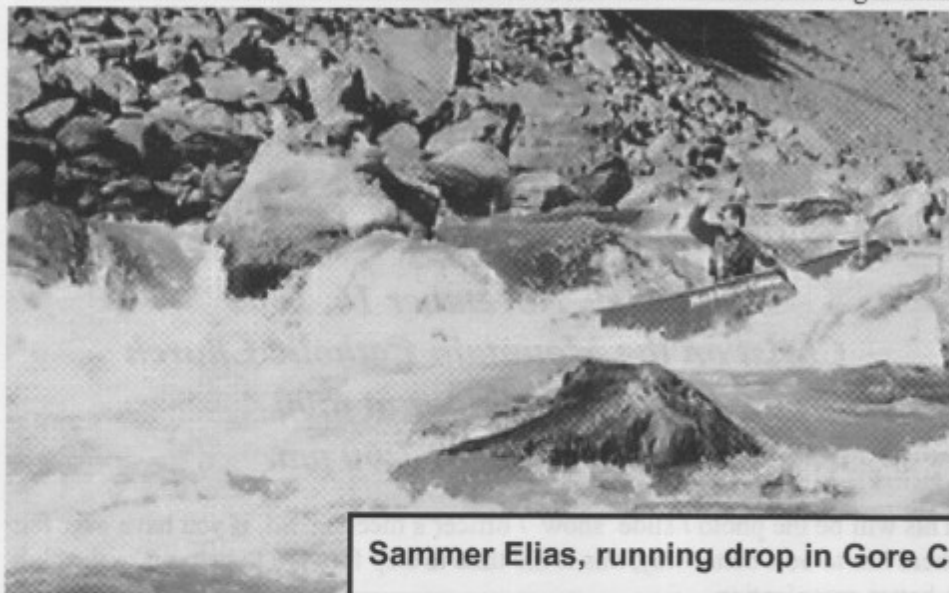
*Sammer Elias*

I ran 11 mile canyon Sunday the 4th; most likely the First Descent in a canoe

of this canyon of the South Platte River. Ran everything from the bottom of the first V to the top of the last V, including the "ledge", and ran it all clean. It was running between 450 and 500 cfs. For those of you who want to know, in comparison to "the numbers", most of the IV's are alot longer than

anything on the numbers, with more gradient, and alot more channelized. Some of the IV's have very little to no eddies, and the water blasts through there. The run has more of the characteristic of Pine Creek. I've looked at pine creek at 350, so I'd say that it might resemble the characteristic of Pine Creek at around 550. A step up from "the numbers" at medium flows. The run is not very similiar to anything I've ever seen actually, very tight and channelized, like there is a gigantic garden hose, shooting water down at the top of all the long IV's. For me, its a fantastic difficult stretch, that goes all day long.

p.s I also ran Gore Canyon on Sept. 15th



Sammer Elias, running drop in Gore Canyon

Just Sammer

## Season's exploits.... continued

definitely be going back up there soon. They had the water once in the northern parts of the states. The water was running clear and just a little on the cold side. We even got to see a moose up close and personal while soaking in a great hot spring.

There was a good turnout for the summer rendezvous. Maybe part of it was the fact was that the release of water from Green Mt. reservoir meant that this was one of the few rivers that had boatable flows. Another causality of the dry season was not having the annual Dutch oven cook off, due to the fire ban.

There was also a good turnout for the Labor Day annual trip down the Flaming Gorge run. With 13 boats on the trip the trip leader was smitten with a bit of bad luck, the Cascade got broke in properly. With a great beginning down the right side of Red Creek, things went bad fast, first with a firm planting of the boat on the first of two big rocks that now were exposed, after some wiggling in the boat and after an anxious moment or two we slid off the rock. Now with no speed and the eddy behind the rock that we just slid off of making maneuvering difficult the second rock drew us in and even with a valiant last effort we just couldn't quite get out from in front of the rock and sure enough the

flow plastered us to the rock and as soon as the upstream gunwale started to go under the water, the boat started it's heartbreaking journey toward being conformed to the shape of the rock. About this same time Rachel, our youngest, decided to abandon ship, after a short swim she was pulled in with the help of our token kayaker Iris. Of course the rock wasn't anywhere near 17 plus feet in width so quite a bit of both ends were in the flow off the side of the rock. After attempting to push on both ends, with a rather good attempt to push on the river right side and a total failure to reach the bottom to push on the other side the canoe didn't move in the least. In desperation an attempt to pull the boat up the rock while standing on the top of the rock resulted in a small amount of movement, once I realized this, then I just kept tugging on the gunwale until the boat went over the rock knocking me off the top and back in the river, with a lot of very grateful help from Dennis Adams we managed to get the boat emptied and got it down the rest of the run. Damage in the end turned out to be a broken gunwale, and busted rear thwart along with a sizable dent in the bottom of our Coleman stove, it was stowed standing up under the center thwart, and ended up taking a lot of the push from the rock, it probably saved the canoe from being completely wrapped around the rock. Of course the canoe has a couple of sizable wrap wrinkles on the side, now it seems to fit in better with the rest of the livery.



# Salmon River, Idaho

by Rod and Judy Martin

Since it really is a long drive, we drove to Idaho falls area in one day, visited some old boating friends, did a quick float on the snake, then drove on to Salmon Id to finish shuttle arrangements with Blackadar.

The weather was cool and rainy, so we stayed in town and the next morning drove 2 hours to the put in. The river was beautiful and clear until we crossed a side drainage which had flooded. Kitchen Creek flooded July 19 and totally dammed the Salmon for a time, when it broke it sent a flood downstream and created a new rapid at the mouth. We gawked at the new rapid, a real significant class 3 that you can see from the road above the put in. Unfortunately the remainder of river was black & dirty.

Arrived to put in at 10, checked in, ranger said gauge was up 10 inches from day before, loaded the canoes & headed down river. We rode the extra water of the previous nights flood, so I'm unsure of water level. It was 3920cfs at take out 8 days later.

Stopped to scout first significant rapid and learned first hand of dangers of the river as the rapid was full of rocks. While scouting, I stirred up a rattlesnake and found the first of lots of poison ivy, complete with nice juicy berries! Actually ivy was the big risk, as it was everywhere and Judy is very allergic to it and I had to watch constantly to keep it off me.

The river was more difficult than I had imagined. It really is class 3 and scouting was a good idea.

Judy and I were glad we had paddled as much as we did this season, even with low water here in Colorado so we were very comfortable with what the river threw at us. Our friend Cindy Brown, a competent intermediate paddler from S.C, was not as well tuned and experienced a few swims as a result.

Aside from handling the rapids well, we were blessed with wildlife encounters. The girls and I saw two bears grazing along the river and I was able to see two more on a side canyon hike. We watched two otters play in the river for the most of an hour at a campsite, a couple of close encounters with a bald and a golden eagle, saw deer & sheep every day, but the real highlight was a young bull moose foraging on the

river. When you float up in a canoe you don't tend to scare the critters, so it makes for a nice view.

The side canyon water was beautiful with most cascading into the river with splash & noise. Even with this year's dry summer, almost all the side streams were running making it easy to find clean water to purify.

We arrived at the take out (Vinegar) by 10:30, but with cleaning, loading, driving to Riggins, emptying the porta-potty and lunch, we were not able to get out of town till 2:00. I had hoped to drive to Twin Falls for motel, but ran out of gas so we stayed in a small town an hour west of there. We did take the scenic route back through McCall and down the Payette canyon to Boise, what a great and beautiful country.

Judy wanted to see Shoshoni falls in Twin Falls, so we stopped there for breakfast and a view. It was pretty as the water was up a little. The rest of our drive was just that, pushing a head wind most of the way home, making a long trip seem longer.

P.S. Paddled Gunnison Gorge shortly after our return home at over 300. It was very technical but had a great time.

## Fall Meeting Topic

### Paddling Pool Sessions

There will probably be a change in where the pool sessions will be held. Karen was able to get a reprieve on the decision last year, however this year it doesn't look good with Meyer's Pool. We'll have a much better grasp of the situation and what options are available by the time the meeting is held, so a decision can be made by the membership.

## RMCC Trips Schedule

*Be sure to check the WebSite for the latest information on up-coming trips and events.*

Oct 12 Horsetooth Paddlers' Regatta CANCELLED

Nov 24-30 Rio Grande River, II+/III (Intermediate)

Bonnie Gallagher, [REDACTED]

Trip is a GO with new coordinator. Thanksgiving on the river.

This river adventure is one of those "You gotta do it!" trips. As for The Editor, I have family commitments, so must stay home.

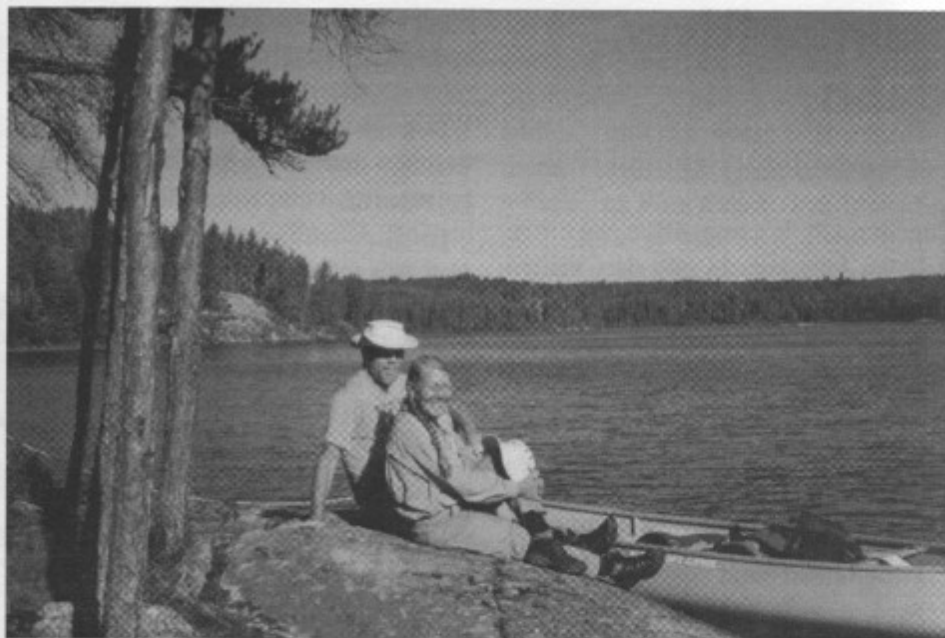
# Summer Paddling Adventures

Lyn Berry and Jeanne Younghaus

## Quetico Provincial Park

Fourteen days in this wilderness was more than enough time to get accustomed to being away from the rigors of civilization, but not enough to truly become a total wilderness convert. We had plenty of sunny and calm days that unfortunately were often interrupted by clouds and rain and wind. This unsettled weather pattern affected our paddling style and certainly no records were set for distance traveled or number of lakes visited. After many days of wind and rain, it was time for a hot shower and blueberry pancakes cooked in a restaurant.

**Portaging around Twin Falls in Quetico Park, showing the "comfortable and advanced" portaging system.** *Jeanne Younghaus*



**The afternoon in Nopiming Provincial Park was spent relaxing in the warm sun.**

*Lyn Berry*

**Dry beaver creeks.** Our original paddling plan was to negotiate a small beaver stream to gain access to a series of small lakes in the western section of the park. Unfortunately, the stream was dry and hardly even muddy. Plan B required us to retreat, and enter other areas of the park via Lac LaCroix.

**Paddling Lac LaCroix.** Just like the Voyageurs of the Eighteenth Century, we paddled about 12 Kms down the length of Lac LaCroix, one of the largest lakes in Quetico Park. Fortunately the day was partly cloudy, and we had a very strong tail wind! It took us almost no time to fly down this open stretch of the big lake; what exhilarating fun.

**Bald Eagles.** It was exciting to see at least one bald eagle on almost every day during our wilderness adventure in Quetico park. Over the last decade, these majestic raptors have made an astonishing comeback from near extinction; and the evidence of this was readily obvious. On one occasion we watched an eagle

soaring right over our heads for almost 10 minutes. Our only disappointment was not to witness one of these birds diving and catching a fish from the clear waters of Quetico Lake.

**Portaging the canoe** was one of the rugged features of our adventure in Quetico Park, and we slogged our way over/thru our share. With my advanced age (I am now eligible for the Golden Age Passport, which I bought while enroute to Quetico), I opted to try an alternative portaging system. Using my Kelty back pack frame and a pair of "goal post like" cradles purchased from Knudsen Enterprises of Lee, MA, portaging was notably easier and more comfortable.

**Wind Bound.** Our second to last day in Quetico was like no other I have spent while on a wilderness canoe trip. The entire day was spent in camp due to very heavy winds and huge rolling waves, and plenty of rain. Late in the day we even moved our tent from its original place out near the windy open point into the trees to a spot much more sheltered. Also a dead tree was cut down that seemed it might succumb to the wind and topple over on the tents.



## Nopiming Provincial Park, Manitoba

Wilderness was lacking in this provincial Park (two of the portages were complete with manufactured stairs!), but we did only see other people on our last day. A wonderful moose, plenty of raptors, several beavers, calling loons, held our interest and enhanced a very wilderness-like atmosphere. The afternoon of our last full day was spent on a small island essentially doing nothing but enjoying being there. The sun was hot, the wind quiet, the waters very warm for swimming.

## The Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River

Repaddling the *journey of Lewis and Clark* thru the white cliffs and bad lands sections was more exciting and eventful than we had anticipated. Different scenery than anything available on canyon or mountain rivers of Utah/Colorado as well as an amazing array of wildlife (mostly birds, but also rattlesnakes) provided sufficient adventure for the nine days. At times the honking of the geese was almost obnoxious, but always seemed to be overpowered by the huge flocks of white pelicans.

**High rubber boots.** We discovered these to be a new and necessary piece of gear to cope with the very muddy banks of the Bug Muddy river. One day as I was putting on my boots I turned them over and *a dead mouse (!)* fell out onto the ground. Where did he come from and how did he get in my boot? Did I mash this mouse the last time I had these boots on? Would the tiny red spot on the toe of the wool socks wash out?

**Rock formations.** The white cliffs of the Missouri are not only spectacular to look at and enjoy, but are loaded with interesting forms and



**The Seven Sisters.** One of the many rock formations in the White Cliffs of the Wild and Scenic Missouri.

Lyn Berry

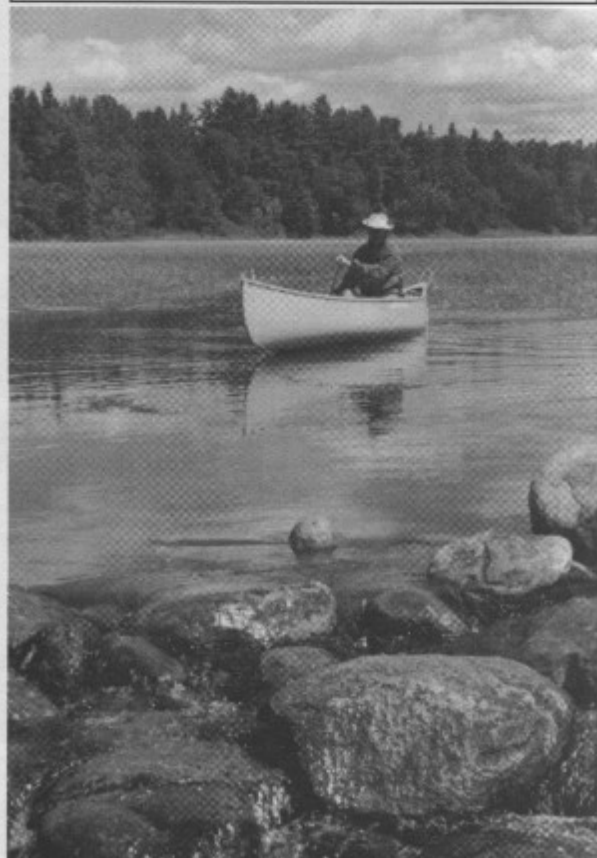
shapes simply waiting for the viewer to turn into something else more familiar and human oriented.

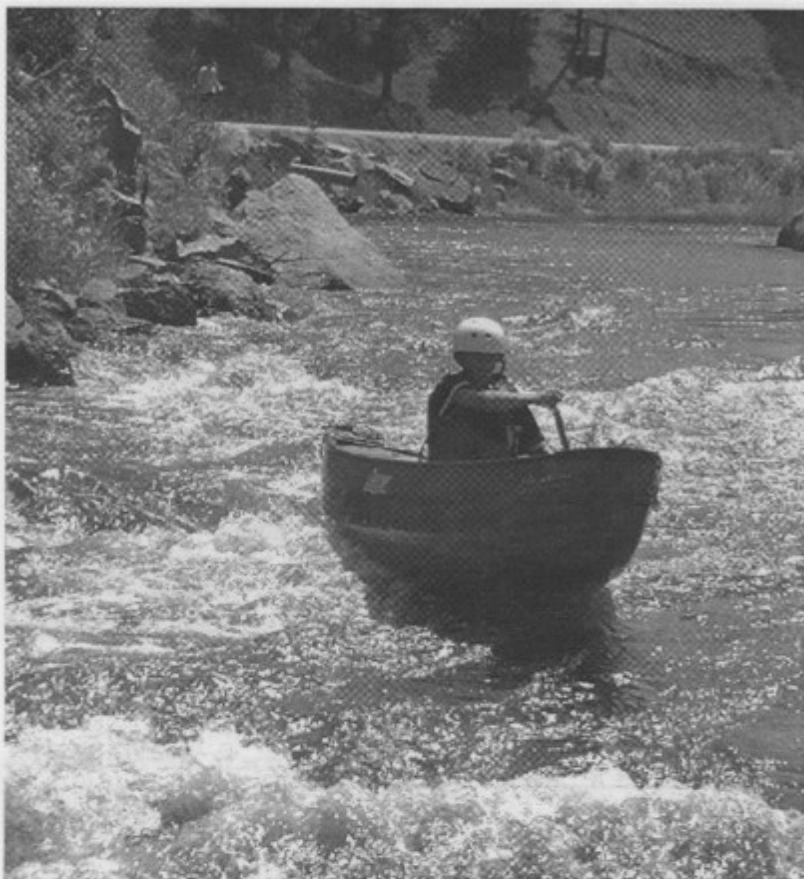
## Lake Itasca, Minnesota

**Headwaters/Source of the Mississippi.** Perhaps not the most exciting place to paddle our new Prospector from Nova Craft Canoe, but certainly very unique. Lake Itasca is the beginning of the Mississippi River and only some 2400 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The excitement comes from knowing that all of the many tourists also looking at this source of the River are taking our picture.

**The waters in the foreground are the very source of the Mississippi River. This rapid was not attempted.**

Jeanne Younghaus



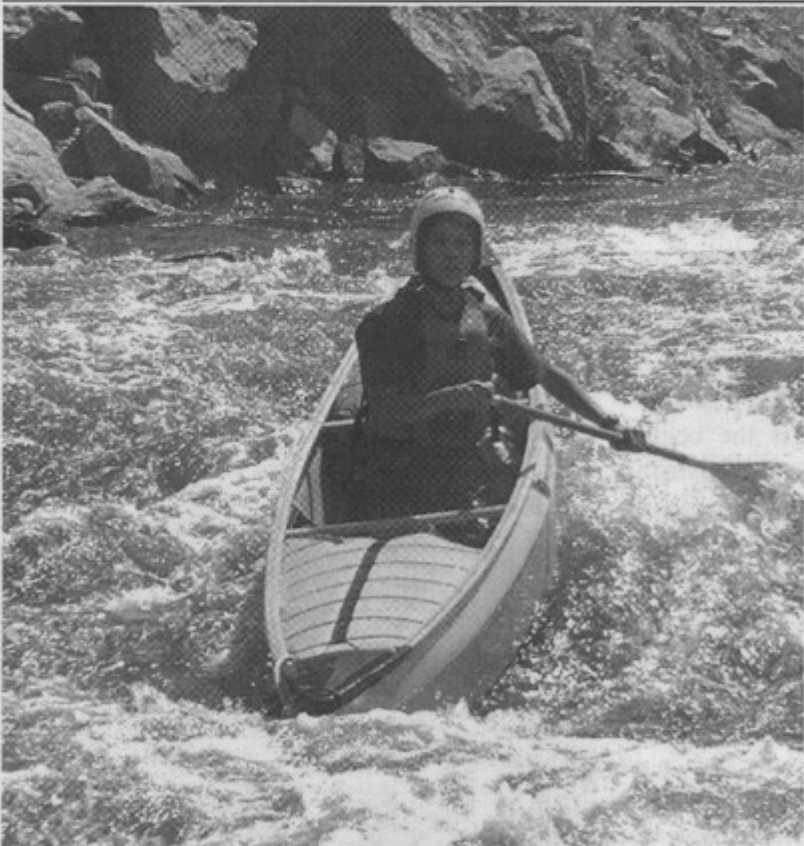


**Wes Hurcomb (age 11), S Platte**

*Jeff Oxenford*

**Ben Fust (age 12), Deckers run**

*Jeff Oxenford*



## 2002 Canoe Experience

*Wes Hurcomb*

I started canoeing in Kerry Edward's C1 during the winter of 2000 when I mastered the art of standing-while-canoeing in the pool. I tried kayaking the next year until I got trashed at the Clear Creek Whitewater Park showing off in front of my Grandparents. I was so scared I quit. Then I realized I did not have the proper skills. Fortunately, the RMCC/ACA kid's canoe program came to the rescue. I attended Jeff Oxenford's kids canoe classes last summer and boy, have I improved. Now soloing class II or class III tandem with my dad is no problem.

The class was really fun and I learned about strokes to use on flat water or white water. The most fun was at the Soda Lakes roll sessions. I didn't exactly learn to roll a canoe but I aced Jeff on the standing-while-canoeing balance session. The highlight of the season was a day trip on the South Platte below Deckers where we put our skills into action. The only thing I had trouble with was the wind and maybe following directions. The river was especially nice this year because campers and day users were mostly absent due to the fire danger.

I like to spend my free time surfing that hole at the bottom of the Clear Creek Whitewater Park. Now when I get trashed it's because I want to!

## Minors Rights

### Possible Fall Meeting topic

A recent Colorado Supreme Court decision concluded that parents can not sign away the rights of their minor (under 18) children on liability release forms.

This decision could affect the RMCC waiver form and participation of families with minor children on canoe trips and in the instruction program.

More about this decision will possibly be discussed at the Fall Meeting. In the meantime check out this Web Site: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/493/>



# The 2002 North American Canoe Championships

by Jeff Oxenford

One hundred of North America's best open canoe racers descended on Gull River (1 ½ hours NE of Toronto) for the 2002 ACA Whitewater Open Canoe Slalom North American Championships. This event represented the first time that the championships were open for all of North American and not just the US. Racing from the club was Bob and Jill Stecker, John Graye and myself.

It was quite intimidating heading up to canoe a race in Canada (the country synonymous with canoeing). Canoeing in Canada is the subject of national pride, with canoeists achieving celebrity status and even a past prime minister an expert canoeist. Past championships were mainly a US affair with a small number of non-US participants. With the race being held in Canada, the expectations for strong competition were increased.

Matters were made even more interesting when upon arrival we found that the flow on the river was twice what was expected. That didn't deter course designers Stephan Krajewski and Bob Foote. With help and advice for many of the participants, they created the most challenging course in recent history. With 462 runs down the course, only 5 clean runs (not touching any gates) were recorded. I was ecstatic with a one touch run, that landed me in 4th in the OC-1 premier REC division.



**John Graye, Gate 3, 2002 Nationals**  
*Jeff Oxenford.*

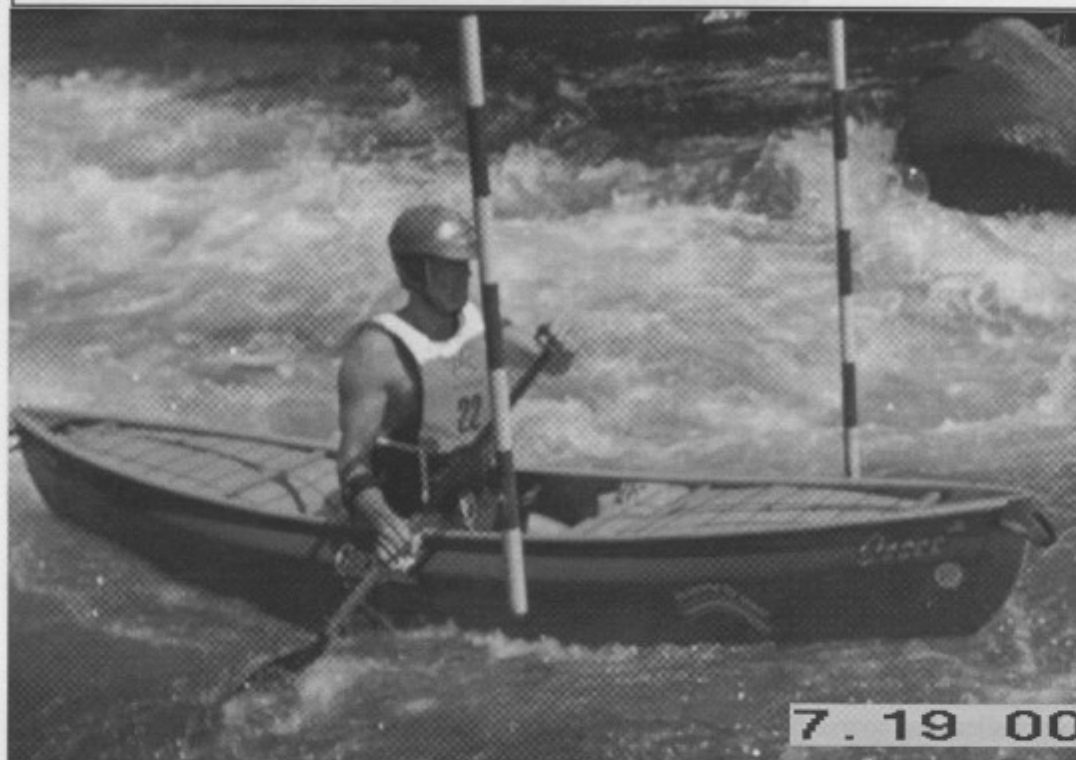


**Jill and Bob Stecker, 2002 Nationals**

*by Fred Lum.*

space of a few seconds (sound like fun?). With no real break there was an another upstream gate, followed by a river-wide peel out to two offset gates followed by another upstream gate. At this point, there was river wide peel out was needed before running a 2-3 foot ledge and a river right upstream gate. The next two gates were the hardest on the course (I only cleaned them both on one of 10 runs down the course). You needed to peel out across the river and hit a downstream gate in slack water, followed by a downstream gate that was behind a pore-over. With one more upstream gate, then there was the Otterslide. In the Otterslide, water screams down a drop of about 10-15 feet at a 45 degree angle. About three quarters of the way down the slide was one of the funnest moves on the course, an upstream gate in an eddy that you approached a light speed. Peeling back out into the current we had one more series of gates that kept getting more difficult as lake levels dropped and large holes formed.

The course consisted of 22 gates spread over a 300 yard length of river. The race started below Horseshoe Falls (class IV drop) and required an immediate peel out into a jet of water (or should I say foam) and then negotiating two offset downstream gates. With rapidly increasing speed of the river, paddlers then needed to set up for an upstream gate. Getting low on this gate meant going into a hole that loved to fill your boat. Coming out of this gate you needed to peel out across the river and then challenge a series of up and downstream gates. To make gate 9, required peeling out, catching an eddy, surfing a wave and then peeling out on the wave all in the



For those of you that have never attended the nationals, this is a great event and is well suited for first time racers. While there is competition, it is always friendly and racers are free with advice about the best lines and in offering encouragement. New paddlers are welcomed into fold and whether you have a clean run or miss all the gates it's a great learning and social time. The atmosphere is as good or better than any river festival (and it's all canoeists). Many a tall tale was told around the campfire.

The next championship will be held in Wausau Wisconsin, July, 2003. This would be a great opportunity

for club members to participate. If you're hesitant to race because you've never run gates, I'd be happy to work with you. It would be great to have a large club turn out at the next championships!

**ED Note:** Jeff earned Second Place in the REC. Combined Downriver/Slalom race in the OC-1 Premier Class.

## Classifieds...

### PFD Salus Life jacket.

color red, size large, with Dry-lex hydrofil liner to keep the user cool and dry, web shoulder straps, side zip, contoured design. \$75, that's \$50 off new price of \$125. Bob Stecker, [redacted]

[redacted] This Life jacket was won at the Slalom nationals, but 'winner' would like to sell it.

### Wenonah Rendezvous solo canoe

\$395. (Retail price is \$845) The Rendezvous is designed primarily for rivers and multi-day tripping under mixed conditions. The boat is Royalex construction, in good condition (worn a bit on the ends) factory weight 58 pounds; outfitted with many interior tie-out points for flotation, gear, and variable rigging such as seat or saddle, thigh straps, and so forth. Contact John Conaway for more information by email or phone [redacted] (north of Fort Collins).

### Dagger Legend 16' Tandem canoe

Green with aluminum/vinyl gunwales-good condition, 16' with 2" rocker. Includes: 3-airbags-bow/stern/mid, 3 paddles-1 fiberglass paddle, 1 fiberglass/wood Clinch River paddle and 1 spare paddle, Foote thigh straps/kneeling setup and seats, spectra painter, snap-in middle seat. \$650 Jay [redacted]

### 16' Red Cedar Trader Canoe

Custom made by American Traders. Incredibly beautiful wood/glass canoe with red cedar hull, white cedar ribs and half ribs, mahogany seats and thwarts and yoke, ash gunwales and hand canned seats. Beauty of the wood is visible on the outside. It is ideal for solo or tandem touring or tripping on quiet or slow-moving waters. It is fast and nimble, responds beautifully. I have only used it two times, perfect condition. \$2000 or best offer. sammer elias, [redacted]

### Walden Naturalist Solo Kayak

A 10 ft, green, small water kayak with storage cover and a quality paddle. Test paddle available in Arvada. Very good condition. \$125. Call Roger [redacted]

### Bell CJ Solo Touring Canoe

A 15 1/2 ft, 32 lb., clear kevlar hull with alum. gunnels and cane seat. A good, stable lake canoe for fishing, photography, etc. Bottom is well scratched, but the hull is straight and very nice. Test paddle available. Sell for \$500. Call Roger at [redacted]

### Bell Northwind RX Tandem Canoe

A very nice, near new river/lake canoe with some rocker. It's a 16 1/2 ft Bell Northwind RX sold thru Galyans as the Woodsman III. Dark green, cane seats mounted at an angle for kneeling comfort. Test paddle available in Arvada on local lake. Sell for \$500. Call Roger at [redacted]



# Beating the Summer Heat in Saskatchewan

Jim and Karen Baker-Jarvis

After roasting in Colorado for the summer and watching the Green River fall to 600 CFS, we cancelled our Desolation Greys trip and headed to Canada. Aquene, Duff, and us had a great time canoeing in the Missinippe area of Saskatchewan, Canada. Canoeing in Canada, either in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, or Saskatchewan has always been in our family's blood. We traveled through a beautiful section of lakes, portages, and rivers. We were not disappointed, the weather throughout the 7 days on

the water was rainy, cold, and windy. The route we chose stayed on medium-sized lakes so winds were not too big a problem. If we had been on large lakes we would have been wind-bound for days since the wind blew day and night.

We paddled two canoes. Aquene and Jim paddled our 17' prospector, and Karen and Duff paddled a borrowed Old Town 169. It was one of those trips where we never had the wind at our back. However, this time we did not consider it bad luck, but rather reveled in the air-conditioned environment. The temperature got down to freezing a couple nights. We found out after we got back to our car that it had broken an 80-year record for cold.

We had great campfires every night, roasting fish. Throughout the trip we

found you could get a bite from a fish on almost every cast. We met a Native American who was canoeing with his son. They were out moose hunting and told us of the history of the area. It was very interesting and we shared our supper with them. This was unusual since most Native Americans in this area travel by boat and motor.

Jim hitchhiked to get the car when we finished. After we loaded the canoes and gear and headed south on the road we met two hitchhiker Native American women. We picked them up and gave them a ride to Prince Albert and then took them out to eat. They were from the Dene' Indian band from Wollestone Lake area and had taken a barge across the big lake from their village and then hitch-hiked to visit their father in the hospital.

## more Classifieds...

### Yakima Rack

Yakima raingutter tower set, 66" bars, set of lock cores. Excellent condition. \$95.00.

### Aire Leopard Cataraft

1993 18' raft very little used. Tubes are in excellent condition except for some minor aluminum oxide from frame. (Still under warranty till 2003) Comes with 76"long X 72" wide 4 bay 1.66" 6061 T6 aluminum breakdown frame in worn but good condition. Frame comes with NRS high back tractor seat, NRS oar stands with pins, welded aluminum kick bar. Scouting bars and all hardware to install a captains floor(less a sheet of aluminum) and fittings to install a DRE seat. Also included is straight railed 2 bay trailer frame Color:Blue, Price: \$2,200.00 Contact: Dave Zader, Fort Collins, Phone

### Thigh straps

3 sets of double thigh straps for whitewater canoes used: 1/2 price of new ones.

Jim,

### Drysuit

German made DryFashion wetsuit. White with blue and red stripes. Rarely used. Will fit up to 6 ft plus. \$150 Firm. Doug -

### Portable Potty

Flush type potty from REI \$50 new last year, will sell \$35. Chris Edwards,

### 18-1/2 Foot Expedition Canoe

Kevlar "Voyageur" Canoe by Mad River Canoe. Only 77 lbs, portage yoke, 1,300 pound cargo capacity, wood gunwales, slotted inwales, and cane seats. Repair kit included. An excellent boat for extended camping trips. \$1,200. Contact John at

## HELP WANTED

### *Advertising Officer Membership Officer*

These lucrative RMCC Officer positions are available for any member desiring to make a lasting contribution to the success of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club. The pay is nothing, but benefits are astounding. Contact Greg Jankowski for further details. The sooner the better

## River Clean-Up

By Jim Hollaway

Saturday, September 28, 2002; Denver. Well gang, the RMCC was represented at the S. Platte River clean-up, but barely. A grand total of five of us were on hand to pull some trash out of the river: Greg Jankowski, Mike Magle, Doug Hurcomb and his son, Wes, and yours truly. We launched one canoe. Now, I don't want to be a scold, but to have only five members show up for the event we founded was embarrassing, and somewhat annoying. Perhaps it's time to discuss whether we should rededicate ourselves to this one civic endeavor, do something else, or just concentrate on paddling for fun.

# Big Water Paddling in a Sea Canoe

by Bob and Jill Stecker

It's mid-September (just a month ago) and Jill and I are on Reindeer Lake in northern Saskatchewan. We're paddling hard to get around a point where there is shelter from the wind and hopefully a place to camp. The wind is quartering from behind and the swells are big. The wind is coming out of the west over a 14-mile reach of open water. In a canoe, this makes for big water paddling.

We're riding the swells using powerful strokes, and the spray is flying when the bow hits the bottom of the troughs. There is some risk here. We could get turned over. But the shore to leeward is not too far and the beach has large

cobbles, not a cliff face. We'd get bounced around floating into it but not pounded into a wall. With perhaps a half-mile to go an Indian appears off in distance, and he is heading right at us in his motor boat. Soon I'm aware of him over my right shoulder, but I can't turn and look. One bad alignment on these swells and we're over. When he's only a few yards behind I holler "we're okay!" He answers back with an okay and after following us a bit further he turns and goes his way.

On several occasions I would have enjoyed having him watching over us again. Say, for example, two weeks later when we were making another big windy crossing. Again the wind was quartering from behind and again over a long reach of open water. Suddenly, very suddenly, three really big waves were on us. Rogue waves coming from behind are hard to see. My end began to rise, and it rose up

higher than I'm used to. I remember seeing the boat sink deeply into the first crest, tilt forward, and then see Jill head down into a trough that was deeper than I'm used to. But she then quickly rose into the air. My god she went up there! And again and once again. And each time that the boat sank into a crest, the waves that passed me by on either side seemed to look down at me.

If you're going to do this sort of thing, be sure to practice on big water where it's safe before you head out into the wilderness. Be aware that on windy crossings the waves tend to get bigger further out. Quarter into the waves rather than run with them if possible. Stay loose in the hips, and pull on the paddle at the right moments to brace the boat as well as to drive the boat ahead. And keep that alignment, especially just before you slide down into the troughs. Remember that the bow

will be slowed when it hits the face of the wave in front while the stern will then want to slide sideways into the trough, to broach, and roll you over.

On this, our 22nd trip to Canada, we used carbon fiber bent shaft paddles and our kevlar sea canoe, the Kruger Cruiser. This boat lets us handle bigger waves than our traditional Canadian canoes. It was designed and built by Verlin Kruger, the guy who does things like paddle from the Arctic Ocean

**Kruger Cruiser and Stecker design free standing lean-to**

*Jill Stecker*





to the tip of South America, an amazing and wonderful man. We met him once. The boat he made for us he used to set the record for the fastest time down the Mississippi River. It's 18 feet long, has low stems with covered decks (less wind resistance), and a large cockpit with a combing that nicely accommodates a spray cover. But its most distinctive feature is a rudder. Sitting with my feet forward on the rudder controls, I don't have to J or pry or sweep to hold the angle. I just match Jill's power strokes with my own---short and up front where the power is. The rudder handles all that stern correction stuff.

The Cruiser gives us a tremendous savings in time and efficiency---something we really needed near the end of our trip.

On this trip the unpredictable northwoods weather kicked up 50-mph winds with rain, sleet, and 40o F temps. We were windbound for five days (but fortunately on a delightful island full of cranberries just ripe for picking). On the sixth day we woke at 3 AM to silence, no wind in the trees--we decided to go for it. By dawn we were in the canoe and nine hours later we were at our car. We had just paddled over 30 miles and neither of us were particularly tired or sore from the trek.

But no, we're not about to sell all our traditional style open canoes. They're still our favorites. However, when those swells get real big we do like the Cruiser with the rudder.

*Jill sent The Editor this additional short note on their "annual" Saskatchewan canoe trip.*

It was great despite the unseasonable wet and windy weather. We had great camping by the campfire in the lean-to and a bit less paddling. Bob got some nice 3 and 4 lb. Northern Pike for our fry pan.

After being windbound (at 40-50mph) on a delightful island (full of cranberries-which we picked and ate) for 5 days we took the opportunity to travel on the first nice day and paddled 9 hours and covered a little over 30 miles-we decided we ought to get off the 200-mile long lake before we were locked in again.

## NORTHEAST CANOE TRIP

*Jill Stecker*

The Adirondacks were wonderful---beautiful densely forested mountains, lakes everywhere, and just about everyone had a nice \$1000 lake canoe on top their car. We've seen some fascinating museums (Canadian canoe museum & Adirondack museum) on canoeing and early outdoor heritage of this area---Adirondack lean-tos, log cabins, great lodges of the 1800's, wooden boat building and wood working crafts, etc.

Our Slalom Championship races were held in Ontario this year and before them, we attended a Canadian wilderness canoeing Paddlefest. Afterwards, we drove to upper New York to attend the ACA Adirondack Freestyle Symposium where we taught a class in Canadian canoe dance. We also did a demo of it for the evening exhibition. It was a real crowd-pleaser and we got the biggest applause. The Wooden Canoe Heritage Society's annual get together followed the AFS. There were lots of canoe builders to talk to and canoes to test paddle. As well, there was lots of gorgeous \$3000+ meticulously hand build or hand restored wooden canoes to admire.

We had some nice mt. bike rides down old dirt roads which lead to several of the great lodges of the 1800's owned by the ultra rich---as the Vanderbilts and JP Morgans.

What was really special about this trip was the fact that we got to meet so many people who share the same passion for canoeing that we do.



Adirondack Guide Canoe

The ***Voyageur's Companion*** is a periodic publication of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club. It is primarily the venue for the RMCC to post trip schedules, classified ads, and related material, enabling members to share and enhance their canoeing interests. Members are invited to contribute articles on canoe trips as well as informative articles on subjects such as: Paddling techniques, Equipment, Rigging the canoe, Environmental issues, River safety, Camping techniques, Canoe history. Please restrict articles to less than about a page and a half. BUT, nice photos enhance the interest in your news.

**Submitting Articles:** Editorial material for The Voyageur's Companion should be sent to: Lyndon Berry, Editor, The Voyageur's Companion,

☐ Prefer Word format via e-mail, but other formats and paper is OK too.

***Deadline for a winter issue is December 10. Get it to me, See it in print.***

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***The Voyageur's Companion***

C/O Editor