

Just
Binder



The Voyageur's Companion

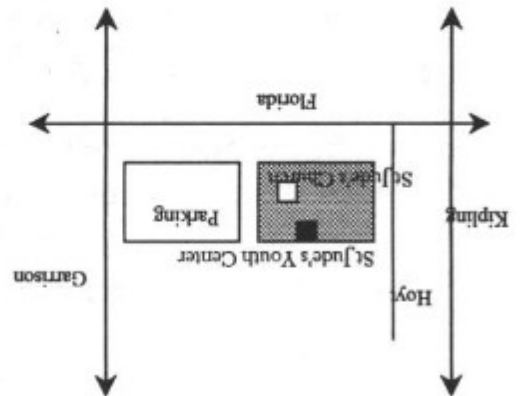
NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB
Issue number 1 February, 1999

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Winter Meeting
February 20th
At St Jude's
Potluck begins 6:30
Italian Theme

Winter Film Fest



The Voyageur's Companion
 c/o Editor
 Longmont, CO 80501

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Notes From The Prez:

~Jim Holloway

I must tell you all about my new ailment. I had taken to calling it the "geezer effect." It's not tendonitis, although I have that too. I now regularly suffer from what a friend recently described as "senior moments." In other words, I forget things I used to remember, like names, dates, and the minutia of living. So, you'll have to cut me some slack as we slog through the year together.

Who Are We?

Bob Cook, editor *emiratus*, made a good point, among others, when he called upon us to pay greater attention to our new or newer members. We need a greeter; a Mr. or Ms. Hospitality. [Any volunteers?] And we [I] need to remember to have new members and guests introduced at our meetings. Help me in this regard, please.

What Are We?

Ever wonder just what sort of organization the club is? Me neither until lately. As best I can discover from the mossbacks among us, we have called ourselves a "voluntary association" for a long time. We have an employer identification number for banking purposes, but we are not incorporated. Further research has led me to believe that we are, to be technical, an "unincorporated nonprofit association." Such a creature exists as a matter of law, *see* CRS 7-30-101, *et seq.* The definition seems to fit us perfectly. Recently, I registered our "trade name" with the Colorado Department of Revenue to preserve our minimalist stature, but doing so does *not*, oddly enough, prevent others from using our name if they want to. Other paddling clubs, like CWWA and Adobe Whitewater, have elected to take on greater stature by becoming nonprofit corporations. They are organized in such a way as to be exempt under section 501(c)(3) or (7) of the tax code from paying taxes on their income. Should we move toward more formal status too?

Officers Meeting

We held a meeting of officers or their designees on January 16, 1999, at my place. We discussed some of things we might try to do as the year unfolds. For example, I volunteered to look more closely into the nature of the club's status as a legal entity, with the idea being to promote the club's primary purpose(s) and to protect ourselves as we go about the pursuit of those purposes. Joanne Brown, Treasurer, happily reported that the club has about \$1,900, with more revenue expected as members pay this year's **dues** [ahem]. **When you pay, remember to send your waiver with your check.** Alan Whittern reminded us that club members who are keen on the open canoe races being held in Golden this summer should get in touch with Bob or Jill Stecker. Diane Binder, Editor, requests pictures, content, and classifieds for the newsletter. Doug Ellis, Conservation, reminded us that the **River Clean-up will be on September 11, 1999.** Mark Zen would like the club to consider establishing a commercially run "mailing list" on the web so that last minute messages regarding trips and club business might be disseminated to club subscribers, and he invited us to consider developing a web site that we might share with other paddling clubs. We talked too about the **Safety Fair**, and thought that it might be held on **April 18.** We discussed the idea of having a swap meet prior to a **Spring Meeting on April 17.**

Meeting February 20 / Other Agenda Items / Trip Leaders-Coordination

We will have our annual trip leaders' gala *during the meeting* on February 20 at St. Jude's. (See related announcement from Greg and Christine for details, page 3)

Also, be prepared to discuss and perhaps to decide:

1. Whether to have a club sponsored canoe "demo day," where members assemble, with their boats and picnic supplies, and let each other paddle their crafts.
2. Whether to schedule some lake trips; ladies only trips; and family trips that include the youngest kids too.
3. Safety Fair - who will coordinate? Karen Baker-Jarvis and Alan Whittern have volunteered to handle a station, but we need more instructors and a coordinator.
4. Instructors' Report.
5. Other Projects.

Trip Report Form

The new form is a work in progress, but it could look much like this:

River: _____
Section's common name: _____
Date run: _____ CFS: _____ Class Rating: _____
Put-in: _____

Take-out: _____

Comments: _____

For more info, contact _____
(Name) (Telephone or e-mail)

Using a simple form should enable us to begin assembling our very own club-paddling guide. It might also enable "us" to log past trips that we still remember, not just those we take in the future. What do you think?

State Parks Pass

If you happen to be interested in lending monetary support to the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, you can buy your State Parks Pass next time you're in Salida and all the money will stay with the AHRA versus being dispersed throughout the state parks system. The pass, of course, will be good for all state parks.

Trip Coordinators

Let's build a Great Trip Schedule for 1999!

This year we are going to collect your trip plans in the general meeting, rather than having a separate meeting for trip coordinators. Why? Because everyone is a trip coordinator! Just think how great this year's trip schedule will be if every club member organizes just entrap. Remember, you don't have to be an expert paddler or have any special ratings. What is your favorite river trip? We are looking for day trips, long trips, easy trips, advanced trips, trips with special themes such as kids, fishing, etc.—just about anything that involves paddling a boat. Please come to the February 20th meeting and video fest with at least one trip in mind, and your preferred date for that trip. Greg Jankowski and I will provide a format which will make it easy to get your trip on the list. Hey, organize one trip, and have other people organize all your other trips. Not a bad deal, right? See you there!

P.S. If you can't make it to the meeting, please call either Greg Jankowski or me to get your trip on the schedule. —Christine Burke

Survey Recap

While digging through old newsletters, I found the results of the survey taken a few years ago. I was struck by the high percentage [81%] of club members whose fondest aspect of membership was the trip schedule. So, bring thyself to church on Feb 20 and volunteer to lead a trip. We could then produce an amazing schedule.

Financial Report

Rocky Mountain Canoe Club Financial Report for the Year ended Dec. 1, 1997

Bank Balance as of 12/1/96:		\$2010.18
Income:		
Dues	\$3765.00	
Merchandise	\$240.00	\$4005.00
		<hr/>
	\$6015.18	
Expenses:		
Newsletter	\$3143.88	
Meetings	\$654.27	
Membership	\$373.41	
Conservation	\$350.00	
Merchandise	\$279.84	
Miscellaneous	\$16.50	(\$4817.90)
		<hr/>
Bank Balance as of 12/1/97:		\$1197.28

New Column:

We are starting an ADVICE COLUMN in the next issue. This should be an exciting way for members to get advice on issues such as fixing boats, where to find things or technique improvements. We would also like to see poems, cartoons, or kids' canoe art work. All this earth-shattering info should be sent to Karen Baker -Jarvis.

Application/Waiver

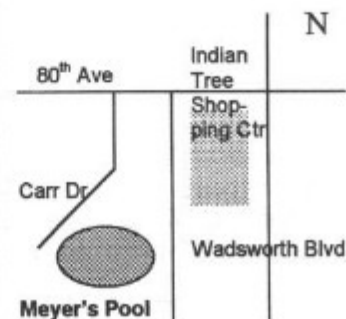
Pages 11, and 12 again contain the Waiver form you need to sign and mail in or bring to the meeting. Some of you sent in applications sans waiver. So please sign and send, or bring waivers on Feb 20



Ron Schmidt photo

Pool Sessions

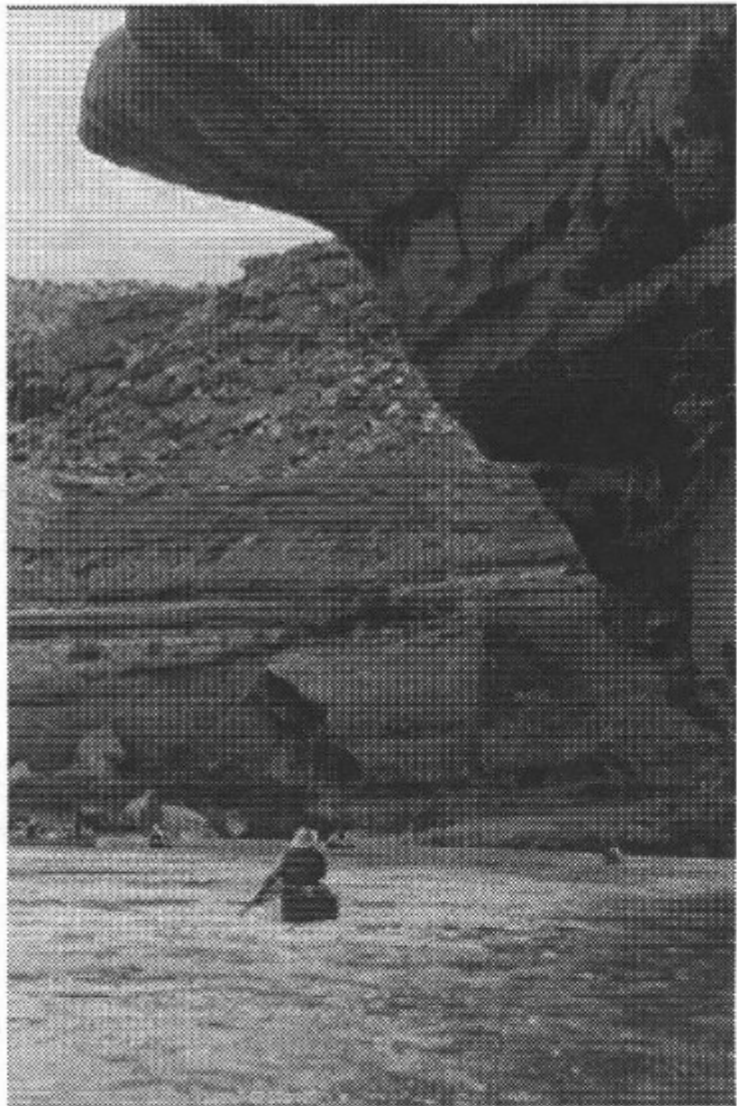
Roll practice, etc., continues on Sundays at the George Meyers Pool in Arvada. Sessions run from 8:00 AM until Noon. Remember Pool is closed 3-28-99, 4-4-99, and 4-11-99. Pool phone number is 303-420-2838. ↑



Conservation Updates

—by Doug Ellis

An updated Arkansas River Management Plan is currently being developed by the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area group (State Parks, BLM and USFS) led by Steve Reese from Colorado State Parks. The plan is being developed with input from all recreational user groups. Members led by the Colorado Whitewater Association with support from this club expressed concern over the potential increase in commercial raft allocations during the summer months. During peak season, there is an average of one launch every 56 seconds. (The launch window is currently 830AM to 330AM.) Since 1990, commercial boating has increased 62% while private has increased 40%. The difference is that private boaters have never exceeded their imposed limits.



Dates for this year's River Cleanup have been changed to Saturday, September 11th.

The Frank Church

Wilderness Area, which includes the Salmon River, has submitted a draft of the Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for input. This draft recommends a fee structure of \$5 per person per day and a reduction in the number of permits issued each year (currently 1,488). American Whitewater Association opposes the DEIS and recommends, among other things, reducing the size of private boat launches from a maximum of 24 to 12; fair management between all user groups, including hikers, pack-trips, campers; and imposing restrictions of motorized boats on the Main Salmon.

The Colorado Rivers Alliance is an advocacy group that was recently formed with the goal of educating law makers about access rights, preservation, recreational impact and other pertinent issues affecting the boating community. At the January officer's meeting, it was decided that the RMCC should support CRA's efforts by helping to sponsor a trip for 20-30 State legislators on the South Platte through Denver this Summer. Dates and other details are forthcoming.

Dates for this year's River Cleanup have been changed to Saturday, September 11th. The event was held every year in May to coincide with the American Rivers Cleanup Week. Unfortunately, this is typical Spring run-off in Colorado. Last year, our efforts were thwarted due to high water. To accommodate boaters, children and other participants, it was decided by last year's participants to move the date. For us boaters, the dates will be less likely to interfere with training classes and early season conflicts. Be sure and mark your calendars for September!

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Squirtin' Salmon: photo by Weenie Wilson

Pre-Season Trip Schedule

Canadian Trip—June 23, 1999 to Aug 27, 1999

A friend of mine from Ohio and I plan to do a long, 1260 mile canoe trip from Fort Simpson, Canada to Fort Yukon, Alaska from June 23, 1999 to August 27, 1999. We will canoe 700 miles down the Mackenzie River from Fort Simpson to the Rat River. We then go 60 miles up the Rat River to the Continental Divide where we have a half mile portage over to the Bell River. From there, we canoe 600 miles down the Bell and Porcupine Rivers to Fort Yukon. The trip follows one of the old gold rush routes of the late 1800's. The whole trip is about 66 days on the water - 32 days from Fort Simpson to Fort McPherson at the Rat River and 34 days from Fort McPherson to Fort Yukon.

The Mackenzie River is a huge river with minor Class I rapids. A section of the Mackenzie that I canoed flowed at about 3 to 4 miles per hour. The Rat River is a small tributary flowing into the Mackenzie River near its mouth. I have never been on the Porcupine River, but I understand that it is a very fast flowing river with nothing more than Class I+ rapids.

It is not necessary to canoe the entire distance. You can start out with us at Fort Simpson and canoe to any of the six settlements along the way, or you can join us at any of the settlements and take out at any other.

My partner is a great person to have along on a canoe trip and he is a superb fisherman. We plan to have a leisurely trip with a lot of fishing along the way. Let me know whether you are interested joining us on all or part of this expedition and whether you know of anyone else who might like to go.

Contact:
Fred Nelson



Photo by Ron Schmidt

Gunnison River, April 16-18, 1999

April 16-18, 1999. Gunnison River, Escalante Bridge to Whitewater. (Between Delta and Grand Junction.) Mostly class I with one class II rapid, portagable. Meet 9 am Friday at Escalante Canyon Bridge. Middle day is canyon hiking and looking for petroglyphs. Two-day trip option available. Children OK. Call leader if you need a partner.

Contact:
Dave Allured

Loma to Westwater, April 24-25th I-II

Annual Spring Trip- high water a possibility!! Early Days, short side hike to petroglyphs.

Contact:
Mark Zen

Plan ahead and contact these folks as early as possible. Trip coordinators frequently have to wait till last minute to receive calls. By that time they have mentally "cancelled" the trip, and last minute contact doesn't leave much time for communication and coordinating of efforts.

Perfect Practice Makes Perfect (Lake Drills)

-by Karen Baker-Jarvis

It's not glamorous; it doesn't involve 30-foot waterfalls, or require long, difficult swims. However, it does make you a much better paddler. Even the Olympic canoe team does it. Doing paddling drills on the lake or in the pool gives you an edge because it builds muscle memory, endurance, speed, efficiency, stroke perfection, and j-lean all in a safe environment. Muscle memory is the ability to do a task such as an eddy turn without thinking about it. It is going down the rapids without flailing paddles or feeling out of control. Muscle memory involves repetitive practicing of the stroke and maneuvers in the lake until it becomes second nature. Think of these drills as building blocks or pieces of a puzzle we put together when we do a river run. Bob Foote ACA instructor trainer always says: "Practice does not make perfect, rather, perfect practice makes perfect." If you practice wrong technique, you will obtain muscle memory of wrong technique. Without muscle memory strokes will break down in stressful situations more often. Good strokes can be learned in classes or from commercially available videotapes.

Paddling on the lake allows you to analyze the effect of your strokes. It is a good time to observe the effects of your J or pitch correction strokes. Try your forward stroke and see how much body rotation you are using versus pulling with the arms. Most whitewater paddlers believe the most powerful form of the forward stroke is done with **torso rotation** rather than arms alone (However, a recent study of the Canadian Olympic team did not confirm this.). Practice paddle "stick" where in the forward stroke once you plant the paddle, the paddle should not move much as you load it. It is a good place to practice the cross-forward stroke and reverse strokes. Try the backstroke, reverse J, and far backstroke. As you paddle look for **paddle splash** which is an indication of an inefficient paddle stroke. The inefficiency is not so much in the splash as in the undue turbulence and air pockets behind the paddle. Try paddling on the opposite side of your normal stroke. This could come in handy if you are injured or paddle with another partner. It also exercises both sides of the upper body. All types of sculling strokes can be practiced on the pond. Do the sculling draw, then modify it to scull more forward or back. Practice the cross scull in solo boats.



Jim and Karen Baker-Jarvis at 'Zoom Flume' in Brown's Canyon, Class IV rapid, Arkansas River, 1200 cfs.

In a solo boat, paddle the **inside or outside circle**. To do this, use either only the forward or cross forward strokes. Start the boat moving in a circle then lean to the inside of the circle and without correction maintain a circle. A modification of this is paddling in a figure eight and switching from on-side paddling to off-side paddling as you cross the center in the figure eight.

Some of the drills in the lake or pool we can do are:

- Use milk jugs with ropes and bricks tied as anchors to make staggered slalom gates. Practice and time yourself as you weave through the course to see improvement.
- Have races or race yourself.
- Video yourself to see if your strokes break down at high stroke rates. Analyze your forward stroke, look for body rotation.
- Practice braces. We like to have our kids try to flip us.
- Canoe blindfolded on the lake to see which way the canoe is turning and correct from instinct.
- Play games with a sponge, the object is to flip the sponge with your paddle into another boat. Put pieces of tape on bow and stern of boats and then try to have each boat get the tapes off the others. The boat left with last tape and the one that has collected the most tape wins.

Practice continues...

...Perfect Practice Makes Perfect continued

- Try to paddle the boat with extreme lean. Keep the body vertical and over the center of gravity and body only hips and below moves. Try to hold a lean to the gunwale for 5 seconds. Shift the lean from one side to another while stopped or under way. Shift lean every other stroke.
- Do slow strokes, with no paddle splash and good form.
- Do interval training to promote endurance. Canoe at 80% maximum rate for 100 yards and repeat 10 times.
- Try standing in the canoe and paddling for practice. Don't blame us if you get hurt with this one, we warn you here.
- Canoe rolling both solo and tandem is most easily accomplished in the pool.
- **The one-stroke drill:** In a solo boat position the boat about 20 feet from a buoy, milk jug, or other obstacle, then using only one forward stroke try to hit the object with bow of the canoe.
- Practice getting into a swamped boat or swimming with a capsized boat on the lake, it's a more relaxing atmosphere than on the river.

Many of the drills require kneepads and thigh straps. I must warn you that lake drills can be very addictive and you still need to get on the river, learn the effects of current, learn swimming with the boat, self-rescue drills, **and maybe laugh a little, life isn't that serious, is it now!** -end

Remember The '99 Nationals...

...will take place at the Clear Creek Whitewater Park in Golden on **July 10-12, 1999**.
If you would like to help, please call Bob or Jill Stecker at

The '99 DOWNRIVER Canoe National Championships...

...will take place on the Arkansas River below Salida on **July 16-18, 1999**. Colorado will also be the site of the Down river canoe races on a 9 1/2-mile stretch of the Arkansas from Salida to Rincon. Scott Overdorf and Ted Burnell will be hosting this event. For more information contact Scott Overdorf at

Kent Ford Clinic/Certification and Re-certification

Our paddling friends from up north, i.e., Poudre Paddlers, have arranged an Instructor's Certification Class [4 days for solos] [5 days for tandems], to be taught by Kent Ford, June 30 to July 4.

A 2-day re-certification class will also be held in conjunction therewith on June 30-July 1. The classes will be held in Durango on or near the Animas. I don't know the cost of the recertification class, but the approximate cost for the full course ranges from \$305 to \$380, depending on whether you're solo or tandem. The final cost will depend on how many paddlers participate, whether you're an ACA member, and whether you're member of Poudre Paddlers.

Lunch will be included on the days of the class. There may be room for 3 or 4 paddlers from the RMCC, so if you're interested, contact Dave Karan

CLASSIFIEDS

Commercial ads welcomed. contact Ann Nye-West
(Please submit personal ads to the Editor Longmont, CO 80501; run for a single issue)

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Rocky Mountain Canoe Club
WAIVER/RELEASE

KNOW EVERYONE BY THESE PRESENTS:

WHEREAS, I (we) intend, or am about, to engage in canoeing activities upon rivers, lakes, and/or other waterways, which activities have been organized by the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB of Denver, Colorado; and

WHEREAS, I (we) an (are) doing so entirely upon my (our) own initiative, risk, and responsibility, and am duly aware that risks and hazards are, or may be, inherent in such canoeing activities; and

WHEREAS, I (we) understand that the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB, its officers, directors, and trip leaders in particular and its members in general organize such activities solely for the pleasure and enjoyment of the participants; and

WHEREAS, I (we) am (are) supplying for my (our) own use such first aid, safety and medical supplies as I (we) deem necessary and I am (we are) not relying upon the members of leaders for such items; and

WHEREAS, I, (we) recognize that neither the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB, not its several officers, directors, members and leaders are responsible for my (our) participation in any particular activity not for the participation of other people and that in no event is the Club or its officers, directors, members or leaders responsible for my (our) conduct of the conduct of others sharing such participation; and

WHEREAS, my (our) participation is in no way based upon any representations made by any members, officers, directors or leaders as to the difficulty, danger of hazard of such activities, but rather because of my (our) independent desire to participate in such activities with other people with similar interests;

NOW, THEREFORE, I (we) do hereby, for myself (ourselves), my (our) heirs, executors, assigns and administrators, release, and forever discharge the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB of Denver, Colorado, and all of its officers, directors, agents, leaders, and members individually and collectively, from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions now or hereafter arising on account of my (our) death or an account of any injury to me (us) or damage to my (our) property, or on account of the injury of death suffered be any other person which may occur from any cause while I (we), or any other person, may be engaged in activities of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB, including therein all ground and transportation operations incident thereto unless such death, injury, or harm results from gross negligence of willful misconduct.

This WAIVER/RELEASE shall be binding in all its terms for all activities of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB.

I (WE) HEREBY CERTIFY that I (we) have read the foregoing WAIVER RELEASE, understand it in all its terms and conditions and sign it voluntarily and

Intelligently, this ____ day of _____ 1999.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Please list all children who intend, or are about to engage in canoeing activities organized by the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB:

As the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the aforesaid minor(s), I (we) have signed the foregoing Waiver/Release and approve of my (our) child's (children's) or ward(s) participation in the activities. I am (we are) aware that the attendant risks, hazards, potential for injuries, loss or death stated in the Waiver/Release may well be greater for a minor's participation, but I (we) assume these risks as parent(s) or guardian(s) of the above named and herewith forever release, remise and discharge the ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB as specified in the foregoing Waiver/Release.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

"The River of No Return"

by Bearclaw Smith

At 2.3 million acres of wilderness, it is the largest preserved territory in the Lower 48. It traverses portions of three National Forests and 106 miles through one of the deepest gorges in North America. There are no roads in and only a few private ranches available via small plane. Its scenic beauty, isolation and wildwater challenge the most intrepid canoeist. It is the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, the longest undammed river system in the West with over 100 continuous rapids. They call it the "River of No Return."

On a warm summer day in August 1998, eight veteran paddlers converged on the small town of Stanley Idaho for a chance to run this famous River. None of us had been down it before.

To run the Middle Fork unimpeded by weight, raft support would be needed. But after much discussion it was decided that we would go self-supported, with all provisions for the week to be carried in seven boats-- five solo canoes, one cataraft and one tandem.

The biggest logistic however, was not ballast, but food. Disputes over cuisine threatened to divide the group before we even left Denver. The question of "budget lite" or "hot-n-fancy" was settled with much compromise. Our elected chef, "Cookie" Adams weighed the decision (literally) of Cornish Game Hens a la Dutch Oven vs. heat-n-serve Tacos. In the end, taste great gave way to less filling.

Because none of our crew knew what to expect we decided to plan for any contingency. Resident handy man, "Doc" Cook took no chances. He packed Vynabond, Aquaseal, Barge Cement, bailing wire and a blow dryer... "the ole enchilada." Doc C's storied bag of miscellaneous D-rings, gizmos and gadgets would come in handy in due course on the River.

The remaining cast of characters included, Kenz "Just-Give-Me-A-Quiet-Room" Metzger, Side-Surfin' Bill "Take-Me-To-A Rivers," "Groovin" John D, "Tiny" Tim the group's chief wit and social commentator, Herb W., affectionately known as "Long John," and "Hawkeye" Ellis.

The party assembled at dawn at the Boundry Creek put-in and said goodbye to whatever life they left back home. For the next week, they would need all their skills for the path of the paddle. It began with the churning waves 50 meters downstream.

DAY ONE: The first twenty-five miles would be a supreme test. The upper canyon in August was running low and navigating it in full boats would be no easy task. Sulpher Slide 2.5 miles downstream would present the first challenge. Rated III+ in the guidebook, this long rock garden required critical maneuvering before hitting Velvet Falls (Class IV) just below. Bill "Rollin-On-A Rivers" led the way, just in time to capture the remaining group on video. For the fully loaded tandem, a narrow chute on river right provided an easy lane to backpaddle through. The rest of the group managed the run without incident.

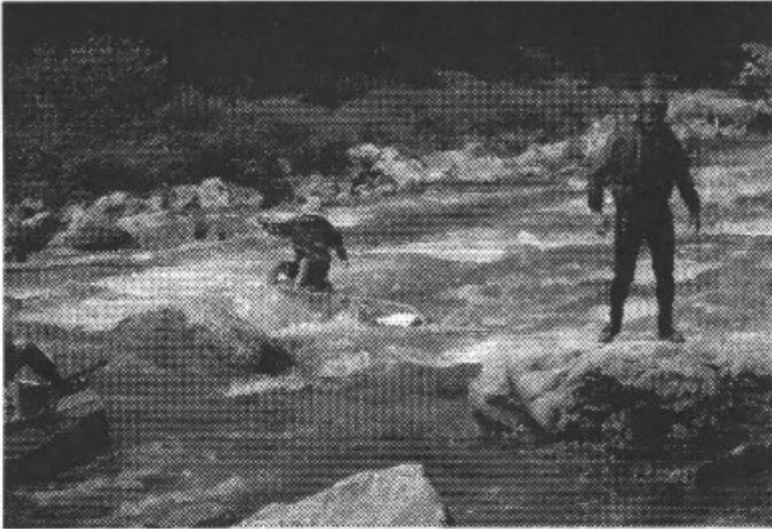
Three miles later "The Chutes" provided a different story. At low flow, the river offered no discernible route. The entire run was a swirling maze that would require quick decisions. The first four boats made the run clean and were parked in an eddy about 100 yards downstream. The others had pulled ashore at the top of the run to scout when a raft appeared and got stuck on a boulder midstream. Knowing that there were more rafts upstream, the lads up top decided to get on downstream before the channel became jammed. That's when it happened.

Groovin' JD hurriedly pulled out of the eddy to beat the raft traffic when suddenly the current pulled him right, and smack into the stranded raft. His boat capsized and was immediately pinned against a boulder. JD managed to swim to shore unhurt. The rest of the group scrambled to shore to assist. While Bill and Doc attended to JD, Kenz and Hawkeye approached the breached boat. Kenz belayed Hawkeye into the current and over to a rock where he could assess the damage.

It wasn't a pretty picture. The boat was up to the gunwhales in fast current. Some of its contents were already making their way downstream. The group was compelled to act fast. Doc and Bill got busy rigging up a Z-Drag on river left while Cookie and Tiny took turns with a throw rope on river right. At one point, ropes sailed into the air from three directions. Finally, with superhuman effort (and the help of a really big log) the boat was ejected from the boulder's tenacious grip.

Groovin' JD hurriedly pulled out of the eddy to beat the raft traffic when suddenly the current pulled him right, and smack into the stranded raft. His boat capsized and was immediately pinned against a boulder.

Continued on next page...



Slicing through the middle of the falls, he felt the full fury of the backwash as his boat plunged sideways. Despite a brave attempt at a brace, he succumbed to the surge. (Rock no roll.)

It was now mid-afternoon; it would be near dark before the group would reach the first campsite, "Sheepeater." The tandem propelled ahead. The map had mentioned Hot Springs... We finally beached our boats on a low rock garden river right, and staggered up a high terrace in search of what turned out to be something out of the "Black Lagoon" -- a murky, bubbling pool... it was pure paradise.

DAY TWO: After the group had their fill of scrumptious breakfast tacos, Cookie called the group together. The entire trip was in jeopardy. He held out a plate that revealed a thin coat of grease, a sure recipe for the trots. His solution was quick: From now on, there would be an additional hot rinse. But for one of our party, the solution may have come too late. The little

white box would become a constant companion.

Before the end of the day we would have another worry, a rock garden called Marble Creek. The rapid was rated class III in the guide. With the River at low flows, this rapid presented a potential hazard-- the kind we didn't want to repeat. But at the top of the run, there would be another flip, another swim, and another boat rescue. It was another long day.

Undaunted by the day's events, Hawkeye and Doc pressed ahead, blazing right by the campsite, "Sunflower Flats," a magnificent series of hot springs that cascade into a series of individual soaking pools. Perfect for relaxing after a long day of paddling. Also perfect for relaxing after a long hour of poling *upstream*, something the duo had always wanted to try... That night all was forgotten over a repast of Tiny's Tacos and a game of Trivial Pursuit.

DAY THREE: The River begins to change character, from narrow, steep canyon walls to more open terrain, with much deeper water and shadowed by spectacular mountains and Ponderosa Pines. We pass several camps, ranches and the Middle Fork Lodge, but see few people enroute. A lunch stop provided an opportunity for fishing and JD, Hawkeye, Kenz and Bill tried their respective luck. While the former had some difficulty in attaching the dry files, Bill and Kenz proved the master baiters of the group, deftly handling their rods before catching a pair of rainbow trout.

The day passed pleasantly uneventful. Cookie commented that the waves looked like "glass." We mutually enjoyed the relatively flat stretch. The last hot springs on the River were located at "Hospital Bar," a popular stopover for raft guides, and, as it turns out, certain cataracters. As we set up camp on the opposite shore, Long John crossed the River to indulge in a "herbal" bath au natural. He was soon interrupted by a female raft guide and her small bathing party. Long John is forced to ignominiously retreat to our side of the River. First a broken oar, now this!

As the sun began to fade, each man became lost in his thoughts, when suddenly, each became transfixed by a rare sight, that of a young woman washing her hair in the springs. The silence was deafening.

DAY FOUR: Beginning at mile 57 there would be more than a mile of continuous rapids, beginning with Tappan 1, a quick Class III drop, followed by Tappen Falls (IV), and then Tappen 2 and 3.

The group aced the upper portion in fine form. Now came the Falls and we were anxious. Bill "No-Man's-A-Rivers" elected to go first. Slicing through the middle of the falls, he felt the full fury of the backwash as his boat plunged sideways. Despite a brave attempt at a brace, he succumbed to the surge. (Rock no roll.)

Fifty meters downstream the river emptied into an eddy, where he managed to swim to the rocks on river right. Each man would now have to make a decision. Kenz opted for a cheat route on the left. Tiny and Cookie blazed through right of center, JD straight down the tongue. One by one, each solo boat managed to learn from the preceding run and came through right side up. At last it was the tandem's turn. Like two men possessed, Doc and Hawkeye paddled the heavy boat furiously through the top of the rapid, catching air before landing on the white froth

Continued on next page

below. Victory was ours!

Years ago, Tom Brokaw, quoted one ole timer from the Middle Fork as saying, "The River -- some it keeps, some it don't give back." Thus far, we were glad that our little fleet of canoes (and one cataraft) were not facing the full fury of early season flows. By contrast, our leisurely late summer pace seemed manageable in open boats.

At mile 68 we encountered "Haystack Rapids," a 200-yard long rock garden requiring a fair degree of maneuvering. Kenz and "Ole-Man-Rivers" went first, making the right-left approach with little difficulty before slicing through a pair of large boulders near the end. The rest of the group followed in turn, Cookie, Tiny, JD and Long John. It was now the tandem's turn. The Freedom peeled out slowly and backpaddled through the choppy waves in good form, with the bow cross drawing and the stern engaged, the tandem managed to keep afloat despite a side scrape near the bottom. By this time, we had all learned the finer points of "bailing."

DAY FIVE: On paper, this would be the hardest day yet, with Porcupine, Redside and Weber Rapids. Rated Class IV at higher flows, we weren't quite sure what to expect. Porcupine was straightforward, Redside turned out to be a deep drop between a phalanx of enormous boulders. Along the way, Bill "Mad" Rivers and Cookie play a game of "sink the battleship," only yards in front of the entrance of the rapids. Bilge pump, paddle and a body go into the water, followed by throw bags and a host of unprintable comments. Suddenly, it looks like a Chatfield safety course on steroids. Fortunately only the paddle gets sucked downstream. A truce is called for the moment.

We proceed to run the wave trains in turn, unable to see around the boulders to learn of the fate of the preceding paddler. Not a hundred yards downstream lies Weber, which the book says is "as mean or worse" than Redside. We all manage to make it though. The adrenaline is no small help.

The day has just begun. Ahead lies Upper and Lower Cliffside Rapids, the later with an enormous hole, reminiscent of "Skull Rapid." The solo boats manage to skirt the hole, going around a tremendous standing wave on River right. Long John approaches in his cataraft favoring the left and doesn't see the hole dead ahead. The 14' raft rides the crest of the wave before nose-diving into the hole, then suddenly, pitches over backwards into a spectacular "endo." Man and raft are hurled into the surge. Long John surfaces fifty yards ahead, still wearing his cowboy hat and sunglasses. Kenz eventually pulls his buddy from the water, where Long John precedes to thank him a thousand times over for saving his ***.

DAY SIX: On the last day we would encounter the heaviest whitewater on the River, the notorious Rubber and Hancock Rapids. After the previous day's episode, we had to wonder. The day broke clear and noticeably warmer, primarily due to the drop in elevation from the upper canyon. We had only ten miles to paddle and wondered if the River had saved the best for last...

We would soon find out. A little over a mile downstream lies Rubber Rapid. We scout it, and come to the consensus that it is quite runnable with our considerably lighter loads. A formidable wave reminds us that even at lower flows, the River still packs a punch.

Hancock is next. Again we scout. There is a class II rock garden that leads to a severe drop near the bottom. The first attempt results in a capsize. Thankfully, the wave train subsides and a rescue is affected easily. Cookie and Tiny blaze through the hole in fine form and Groovin' JD has his best run of the trip. After scouting river right, Doc and Hawkeye decide that the drop is a certain dumper, so for the first time in six days they decide on a sneak route with Doc in the boat and Hawkeye lining the Freedom from shore. But a huge boulder blocks the route, yanking the painter from Hawkeye and turning the boat sideways into a narrow chute. There isn't enough time for Doc to right the boat and reel in the painter. The canoe goes over, and with it a small dose of pride.

At mile 96 the river opens up to its widest point at the confluence of the Main Salmon. The views upriver are out of a Bierstadt painting. Shafts of bright yellow, silhouetting our company in divine light pierce a veil of pink and purple clouds.

We merge onto the Main Salmon with considerable speed. The Main presents an all-together different character from the Middle Fork. There is three times the volume and the waves become ocean-like, large and continuous, but devoid of boulders. The take-out at Cache Bar is just ahead. Unconsciously our convoy begins to string out, savoring the last moments of a fantastic experience. With time, a permit, and a week's rations, the Main Salmon would beckon. But for now, we are content to bask in the glory of having successfully navigating 100 miles of some of the prettiest stretches of water anywhere, totally self supported. Despite its name, the "River of No Return," we all knew that we one day would. -end.

Long John surfaces fifty yards ahead, still wearing his cowboy hat and sunglasses. Kenz eventually pulls his buddy from the water, where Long John precedes to thank him a thousand times over for saving his *.**

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Upcoming Dates of Note:

- February 20** Winter Meeting & Video Film Fest at St Judes, Trip Coordinators Meeting
March 20 Deadline for submissions for Spring Issue
April 17 Spring Meeting
April 18 Safety Fair

Submitting Articles: The Voyager's Companion 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. We invite members to contribute articles on trips as well as informative articles on subjects such as the following: Paddling techniques, Equipment, rigging the Canoe, Environmental Issues, River Safety, Camping Techniques, or Canoe History. The editorial staff appreciates your efforts to limit wordiness of superfluous details, and to restrict the article to under 1,200 words (about 2 pages).

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.

The Voyager's Companion is a bi-monthly publication of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club. Editorial material for The Voyager's Companion is welcomed and should be sent to : Diane Binder, Editor, The Voyager's Companion, Longmont, CO 80501. OR email Documents in the following file formats: Word 6.0, 7.0, WorkPerfect, Word 95, Word 6.x. Graphics files: .jpg .gif .pict .tif .pcx .dxf .cgm .cdr .eps .emf .gif .pcd .pct drw .pcf .tga and .bmp

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