



The Voyager's Companion

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB
FALL 1992

RMCC's FALL MEETING IS AT HAND

October 23 (Fri)

6:30 pm fellowship

7:00 pm meeting at

John Collins Methodist Church located on the SE corner of Bannock and Cliff. This is a mile or so south of the intersection of Santa Fe and I-25; it is 2 blocks south of Evans and 2 blocks west of Broadway.

Everyone is invited to bring goodies to eat and share. RMCC will provide beverages (non-alcoholic). Please do not bring beer or booze.

This is our opportunity to bring pictures, trophies, stories, tall tales, and whatever else you have that can be shared with other Club members.

Does any one have a large screen for projecting slides onto? If so, please call Lyn at and bring it to the meeting.

The format of the meeting will be informal, except that I will try to get everyone assembled to

show slides and/or videos.

If anyone wants to show videos -- they need to make arrangements for a VCR monitor, etc.

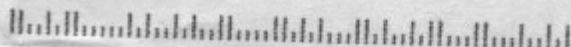
A prime feature of the meeting will be the election of RMCC officers for 1993. A President, Treasurer/Membership, and Editor need to be determined from within the club's membership. If anyone has strong feelings about who should/could assume these responsibilities, please call Lyn before the meeting.

If any club member has a topic that he/she would like discussed at this meeting, please call Lyn ASAP. By previewing such topics with Lyn, they can better be presented, and there will be more likelihood of a good reception: eg. conservation, club programs, leader training, club budget, etc.

Our club has had an eventful year! Come to the fall meeting to hear more about it, and to share your experiences.

The Voyager's Companion

Lakewood, CO 80215



S. Santa Fe
4945

YELLOWSTONE LAKE: a trip to remember, a trip to forget

by Ed Gallagher

Twenty miles long and 14 miles wide, Yellowstone Lake is North America's largest mountain lake. Settled within a unique combination of forests, meadows, valleys, rivers, mountains and geothermal wonders, the lake attracts a steady stream of canoeists throughout the year's warmer months.

On the cool morning of Monday, July 13, I unloaded my borrowed Wenonah Jensen solo and joined two sets of tandem paddlers on a stony beach near Steamboat Point at Yellowstone Lake's northeast edge. While this was not a canoe club trip, the ensuing voyage held an experience probably worth noting for all of us.

Before embarking, I mentioned the planned trip to my friend Dave, from whom I borrowed the solo canoe. He's an expert canoeist with decades of experience on rivers and lakes. "You wanna come with us?" I asked. "You gotta be kidding," he replied, "not with that wind!" He described canoeists he'd seen caught in winds or storms on Yellowstone Lake, fighting the waves for hours. "A Class IV river is less of a hazard than that lake," he concluded, "but you're welcome to borrow my canoe."

Thirty minutes into the journey south from Steamboat Point, the indubitable southwesterly drove Dave's words into my teeth. Still, the waves were manageable, so we pushed on, tacking back and forth to ease the effort.

Six miles down we took a break on the shore, then pushed off again. With a delayed launch, I lagged behind the two tandem boats by more than a comfortable distance. After a mile or so, I noticed a pointed object floating off to my right, several hundred yards away. Right about the time I wondered if it was some kind of capsized craft I heard the cry, "Help!" Or I thought I did. I couldn't see anybody, and wasn't sure from which direction the call might have come. With the second cry I was sure, and paddled in the direction of the voice, farther out into the lake.

The man in the water appeared to be in his

fifties and fortunately he was calm, although not entirely lucid. I quickly learned his name was Bill, and that he'd been in the water for at least an hour and a half. I considered the situation and then explained, "The best I can do for you is to tow you to shore. If I try to get you into the canoe, it could ruin the day for both of us."

It emerged as the longest 20-minute paddle of my boating life. Bill was semi-conscious at best, most of the way; but with the rope wrapped a few times around his wrist, he lost the line only once during the journey. Maintaining continuous chatter, I learned Bill and his son, Wayne, were from southern California. Wayne had also been in the canoe, but now Bill had no idea where the younger man was. Unfortunately, my emergency whistles were not heard by my distant boating partners, nor were by emergency paddle signals immediately recognized by them, so it was just Bill and me - a lonely journey.

Half-way back to shore, a motor boat appeared on this otherwise deserted portion of the lake, heading more or less in our direction, a few hundred yards away. I paused to send the emergency wave with my fluorescent orange paddle. The motion had to be seen, but the boat sped on its way. (I later learned this was a Fish and Wildlife Service patrol!)

By the time I reached shore, two of my canoeing partners had arrived and assisted in treating Bill's advanced hypothermia. It was then I learned the others had found Wayne, in bad shape from exposure, but safely on the shore several hundred yards south.

From this point, a number of factors combined to save the day for these two men. First, we received additional help from a lone canoeist further down the lake who had heard an emergency whistle. Second, a National Park Service (NPS) patrol cabin sat right at the point of our landing. Third, just after starting off on a five-mile hike to secure emergency evacuation, I came across a pack team led by an NPS employee, and the man carried a two-way radio and a key to the cabin. And fourth, one of our group was a critical care

nurse, providing an extra measure of medical attention. Pretty good fortune for a bad day.

An hour later an NPS motor boat appeared, but because of the rough water the skipper was not willing to beach the craft. Two hours later, in calmer conditions, he returned and evacuated the two survivors.

After camping by the cabin overnight, our group decided to curtail the trip and head back to our vehicles. The weather remained unsettled, and the close call of the father and son had spooked us. An hour into our return journey, the wind and waves drove us to shore. For twenty minutes before beaching, it took nearly all of my energy and concentration just to keep the Wenonah right side up, let alone make progress.

We waited. And slept. And ate. And stood on the shore. And read some stories. And waited some more. Ten hours later, at 9 P.M., we launched again in waves that were still unkind. About ten o'clock, the wind at last died to a breeze, leaving us only with an awkward swell to diminish our enjoyment of the full-moon paddle back to the stony beach near Steamboat Point.

Despite this experience, I still think Yellowstone's a great place for canoeing! The scenery and atmosphere is outstanding, and it's only a day's drive from Denver. But note these precautions and suggestions:

Hit the water early in the day. If the wind comes up, it's usually by 11 A.M. or noon, and then it can last the rest of the day.

When obtaining backcountry camping permits, **plan your reservations so that you don't need to paddle too far.** Five to eight miles is enough for the short window of good conditions you might encounter. And be aware that some of the rangers might know a lot about the canoeing perspective, but the advice of others might not be so reliable, particularly in regard to what constitutes a day's reasonable paddling distance.

Stay close to the shore, especially when conditions are unfavorable. If conditions become hazardous, get off the water without delay. The rangers would rather you camped in an

undesignated spot than drag you out of the water hours later.

Don't forget normal precautions just because it's flatwater. Keep boats reasonably close together, and make sure everybody understands emergency signals. Before setting out, review flatwater capsize responses and hypothermia treatment.

Consider Lewis Lake, the Lewis River Channel and Shoshone Lake as alternatives to Yellowstone Lake, especially if it's your first canoeing expedition in the park. These offer equal beauty, and you could easily spend four or more days in this area without boredom. For our group, a day trip here was a revitalizing experience after our aborted expedition on the big lake.

See the August '92 Canoe magazine for more on paddling in Yellowstone National Park.

SWEETWATER TO DOTSERO JUNE 20

by Ed Gallagher

The Colorado River wound its course lazily from Sweetwater to Dotsero on Saturday, June 20. Eleven RMCCers wound their way with it, half of them disappointed with the absence of a raging torrent, and half of them relieved.

In any case, the Class I+ trip that should have been a genuine Class II proved to be a wonderful picnic and an excellent opportunity to practice turns, ferries and light surfing. Some Hollywood wannabees even found time to make a Grey Poupon commercial (Yes, we have it on video.)

A highlight of the trip was an extended rope throwing and rescue practice over the lunch break. During this exercise, many were baptized, but few were saved.

Even with the lack of desirable volume (the Dotsero station was reporting 2300 cfs), this section of the Colorado is still a delight. If you can't make a whitewater trip out of it, you can still have a darn good canoeing picnic.

BEAR STALKING *in the Quetico Wilderness*

by Lyn Beary

Everyone has their favorite bear story!

My favorite bear story was just re-written last August during our canoe trip in the Quetico wilderness of western Ontario.

Right from the start, this week-long voyage was destined not to be your usual and expected relaxed journey through the lakes of the voyageurs. This adventure was loaded with large doses of chilly-rainy weather, waters not warm enough to swim, and an excess of high winds, sometimes tail, sometimes head. We were forced to paddle long miles for many hours in high winds to make-up lost time due to rain-forced lay-overs.

We first encountered the bear on our third day, one in which we did not leave camp until 3 pm due to a rainy morning. On the portage trail into Sturgeon Lake we saw fresh bear scat. The bear had also left his calling card at our preferred campsite on the island near the north end of the lake; so we opted for a camp on the mainland which appeared to be un-visited by the bear.

Just as we're beginning to unpack, Jeanne sees the bear from only 10 feet away as he is strolling into our midst. After realizing that it is really a **very large black bear** and not someone's cuddly teddy bear, she utters an exclamation for the rest of us. The bear continues snooping among us and our packs, and decides that Rosemary's day pack is the one with the candy bars. He carries it off and removes the desired items doing obvious but not significant damage to the pack.

We quickly repack the canoes, manage to fetch the day pack, and head back to the island. Jeanne slips on the rocks and takes an unwanted swim, but so far does not feel the cold - the adrenaline is too high. Since the bear has left the island, we can camp there in solitude. Sounded good, but we see too much bear scat all around, and decide to camp at a mainland site on the opposite side of the lake.

Camp is essentially up and dinner started when Blake sees Mr. Bear swimming towards us from the opposite shore. When the bear gets on shore, Blake sees him shake and immediately appear dry with thick and radiant fur. Some well-aimed rocks, and Mr. Bear is off into the woods. Half-way through eating dinner, we suddenly realize that the bear is approaching from the opposite direction. Again a few well-aimed rocks, and he is gone.

What to do? Our camp is established, and it is too late to move; besides, where could we go? The bear is obviously stalking us no matter where we venture.

All he wanted was our food, and maybe a little attention. The process of hanging food bags is complicated by the absence of suitable high and clear overhead branches. We do find something acceptable. we hope.

Then, as we head for bed, the bear returns and climbs our food tree!! How does he know that this tree is the treasure tree? Bed is delayed while Blake throws rocks again; and we discuss our approaching all-night vigil.

Not much sleep - several times during the night it rains; but Lyn only hopes that this will prevent his hearing the bear in camp. About every 3 hours the bear visits camp, snoops around. We awaken, and each time the bear is turned back into the woods by Blake's properly aimed rocks. The bear does find a plastic bottle of clorox which he destroyed. What was the bear's expression when he tasted this human delicacy?

All he got was rocks in the head!!

About 6 am the bear returns again and, this time, decides to climb the food-pack tree. Fortunately, he sets off an audible alarm we had set just for this purpose. We hastily get up, and again Blake tosses rocks and hits the bear in the tree. All Lyn can think as the bear climbs down the tree is, "I hope he runs away and not towards us." He runs away again!

We pack up and leave camp as quickly as possible, stopping for breakfast about 4 miles down the lake. Breakfast is relaxed and leisurely, but

always we have at least one eye on "bear alert." Shortly after breakfast it begins to rain, and rain is with us the rest of the day. Happily, there are no more bear encounters, but we do encounter more rain and high winds.

From then on we take out extra bear insurance, and upon reaching camp, our first chores are specifically bearable. Our efforts at hanging the food bags become more sophisticated; fortunately we never find out how successful. Also we assemble piles of rocks strategically located about our camp site, just in case.

The Adventurous Voyageurs who bearly paddled the Quetico waters from Aug. 28 - Sept. 7 were Blake Clark, Rosemary Burbank, Jeanne Younghaus and Lyn Berry. This was certainly a new twist to wilderness adventure.

WHITE RIVER

by Scott McDonald

While scouting the White River Canyon below Rangely earlier this year, I couldn't figure why I have never seen it on the schedule - at least I don't remember seeing it. It is a nice 600-800 ft. deep canyon with cottonwood groves on the river bottom and only one road crossing it for its 53 mile length. True, it is a six hour drive from Denver, and the shuttle runs on the long side; but what's an hour or two when you can see new terrain such as this.

The river was running a strong 1800 cfs when our five canoes put in on Saturday over Memorial Day weekend. We started about 12 miles below Rangely, where the canyon begins, at a spot which proved to be of questionable ownership. Perhaps a better put-in would be Cowboy Canyon off the road to Bonanza. This would cut off about 10-12 miles of canyon but would shorten both river miles and the shuttle, both of which are on the long side. It is a rough road so it could exclude passenger cars.

Even though it has a modest 7 feet/mile gradient, the current pushed us along quickly, and we had no trouble making our mileage, a major concern of mine. I would recommend a flow of at

least 1000 cfs to make the trip more enjoyable. Our only hazards were large sweepers chopped down by some very busy beavers. One of them extended completely across the river. (Were they trying to dam the whole river?) There were numerous beaver sign along the banks and one was seen swimming by camp one morning.

The second day we passed under the Bonanza bridge where the scenery changed from rounded canyon to one with sharper walls with mesas and buttes similar to the Four Corners area. A couple mile long sections of 20 feet/mile gradient provided some nice rolling waves and easy rapids on the second day. Woodstock Rock was near here, a perfect image of Woodstock of "Peanuts" fame.

Overall, the weather could not have been better. Except for brief half-hour showers each evening, the weather was sunny and in the 70s-80s with no wind. We fared much better than other groups this weekend I later found out from other members. The guide books warn of mosquitos and, yes, we did get some, although I've seen worse. I was hoping to beat the bug season, but we must have missed it by a week or so. Any later could be even worse. Considering all factors, Memorial Day or earlier is the best time to run this section, making it a good early season warmup.

ARCHAEO-CANOES?

from an item in July/August '92 *Archaeology*

Bulldozers digging foundations for the future International Center of Food and Wine at Bercy, in eastern Paris, have uncovered the oldest wooden boats ever found in Europe.

Archaeologists monitoring the digging discovered three oak canoes, dating to 4300-3700 B.C., of which the biggest was 16 feet long and nearly intact. The boats were buried 15 feet below the present bottom of the Seine, where groundwater helped in their preservation.

The canoes will be sent to Denmark for conservation, then displayed at a new museum in Bercy.

GLENDO TO WENDOVER

by Verla Priest

The *ladies only* trip failed to materialize as scheduled when the flow on the North Platte below the Glendo dam dropped to 1/5th or less of previously experienced flows as part of the annual "Silt Run". Once per summer, soon after the 4th of July holiday, the Guernsey reservoir is drained in an attempt to rid it of accumulated silt. To facilitate this, the flow from the Glendo reservoir is severely curtailed.

An attempt to reschedule a couple of weeks later led to such a small group that we relented and allowed members of the opposite sex to join our group. After camping Saturday evening at Two Moon campground in the Glendo State Park and watching severe thundershowers all around us, a party of five boats made the run on Sunday, July 26, in cool, sunny weather.

The Glendo dam was wide open resulting in a reported flow of 7,100 cfs, considerably higher than the 4,500 - 5,100 cfs we had paddled on previous trips. At the higher flow we all opted for the route down the narrow channel to the right of the island about two miles into the trip - the one with the nice little drop at the end of it. The higher water also put almost all of the rocks at the major rapid in the canyon above Wendover under water, so everyone chose to run it rather than lining as in some previous trips. The waves were slightly larger, and the big eddy on the left was quite active with lots of "funny water" at the eddy-line. Various routes were paddled from sneaks into the top of the eddy to long rides right down through the big waves.

The trip was run in about four and a half hours with no mishaps unless you count Dave Roger's half-mile upriver hike to retrieve his camera from the dry rock by the big rapid.

For future planning, there is a phone recording which gives flows and reservoir levels in SE Wyoming, 1-800-253-8737; we have also called the Glendo dam for current information.

Incidentally, a couple of members of our

original party went ahead as originally scheduled and reported that the trip was an easy float at the low flow experienced.

By taking out at Wendover, we had a lovely day trip without the necessity of wading through the mud at the take-out on Guernsey. Reaching the Wendover take-out is, however, a little convoluted, and our progress was slowed by having to wait for a long freight train TWICE as the tracks and the road are interwoven.



RACE RESULTS

The 1992 Labor Day Canoe Races from Rifle to Debeque on the Colorado River was an outstanding success according to race organizer Jerry Nyre. Ten canoes were entered by teams from all over Colorado and from New Mexico as well.

Fastest time overall was set by Alma paddler Jeff Bergeron and his partner in a tandem cruiser. They bettered their time from last year by twenty minutes, paddling the 36 mile route in 3:36.

RMCCer Mark Zen and his partner Maria Griffith placed second in Mixed Couples which, this year, was divided into Long (18 feet and over) and Short Boat categories to offer the shorter boats some compensation for their inherent speed disadvantage.

An interesting sidelight on the competitive aspect of our sport - one of the Recreational Tandem Canoe teams featured a paddler with only *one arm*, and the team completed the course only 0:48 behind the overall leaders!

Jerry reports an increasing level of interest in amateur participation in organized canoe racing, and he is already scheduling a repeat program for the Labor Day weekend in '93. He expects the total purses to be in excess of \$500 worth of canoeing accessories.

The first race of the '93 season will be 55 miles on the White River from Meeker to Rangely. For information contact Don Peach, Rangely Area Chamber of Commerce, 209 E. Main St., Rangely, CO 81648.

A note from your editor...

For me '92 has not been the best of years (seasons) although my partner and I finally managed to get on the river a few times (and **in** it, once.) A crisis late last winter delayed the start of our paddling season by several months and proved a major distraction from the usually pleasurable task of assembling a newsletter.

I extend a big **thank you** to all the RMCCers who responded to requests for material: trip reports, articles and other items of interest.

Thanks also to my paddling partner,

occasional typist and organizational overseer without whom I wouldn't have gotten even this much done.

Let me just close out my tour by offering some encouragement to those who have not yet set pen to paper (or finger to key.) Some of the fun of paddling is in sharing your recollections of your experiences. (And remember, with a little judicious editing, the recollections may even be an improvement. There's nothing in our charter that says the newsletter must be non-fiction.) I encourage your wholehearted support of my successor.

ROSTER ADDITIONS SEPTEMBER 92

ALESCH, RIC

BEAVER, MILO

CURLESS, CHUCK & LENNI

HERRO, RON

KLINKOWITZ, MITCH & SHANE DIMMICK

LANE, TIM & GARRY SHELP

LOCKE, KEN & DEE

MANCEAUX, DERRELL

MORSICATO, JAMES

PATTERSON, CRAIG

PURRETT, RANDY

ROTE, DAVE

STARR, JERRY

VOVOS, BRAD

WEST, JOHN (DALY)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB

1992 OFFICERS AND COORDINATORS

PRESIDENT

Lyn Berry

TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP TRAINING

Sheila Cox

Pete Petersen

1992 SUMMER TRIP SCHEDULE COORDINATORS

John Licht

Tom Beavert

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Paul Priest

IMPORTANT DATES 1992

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

7:00 P.M.

FALL MEETING

John Collins Methodist Church

2320 S. Bannock (Ilf & Bannock)

Englewood

RMCC trips are cooperative adventures shared by members and their guests. The entire group is collectively responsible for the trip, and each participant is individually responsible for judging his or her own qualifications, skill level and safety on the river being run. The trip coordinator may refuse to allow a participant on a trip, but the responsibility for judging one's own qualifications lies solely with each trip member. Trips are open only to RMCC members and their guests. All trip participants must sign the RMCC Waiver and Assumption of Risk agreement prior to each trip.

MEMBERSHIP \$10 PER HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR. CONTACT SHEILA COX