



# The Voyageur's Companion

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB

June 2001

Roster and Trip Schedule Newsletter

## Inside this Issue:

Basic Canoe Class . . . . .	1
Style Paddling . . . . .	2
Thoughts on Eagle River . . . . .	3
New Class . . . . .	4
ROSTER . . . . .	insert
SCHEDULE . . . . .	7

## RMCC's 2001 Basics Open Canoe Classes

by Gayla Sturbaum

RMCC's 2001 Basics open canoe classes were held Saturday, May 12th, and Sunday, May 13th at Chatfield Reservoir and the South Platte River. On both days, we had clear skies and 80-degree temperatures -- the weather couldn't have been better. This year's session boasted one of the largest RMCC Basics class enrollments ever. It involved seven certified RMCC instructors, and two assistants, who led a very successful and challenging two-day training session for a total of thirty-eight students.

ACA instructors for tandem boaters were Bob and Carol Aikin, Kerry Edwards, and Bob and Jill Stecker. Susan Graham and Jeff Oxenford were the ACA

Continued Page 4

## River Rendezvous

### Potluck, Dutch Oven Cookoff

**Saturday and Sunday,  
July 21 and 22**

#### Radium, BLM Group Campsite

From I-70 in Silverthorne take Hwy 9 North almost all the way to Kremmling. About 1-2 miles from Kremmling turn Left on 1 Road (dirt) AKA Trough Road. Go approximately 15 miles to intersection with 11 Road where there should be a sign to Radium. Turn Right onto 11 Road and go a few miles to the Radium BLM Campsite, which is on the Left just before the road crosses the Colorado River.

There should be a big canvas canopy already set up. That is the center of activity. At various times during the weekend, President Jankowski or official designee will be there to collect the nominal \$3.00 per car per night plus \$1.00 per person per night fee.

#### Schedule and Fun day trips

Arrive early on Friday and, weather permitting, get together and do a quick trip from Pumphouse. The big canopy will also have to be set up before dark on Friday! Bad weather? Then just get started with telling tales and convincing each other that this year's Rendezvous will be better than last

years. Early drinking is permitted, but also be prepared to welcome later arrivals.

Saturday and Sunday river trips of various descriptions will be arranged, coordinated, and sent on their way. The big canopy is the location for all this getting organized. Best to be ready early so as not to miss the send-off. Various trips can be expected to be coordinated along the Colorado River all the way from Pumphouse to Dotsero, including the infamous Rodeo Rapids

#### Weekend Whitewater Class

This important segment of the Club's training program will again be conducted in conjunction with the Rendezvous. Persons participating will be on their own schedule under their own instructors, but the after-boating activities will all be together.

Continued on Page 3

Sign up for RMCC News; the e-mail source for trip planning activity and other discussions.

At: [rockymountaincanoecub.org/rmccnews.html](http://rockymountaincanoecub.org/rmccnews.html).

# What's Style Paddling, Canoe Dance, and Canoe Freestyle?

by Bob and Jill Stecker

The March issue of our newsletter featured a nice article by Jeff Oxenford, Paddling in Style. I'd like to build on that article, clarify some terms, and hopefully add to Jeff's efforts to stimulate interest in what I'll simply call for now a different orientation toward paddling.

Let me say at the outset that this article is not for people with only a casual interest in canoeing. It is only for paddlers who are seriously interested in paddling a canoe very skillfully, on whitewater or on a lake. It is for intermediate to advanced paddlers who own either whitewater canoes or lake canoes, solo or tandem. It is also for folks with 16 or 17-foot canoes who might like to skillfully paddle their big canoe solo. And since the canoeing I'm talking about can be done on a small pond all by yourself, this article is also for those who sometimes tire of long shuttles, driving long distances, or finding people to go canoeing with. So, let's start with some definitions:

"Style Paddling" is a traditional Canadian way of paddling, with emphasis given to paddling a tandem canoe solo, heeled to the rail. Precise boat placement is emphasized. Strokes are not emphasized. And you will hear of the "invisible paddler," the idea that when doing stylish moves, attention should be directed to the canoe's movements, not to the paddler.

"Canoe Dance" involves two or more canoes doing coordinated maneuvers following a choreographed routine. Although canoe dance requires skillful boat placement, it is mostly about just plain fun.

"Canoe Freestyle" is a recently recognized ACA activity (like Open Canoe Slalom, Canoe Sailing, etc.). It emphasizes doing well-defined moves (generally 180 degree turns) in all four quarters (onside and crossed over, forward and reverse) for a total of about 26 named maneuvers. Unlike Canadian Style-paddling, strokes are emphasized, entertaining showmanship is encouraged, and no attention is given to boat placement skills.

Now then, what's all this got to do with us canoe club folks? Just this—if you try only a smattering of what's contained in the above three flatwater disciplines you'll be a better paddler and you'll probably have a lot of fun. You might even find that this kind of paddling could be an end in itself, like whitewater paddling or wilderness tripping. I have mentioned "boat placement" several times. Let me give you a few examples of what we do in our Quietwater Finesse Courses that teaches boat placement.

String out a floating polyethylene rope and skull along it keeping the bow within 3 inches of the rope and the keel perpendicular. Do this in both directions, and be sure when skulling to you're offside that you paddle onside as well as crossed over. Then try this with a dance partner on the opposite side of the rope, keeping the bows within 6 inches of each other and the keels aligned.

Or, paddle tandem or solo through "Bob and Jill's 4-Buoy Training Course." The drills we've designed for tandem paddling isolate and clarify the bow and stern paddler's separate responsibilities (great for whitewater skill development). Maneuvers for both tandem and solo include sideslipping between buoys, and going around and through the buoys (forwards and backwards) using draws, cross draws, jams, and slices.

Over the past several years Jill and I have been intrigued with extracting the best ideas from the various classes we've taken—in Canadian Style-Paddling, Canoe Freestyle, and Slalom Racing—then using these best ideas for serious practice and for play. We tend to go out on a nearby pond and paddle in the evening. The canoeing enjoyment is wonderful, and so is the easy logistics.

## CLASSIFIEDS

by The Editor

I do not have any of these items at this time. Classifieds can be viewed on the [RMCC web-site](http://www.rmcc.org)

[www.rockymountaincanoe-club.org](http://www.rockymountaincanoe-club.org)

Do you have a canoe or river running something to sell, or do you need something?

Do you have any paddling needs or offers (eg need partner, have canoe to share, etc.)?

I want to include Classifieds in the next Voyageur's Companion.

Contact The Editor...

## MY THOUGHTS...

### Today I went down the Eagle River in my canoe

by Sammer Elias

This past week has been sunny and in the seventies. Everyday after work I would look at the river and be tempted in running the six miles to the next town. I've only previously been down a mile from my house. I did not know what lay beyond that mile. It was my land, where my river disappeared beyond the bend. And it was a mystery, an adventure that I couldn't wait to explore. But everyday this past week I would talk myself out of it, telling myself that I should wait for the weekend. Well this weekend came, and a storm moved in on Friday that brought cold weather, clouds, and rain for the entire weekend.

At first, I was very disappointed. My plans were to run the Eagle River once and the Colorado River once during this weekend. Today, Saturday, was completely overcast,

dark, and chilly. Everyone canceled their paddling runs for this weekend. But not I. Today was beautiful. I love this kind of weather in the mountains: dark, gloomy, mysterious, sometimes raining. Inside myself I remembered that I was a real canoer. Not just someone who does it for sport, hobby, or pastime. It represents my relationship with nature. It is a ride on the river. And the river takes me on a ride through my home, the wilderness. And if I feel that the rivers, all wilderness, are my home, than canoeing to me is truly my dance within my home. And my experiences in nature are always immensely amplified when I am alone. One man, one river, one sacred land. Solitude, serenity, peace. Grace within power. Competence within danger. Self sufficiency within isolation. All of which are experienced when I am paddling alone, and most of which are experienced any time I am alone in the wilderness.

Unfortunately solo travel is often discouraged, sometimes with scorn. The reasoning is understandable, yet safety rules and warnings are

often accepted in the exchange of ones own judgement. Many of us choose to take risks in order to receive reward. We should only choose risks with which we can live (sometimes literally) with the consequences. Most of us calculate the consequences, and then we use our judgement. But when safety rules and warnings are followed blindly, then it weakens our ability and responsibility for making those judgments. Some people take life-threatening risks amongst partners and groups, while another person can take a far lesser risk while traveling solo. It's not the general rules that matter, but rather the consequences and the ability to comprehend them.

Today I paddled a class II plus stretch of river alone in the wilderness. The air temperature was in the fifties, and the water temperature was in the forties. I dressed appropriately, I scouted what was not clear, and I understood my level of skill. I calculated the consequences. I judged correctly, and the reward was great.

### Rendezvous Information (Continued)

#### Potluck Dinner (Saturday)

The RMCC Rendezvous Potluck dinner is famous. Formerly the venue included the now-exhausted RMCC Nail Pot Luck Soup. Now with so many gourmets in the Club, everyone has the opportunity to bring and/or prepare their own scrumptious feast to share. As always, those who desire can prepare their delicacy in a dutch oven and enter their feast in the cook-off competition.

Traditional Dutch oven categories will include: main course; bread; dessert; and, new this year, uncatego-

rized. Judges will be determined early in the evening, but judging will be held promptly at 7:00PM.

#### BYO

Bring your own food, beverage, lots of ice. (A limited supply of RMCC supplied beverage will be available for those who forgot or who under estimated.) Also bring chairs, and guitars, harmonicas, other music makers (no boom boxes), lyrics, poems. Also any "group-type" games, toys, or hobbies to share.

## Basic Canoe Class (Continued)

instructors for the solo canoe groups. Our assistants, Christine Burke and Rich "Wave Surfer" Denholm, are preparing for ACA certification. They both gained real-time training experience over the two-day course and provided much appreciated support for the students. Christine assisted tandem paddlers while Rich offered helpful advice (and demonstrated "wet exits") for the solo paddlers.

On Saturday, fifteen open tandem canoes and 8 open solo canoes practiced beginning-to-intermediate maneuvers at Chatfield between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. We paddled forward and backward, slid around buoys, paddled in circles, dumped out of our boats, and cheered each other on. A favorite maneuver in the solo canoe group was the "low brace." If we weren't wet before the "brace" training, we certainly were wet afterward. We even trained during lunch break! We downed quarts of water and slathering on bottles of sunscreen on Saturday but we finished with the necessary skills to hit the river the following day.

Sunday dawned clear and sunny. Paddlers arrived at the South Platte full of anticipation for a day on the river. Boats and paddlers were unloaded at the C470 parking lot and shuttle vehicles were moved down stream to designated pick-up sites. Obviously, the details of staging the launch of 30 canoes on the South Platte River can be quite a challenge. (Convincing the park ranger that we should put 30 boats on the South Platte River was also a challenge.) In the end, everything went as planned. Tandem and solo groups listened to final river safety instructions, passed equipment safety checks, and in turn, put our canoes in the river.

The river training really put our new skills to the test. Paddling on the South Platte gave us a chance to learn more river running skills and to practice using the strokes we'd learned Saturday. We ferried cross-river and back, we squeezed 8 solo boats into some mighty small eddies, and later, we lined up our boats to maneuver through several drops in the river. Paddling on the

river is hard work on a warm day! Luckily, many of us had the opportunity to fall out of our boats and enjoy a brisk dip in ice-cold, Rocky Mountain spring runoff. By late afternoon, the Stecker's tandem group and both solo class were successfully running the Class II chutes near Belleview Avenue. (That is, with the exception of the class photographer, who thinks she'll try them the next time.)

All in all, it was a great two-day session. Mike McCaw, a long-time member of RMCC, had taken classes with the club in years past. He was overheard by Jeff Oxenford to say that this class had brought him full-circle with the club. It's clear to this novice member of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club that the club membership, instructors, and officers will encourage and develop the best kind of paddlers out there; the kind of paddlers who are knowledgeable and aware of the correct way to spend a day on the river.

Thanks again, it was great -- see you on the river!

## Quietwater Finesse Paddling

### NEW CLASS for 2001 (16 hours)

*Bob and Jill Stecker, ACA and Canadian Certified Instructors in Whitewater and Style Paddling*

**Course description:** This course is for those who are seriously interested in paddling a canoe very skillfully, on whitewater or on a pond. The emphasis of the course is on stroke efficiency and precise boat placement. We will explore the nuances and complexities of many canoe stroke variations. You will find the maneuvers applicable to whitewater as well as flatwater, and to be very challenging. You might also find

these maneuvers to be an end in themselves, something you can enjoy doing on a small pond all by yourself.

**Skill level:** intermediate to advanced.

**Equipment required:** any type solo canoe (or tandem canoe paddled solo, heeled over Canadian style). Tandem canoes are especially welcome, but they must be paddled solo. We will teach Canadian "Style-paddling" (paddling a big canoe solo) to those interested. High performance solo and tandem Sport Canoes are available (\$10 rental). Cost for the 2-day course: \$60.00 per person.

**Class size:** Five people minimum.

**Date:** June 25-26

**INTERESTED?** Call Bob and Jill (8am to 6pm)

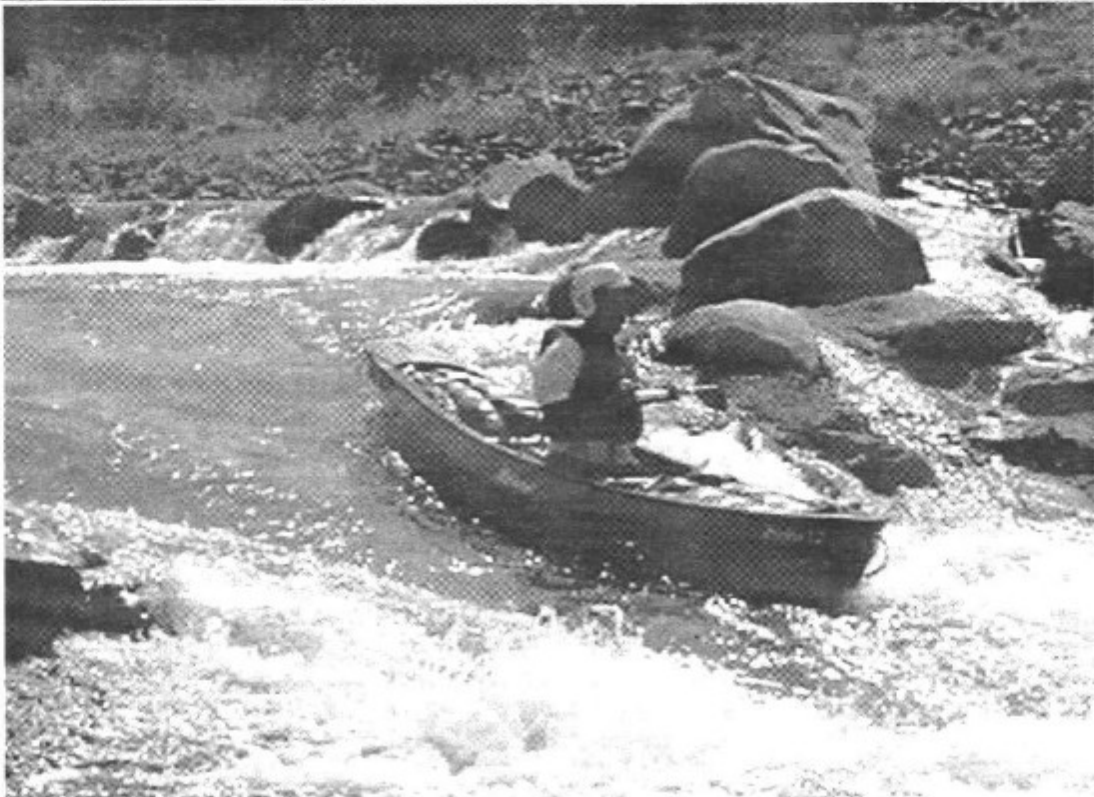
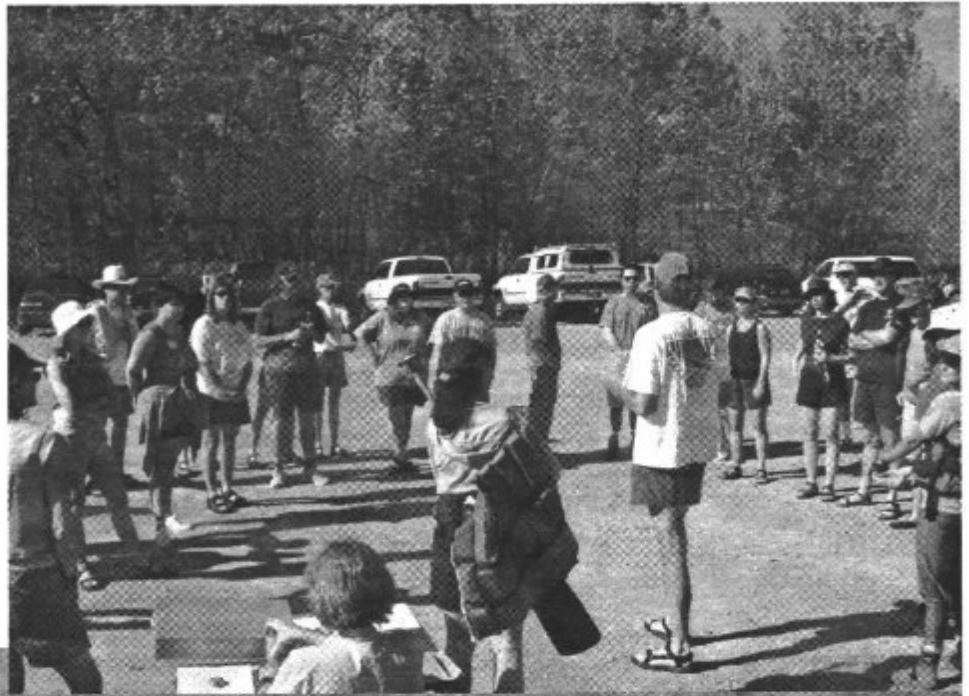
**Scenes from RMCC 2001  
Basic Canoe Class:**

Right: Getting started

Center: Gayla Sturbaum  
and Ellie Freeman, lake practice.

Bottom: Ted Sturbaum,  
bottom of chute Nr 1

Photos by Jeff Oxenford and  
Gayla Sturbaum



## RMCC Trip Schedule

*In the Voyageur's Companion and on the web!*

by The Editor

Should the RMCC have more trips in its schedule? Should there be more trips; should there be an ample mix of novice, intermediate, advanced trips? Remember the RMCC web-site has the up-to-date listing of Club trips.

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

Following are trip organization guidelines from Ken Bauer. Read these and recognize that becoming an RMCC Trip Coordinator is not difficult and very rewarding.

### Rocky Mountain Canoe Club Trip Organizing Guide

by Ken Bauer

April 2001

#### Checklist For Selecting a River and Date

Use a reference book such as Doug Wheats' *The Floaters Guide to Colorado*, available at outdoor and whitewater oriented stores.

Ask a club member about a river you may be interested in at the skill level you are interested in.

Find out where the put-in and take-out locations are. Any access issues?

Determine when the river flow may be optimum. Again, Doug Wheats' book or members are a good resource. You may have to adjust for yearly snowpack conditions and local seasonal weather patterns (monsoon, etc.), as well as usual seasonal dam release effects. An example is the regular late season water release into the Blue river from Green Mtn dam.

Pick a river and weekend!

Select where to meet and what time. Consider driving distances for where people maybe coming from when selecting a time. What is the most convenient place to meet? Nearby gas station, put-in, or the take-out?

Call the Trip Coordinator or email the Webmaster directly.

#### Once Your Trip is Posted and People Call

Determine how many people you may want to limit your trip to, if at all. Compile a list of names and phone numbers. Perhaps pick a back-up coordinator in case you cannot make it due to illness, car breakdown, etc.

Determine the minimum skills required to run this trip.

List the minimum equipment for participants. This would include (beyond PFD's) spare paddles, floatation, protective clothing (wet or dry suits), food and water for long trips, and first aid kits. Note throw rope availability.

List any special equipment needs like static ropes and pulley kits for potentially "snaggy" or pin prone river floats.

Ask about peoples skills. If you have never floated this trip before, that's OK. Just inform people of that and solicit help from interested people that have done the trip before. List things like people wanting to experience slightly harder trips to run (requiring some help or mentoring), paddlers with rescue experience, and above average paddling skills (helpful in mentoring other paddlers).

Inform callers about your trip requirements from the above items. It's your trip. Ask about their willingness to shuttle, help with less experienced paddlers ,etc. Inform participants about the general intent of the trip. Is it a slow float? Intense playing? Long hard paddle? Any side hikes of special interest?

#### At the River

Hold a pre-put-in meeting. Ask for or select an experienced paddler or paddler to trail behind at sweep. This person can spot problems and help rescues. The sweep could be you if someone else leads. Determine a lead if not you.

**HAVE PEOPLE SIGN WAIVERS!**

Ask if anyone has any special concerns or conditions of note. You could mention that any sensitive issues be brought to you in confidence so that you could either advise or keep in mind. Examples could be medical conditions people don't want to advertise, or people being embarrassed to admit a bit of fear of the water. You may have to advise that someone shouldn't do the trip. While this may not be pleasant, keep in mind the safety of the person in question first.

Review safety issues to the extent they may exist. This could include water levels or river hazards.

Set a safety protocol. A fair method is to emphasize people safety first, boat and gear retrieval second. Remind people to hang on to their paddle. Determine who will be lead rescue boats. Ask that in rescue situations that people not crowd in and present additional hazards. Avoid promiscuous rope throwing.

Note any other points of etiquette, like boat spacing, surf spot sharing, and keeping people in view.

Determine general agreements for breaks and break places, including lunch.

**Have fun!**

# RMCC TRIP SCHEDULE 2001

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/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 Assignment of Risk agreement prior to each trip.

Date	Trip Location	Coordinator	Phone	Level	Limi	Description
Jun 2	Poudre River	Ken Bauer		Int-A		Filter plant/Bridges/lower Mish. Water level going high, serious play trip.
Jun 2-3	Colorado R.	Dennis Adams				"Kids Schools Out Flotilla" down Ruby Canyon.
Jun 9-10	North Platte R.	Eric Nyre		Int	6	Six Mile Gap to Saratoga. 51 miles. Solo boats must be at least 15', tandems 17'.
Jun 15-17	North Platte R.	Ken Bauer		class II+	yes	Six Mile Gap to Treasure Is., umpteenth annual N. Platte trip, can fish evenings.
Jun 16-18	Yampa River	Karen Amundson		B-N		Craig to Juniper Springs.
Jun 25-26	Quietwater Finesse Paddling Class	Jill & Bob Stecker		Int-A		Pre-register by June 4.
Jun 28	Canoe Clinic	Jeff Oxenford		Int-A	10	
Jul 21-22	Summer River Rendezvous	Karen & Greg Jankowski		class I-III		Colorado River at Radium. The big summer party/dutch oven cookoff and fun day trips!
Jul 21-22	Whitewater Weekend Class	Jill & Bob Stecker		N-Int		Pre-register by June 30.
Jul 29 - Aug 5	Green River	Karen & Greg Jankowski		class I-III	25	Desolation-Grey Canyons. Shuttle fee \$125/car, \$18/camper, boom boxes required. Spray skirt recommended
Sep 1-3	Colorado R.	Dick Akins		B-N		Loma to Westwater. Class I. Adults only.
Sep 1-3	Green River	Eric Nyre		N	12	Town of Green River, to Mineral Bottom. 63 miles. Sea Kayak trip. Boomboxes required.
Sep 1-3	Gunnison R.	Sammer Elias		N	no	Escalante Canyon to Whitewater. Mostly class I flatwater, two class II rapids.
Sep 1-3	Green River	Karen & Greg Jankowski		class II/- III	no	Flaming Gorge. End of Summer Rendevous. Kids OK. Cold water gear recommended. Boom boxes required.

**Be sure to call the Trip Coordinator early to sign up!**

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. The editorial staff appreciates your efforts to limit wordiness or superfluous details, and to restrict an article to under 1200 words (about 2 pages).

**Submitting Articles:** Editorial material for The Voyageur's Companion is welcomed and should be sent to: Lyndon Berry, Editor, The Voyageur's Companion, [ ] Buena Vista CO, 81211 [ ] OR e-mail to: [ ] {That is: j (Jeanne) l (Lyn) ark (Arkansas) river} . Material is preferred via e-mail or on PC disk, but paper is great too. Use the following formats for text: Word 6 or 7, Word Perfect, Word 95 or 97, and most others; and for images/pictures: .bmp, .tif, .pcx, .gif, .tga, .jpg, .pcd. So far I do not have a scanner, but hopefully that will change soon. **Deadline for August newsletter is July 26, After The Rendezvous.**

Membership: \$15.00 per Household per Year. Contact David and Jeannie Ney [ ]

Mail applications to: [ ] Golden CO 80403



Time to Renew your membership?

Is this your last issue of the Voyageur's Companion? Are your dues paid for 2001? Check for your name on the inserted ROSTER!!

Newsletter of the *Rocky Mountain Canoe Club*

**The Voyageur's Companion**

C/O Editor

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