

# BOWLINES

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Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association May/June 1998

## Summer Paddling Issue

In This Issue:

Where BWA members go for summer river fun  
BWA summer paddling stories  
A look at the Spring Clinic  
Cleaning up the Red River: A Photo Essay



*The Ocoee River in Tennessee. Perhaps the river most boated in the summer by the BWA, now has more to offer because of special releases on the upper section.*

For many in the BWA, Summer is that sweet time of the year when there is a freedom from layers and layers of clothing and from work for a week or two to really indulge in long periods of "Hydro-therapy". When the local streams dry up, the BWA goes near and far in our search for great whitewater.

Tennessee, West Virginia and North Carolina are the most common destinations for weekend paddling, but many will drive to Georgia, Pennsylvania, or even Maryland for a three day weekend. (In past years there has even been 3 day trips to the Ottawa river in Ontario.) The Ocoee, Nantahala, Pigeon, New, Gauley, Chattooga, Nolichucky, French Broad, Yough, Green, are frequent destinations in the summer. This does not mean we forget all about closer streams like the Cumberland and the Big South Fork that take on a milder, lazy character in the summer. The Big South Fork Canyon becomes a class II that can be run down to about 300cfs, The Cumberland below the Falls can be run all summer. Combined with hikes, trail bikes, and a bit of lazy summer laying on a big rock at the rivers edge they make for a great get-away weekend. Others in the BWA, with the time, money and desire for some really new and different head north or west.

**Wow! 24 photos in this issue that you can see in color on the Internet!**

*Continued on page 4*

# Kid's in Paradise

A few weeks ago, some of the younger paddlers in our club headed to the Hiawassee for a weekend of paddling. With boats strapped on top and parents in tow, Nathan Cable, Ecton Green, Mandy Durr, Eli Vantreese, and Kelsey and Emily Miller were ready for some river-running fun.



*Nathan Cable running the drop at Oblique Falls*

Saturday was spent on the river running Oblique Falls, playing Thread-the-Needle and surfing at Three Islands. Nathan was confident and relaxed, consistently following his dad's line. Ecton showed some real natural ability - he loved not only the water but the experience. It was Mandy's maiden voyage on her new ducky and wow!, has she improved this year! Eli was a very independent paddler, and readily pushed his skills. Kelsey and Emily were happy in Mom and Dad's canoe - enjoying the warm sun and cool water.

Saturday night took on a quieter tone. As dinner was cooked, the kids were content to play hand-held computer games, build a fire, and listen to Hanson Brothers and Spice Girl's on their walkman's. After a most raucous wrestling match in the Miller tent, we sat around the fire and told stories. Each parent proceeded to reflect on their own child's river experiences. The pride and satisfaction that each parent had for their child was clearly visible. We love paddling. And it's wonderful to not only share that love with our children, but to watch their own joy of paddling grow.

Sunday brought more paddling on the Hiawassee. We tried for enders at Ender Spot, boofed a few rocks and ate lunch at Lunchstop. Later that afternoon, some of us headed over to the Ocoee. Jim Green was kind enough to run shuttle, while Eli, Bruce Rishel and I ran from Goforth Creek to the take-out. After getting surprised at Surprise, Eli ran perfect lines. Jim and Ecton were taking in the sights at several of the play spots and were sitting at Hell's Hole when we pulled in. Ecton's face was just lit-

## BOWLINES

Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, POB 4231, Lexington Ky, 40544

### Club Officers 1996-97

President	Bruce Rishel
Vice-President	Bill Lynch
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### Join in on the Fun!

BWA website: [www.surfbwa.org](http://www.surfbwa.org)  
 Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$15/individual; \$20/Family/year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club kayak, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, and a stream gauge guide.

Meetings are held the at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each Month at:  
 Columbia's, 201 N. Limestone, Lexington, Ky.

Submission of Newsletters articles preferred on zip or floppy disk (Mac or PC) or typed. Pictures can be digital or ready to be scanned. Please included stamped envelope for return. Files can also be e-mailed to: don-spang@aol.com or to princv@sprynet.com



up watching all the hot play boaters doing 360s and cartwheels! Jim had to drag him away.

We're already planning our next weekend trip to the Pigeon River. And the kids are hot to go!!



*Ecton Green taking the plunge at Oblique Falls*

## Summer Paddling .....

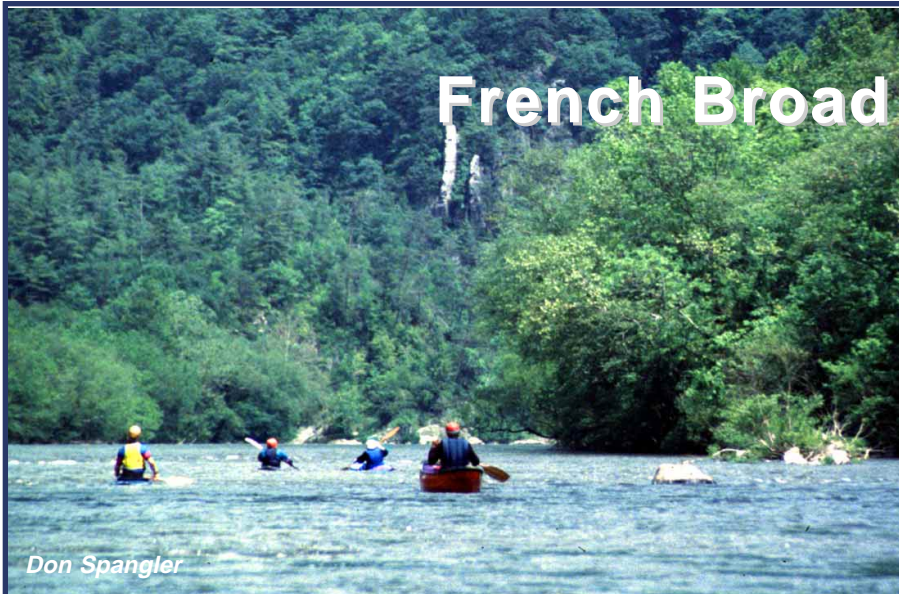
Colorado, Idaho and New Mexico are the most common destinations for those heading west. This takes them to some of the finest whitewater found anywhere. Trips on the Arkansas, Selway, Lochsa, Yampa, San Juan, Colorado, Clearwater, Salmon are popular. To paddle many of these rivers means being lucky enough to get a permit....which may take years of applying for one. Get one of these coveted permits and you will find you have more river buddies than you realized!

Canada and New England have a special calling for some BWA paddlers. While there is great whitewater to be found in parts of Ontario, Quebec or the north-eastern U. S., the lore of the Voyageur and long wilderness trips wait for those that want a slower pace. The Great Northland offers the opportunity to paddle for days without seeing another person. Bears, Moose and other wild life is found along the rivers edge of the Alleghash, St. Johns, Missinabbi, Petawawa and many other rivers of the north.

So take your pick, great Summer Paddling is out there waiting for you. All you have to do is take your self to the River and paddle!

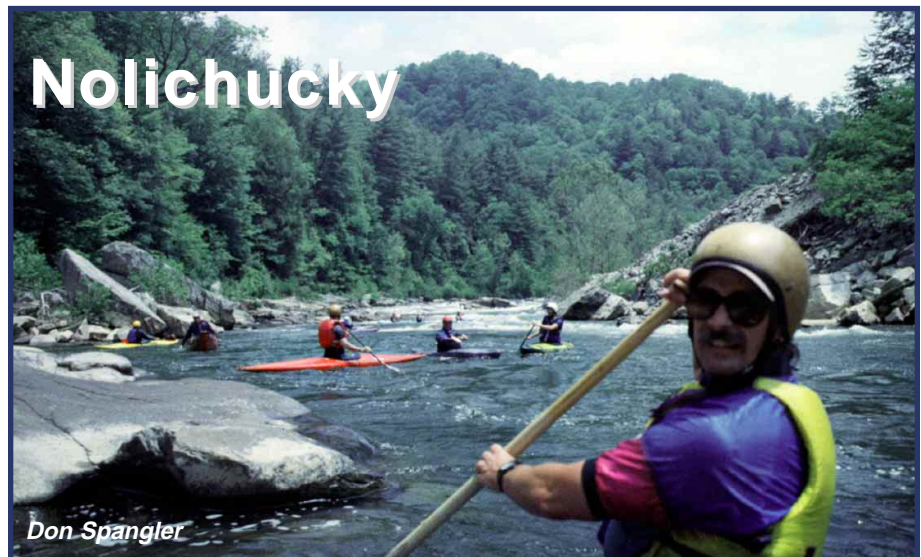
*Don Spangler*

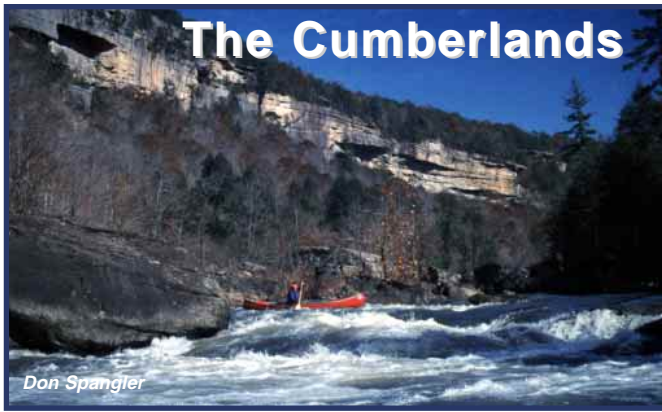
# Summer Paddling with the BWA



The French Broad is one of those long drainage rivers that is often very runnable in the Summer. The upper parts of the river is mostly flat with some shoals. Below Ashville there is a lot more gradient with ledges and beautiful gorges. Its volume and size increases considerably and you can encounter some large significant rapids they may rate up to Class 5. ( Most of these rapids have very easy sneaks that are rarely much more than an easy class 2 or 3. Take out for the section with the best rapids is Hot Springs. There is an class 2/3 section above this run with the takeout at Stack House

Less than an hour from the French Broad is the Nolichucky. The run from Popular N.C. to Erwin Tenn. is squeezed between the Bald Mountains on one side and the Unaka Mountains on the other side. It provides almost continuous fun from the beginning to the take-out. The significant rapids (3 to 4+) start at once and continue for almost the first half of the run. After that it mellows out to easy class 2/3 till you get to the takeout. It can be run most of the summer at easy low levels, but after heavy rains, look out!





*The Big South Fork Canyon*

Both the North Fork and the South Fork of the Cumberland offer milder whitewater and a good overnight trip at lower water level. We paddle them so much in the Spring, we often forget them the rest of the year. Several different runs can be done in the summer on these Kentucky rivers.

Summer is a great time to do an overnight or two on the Big South Fork!  
 If you can stop the hair boating long enough to look around at the scenery, summer is a great time to do an overnight or two on the Big South Fork easy section (Class I-II), from the Leatherwood Ford put in. Except for the portage around Angel Falls and one other possible portage, its truly accessible to even the total novices like me, and is grandly beautiful. I was backpacking there with Noxie over Memorial Day weekend and we hiked up Fall Branch to a spectacular view from the cliffs that overlook this section. The advantage of a trip like this is that its only three hours away and you can spend more time boating and communing with nature than you do in the car, and you can take anyone with you, regardless of ability.



*Vannessa Mullins.*



**BWA'er BeurenGarten having fun on the lower Gauley**

The Gauley is the Classic Big Water of the East, but during the summer you can have great runs at levels that make it far less pushy. True, at fall release levels it is true big water, but at around 1000 cfs It become much more tame and still has some great play potential.

The lower becomes as easy as anything on the Ocoee. It is classic pool-drop, with great places to play and enjoy in every rapid. While the water may depend on some natural flow to supplement the low release, it runs much more often then you might think. The New is always there for you in the summer. It loses it huge big water springtime levels, but turns into a great summer run. At the lower water levels there are some great ender and surfing spots. For those who may not be up to the Thurmond to Fayette Station Gorge section, there are two other runs above

Thurmond. Prince to Thurmond is mostly class 2 with a little class 3. Above Prince you have class 2 with some long pools. Should you be there when the water level is over 9,000 cfs, take a look at the "Dries", a five mile stretch from Cotton Hill to Gauley. It comes back to life with the overflow from the dam becoming more and more difficult depending on how much water there is.

### Why I Like Summer Paddling

- I like summer paddling because I don't own a dry suit.
- I like summer paddling because rafting chicks wear bathing suits.
- I like summer paddling because I like the smell of sunscreen.
- I like summer paddling because the Ocoee runs on schedule.
- I like summer paddling because my sleeping bag only goes to 20 degrees.
- I like summer paddling because you don't get run over by snowmobiles in the Boundary Waters.
- I like summer paddling because I can show off my massive tanned arms and chest.
- I like summer paddling because Madawaska holds classes.
- I like summer paddling because the Nantahala doesn't feel quite so cold.
- I like summer paddling because the Elkhorn smells so good.
- I like summer paddling because thunderstorms are exciting.
- I like summer paddling because leafy strainers are softer than bare ones.
- I like summer paddling because the rocks on the bottom seem softer in warm water.

*Dave Merrifield*

# Chattooga



Don Spangler

## *One of the 5 Falls on the Chattooga, Jawbone*

The Chattooga River is one of the wildest and most beautiful whitewater rivers the BWA paddles. At summer levels most of the river gets easier. It starts at the Whitesides Mountain in North Carolina and flows southwest to form the border between South Carolina and Georgia. It has three sections to run. Section 2 is flatwater and easy class 2. Section 3 is more demanding class 2-3+. Section 4 demands respect. Not only is it rated up to class 5, there are treacherous undercuts and pot holes that can be deadly. Yet if you have the skill and are careful, you will be rewarded with not only the most incredible scenery but wonderful rapids to match. After the last rapid runs into the lake, you have one final price to pay: you must paddle the lake to the takeout! A small price for such a wonderful experience.

### *Why I Like Summer Paddling!*

My first response when asked to write 2 or 3 paragraphs on why I liked summer paddling, was the following retort "What makes you think I like summer paddling?" "Well could it be, he replied, the warm water?" Paddling with shorts and just a PFD? I had to admit that I used to love going shirtless while paddling because I could show the bikini clad rock foxes my bulging biceps. Now I'm just too embarrassed to show 'em my new Buddha look. But is this enough to deter me from summer paddling? Hell no!

There is nothing like paddling in warm weather and warm water. Colorado may have great rivers with exciting white water but having to wear a dry suit during the summer just doesn't appeal to me. I prefer the favorite parts of my body to be on full alert at all times. If I ever were to die on the river, I want the coroner to properly identify me as a male kayaker not as Boy Lloyd.

The down side to summer paddling is low water. However, it is pure ecstasy to catch your favorite stream running high when it normally is just a trickle. In case your not lucky enough to catch a creek run during the summer try the New River Gorge, the Cheat, or the dependable Ocoee. As long as it is flowing that's where I'll be going. See you on the River!

*Lloyd Funkhouser*



Don Spangler

*Lloyd at Left Crack, watches as the Chattooga gathers its fee for a mistake with a micro eddy at the previous rapid.....his boat.*



*Don Spangler*

***Our Prez, Bruce Rishel, surfing with style on the upper Ocoee***

One of the great playboating rivers is 4 1/2 hours drive from Lexington. A drive that is worth it if you consider that it runs when almost nothing else does and no river around plays better than the Ocoee! There are big holes, little holes, holes that give meaning to "acrobatic boating". Waves exist from surfing waves, ender waves, shredding waves, and just great splash-in-your-face waves. You can do Class 3 moves in Class 2 water or Class 4+ moves in class 3 water. Almost any water feature you might like to find to play exists on the Ocoee. All this exists because of a flume that carried water to a generator downstream failed after 64 years. In 1976 the water had to once more run over the riverbed, and boaters "discovered" what a great river it was.....it would never be the same. By the time the flume was repaired years later, it was obvious that the river was more important to both boaters and the local economy than the electric that had been generated! So enjoy the Ocoee and learn to be a better boater while you have a ton of fun! Just watch out for all the others on the river that are leaning new moves and remember the rafts consider it your responsibility to stay out of their way!



*Don Spangler*

***Bruce is working on this new style of Ocoee river running, it saves wear and tear on the bottom of the boat and protects you from out of control Ocoee Kayakers.***

# Canada & the Northland



Wilderness Tripping on the Missinabbi in Ontario

My memories of Canadian waters are very special!

Summer paddling always brings to mind Canada. In my early paddling years, I went to Madawaska Paddling school. The school, for those who have a love of paddling, is an incomparable way to spend a week. While there we met Canadian friends who have kept in touch. Each year they either come down here or we go there. My memories of Canadian waters are very special. Led by locals who know the rivers makes these rivers feel like home. The remoteness of the rivers, the water quality, the scenery, the black flies all make Canada in the summer my first choice priority.

Prince Vittitow

Canada is always a good choice for long Wilderness trips. Unlike most of our western rivers, permits are not required or can be easily obtained. Driving to Ontario or Quebec is about the same as driving to Colorado. One thing to remember, your money will go further in Canada because of the rate of exchange.

There are dozens of Wilderness river trips to choose from as well as many day trips. Information with river Maps is easily obtained from the Provincial governments. The waters are pristine and uncrowded. Most streams are a combination of easy class 1 and 2 water with pool drops that can be anything from class 3 to a major water fall. But the great thing is that almost anything class 2 and above has marked portage trails, remember, the Great Northland was the home of the Voyageur. Canadians are friendly and it is worth getting to know them and Canada. Side trips to Ottawa and other historic places are a must!

Not ready for a trip outside the USA yet, but want a taste of the North? Consider a trip to Maine. The Allagash and the St. John have been favorites of the BWA for many years. Both are jewels of the North. Paddling is easy Class 2 with only a couple easy portages required on the Allagash. Permits are required from the paper companies that own the woodlands, but are easy to obtain. Shuttle is easily arranged by a family that owns a store and small campground at the takeout.

While in Maine, you should also visit Baxter State Park and Arcadia National Seashore Park. There are also great runs on the Dead, Kennabec and other rivers along the way.

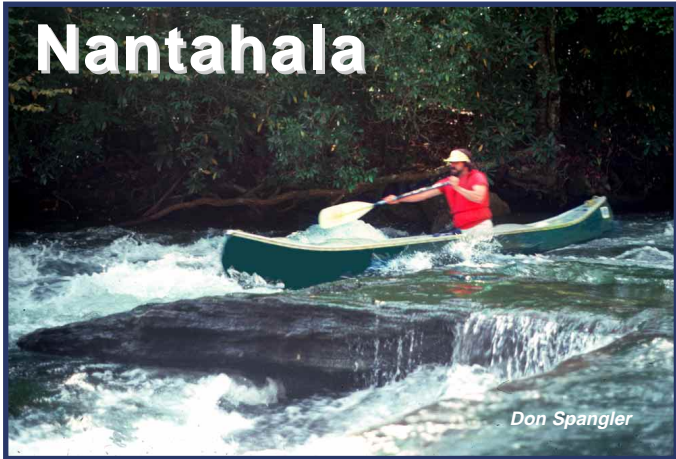
## What do I like about summer paddling? Hmm

For every one semi-romantic facet of summer paddling that comes to mind, I can think of at least two less than respectful but more truthful responses. Warm sunsets are nice, but so are scantily clad boater chicks and cold beer. Weekend road trips are friendship inspiring, but scantily clad boater chicks and cold beer are nice too. Spending the day trying to do cartwheels in Flipper on the Ocoee are a blast, but there is a lot to be said for scantily clad boater chicks and cold beer.

The Warm water and bright sun feel great, but so do scantily clad boater chicks and cold beer. Driving through the Mountains during the summer is gorgeous but so are scantily clad boater chicks. The beauty is always intensified with cold beer. Cruising through Algonquin Park on the way to Madawaska is fine but so are scantily clad Canadian boater chicks and cold Canadian beer. Fighting the crowds at the Lower Yough is worth the hassle for the fine class III action, especially with all the scantily clad Yankee boater chicks and cold Yankee beer.

All kidding aside, summer paddling is a blast. The warm weather and guaranteed, dam released water make for a fun filled boating trip every weekend. I am looking forward to another fun season crammed full of boating, scantily clad boater chicks and cold beer.. Life is good!

Beel



The Nantahala river near Bryson city is where BWA paddlers have gone for years at to hone the basics of boating. It and the Nantahala Outdoor Center have always been a favorite. The River may be cold but there was always a great hot meal waiting for you at the "Rivers End" and a store you could look at all the latest things you just "had" to have. Nothing has changed, except the store and all just got bigger and a bit more fancy.

Reliable releases, a beautiful gorge, and friendly folks still make this a must for boating in the summer for the class 2 boater. Its nine miles of fast water has all that one needs to go to the next level of boating.

### The Pigeon and Other Summer Runs

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The Pigeon's provides Five miles of class II and III rapids. The water is generated by a power plant so water in the river depends on their generating days. This year it can be run most wednesdays, thursdays and saturdays. You can see the Pigeon from US 40 while on you way to North Carolina.

There are a lot of runs other than these that have not been mentioned. The Cheat, Tygert, Rock Creek, and many others can be run if we get good summer rains. You just need to watch the weather channel, stay on the Internet, and keep the phone handy to find out where to go. If you don't mind driving a few hours every weekend, you should always be able to find something to paddle! If you do, then you can stay home, watch TV, mow the yard and miss a great life. The choice is yours!

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# Cleanin' up the Red

What an experience! Here were 25 people who volunteered to participate in the most grueling cleanup I've yet to experience. The day started shortly after 7am with carrying supplies part way down the cliff to the Red River which flows through the gorgeous Red River Gorge. The section we cleaned was inaccessible except for the trail which leads about a mile upstream from the take-out for the white water section.

Last summer a gorge resident by the name of Russ Miller had for the third year collected over



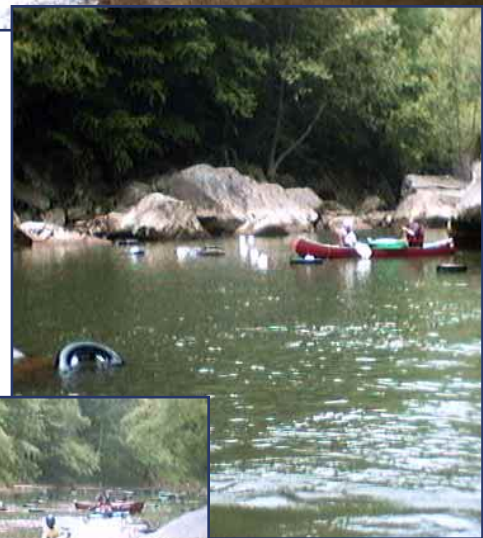
100 tires; car, tractor, huge logging truck tires, etc. Once again he had stacked these in collection sites above the water line. He also had stashed long strings of milk jugs. We stuffed these inside the tires for flotation. Thirty or so inner tubes were also used to float the tires. The inner tubes worked much better for when the tires tumbled down the constricted rapids at low water, the milk jugs often popped out and had to be stuffed once again. Because the water was low, we had to push the tires through the flat water sections and repeatedly pull them off rocks and back into the current.

Needless to say, there were some tired puppies at the end of the day. But in spite of the challenging work, it was a wonderful experience. The sore muscles have healed, but the satisfaction of a great accomplishment remains. This wouldn't have happened without the dogged commitment of a person such as Russ Miller. What we did was only a fraction of the work that Russ had done over this past year preparation for this day. It was after 8pm when our work was done and finally we could enjoy the chili and drinks provided by the take-out crew.

Thanks to Russ and all the BWAers who were able to "give something back."  
*Marrea Matthews*

# A "Tiring" day on the Red

A Photo Story by John Galik



# Clinic Paddling 101

An incredible Spring Clinic was held April 25th and 26th at the Emory/Obed in Wartburg TN. The BWA once again trained approximately 50 beginner and intermediate paddlers. We had outstanding weather and water levels on which to teach. The tired smiles on the student's faces indicated their appreciation and enthusiasm toward their newly found sport.

There are so many people we need to thank for making this thing happen. These folks made this clinic run extremely smoothly. All problems were dealt with calmly and efficiently.

Ben Newman was the head kayak instructor and Don Spangler was the head canoe instructor. They did an outstanding job at dividing the students and teachers into appropriate groups. They listened to their groups' concerns and addressed them in a timely manner. The groups were adjusted again on Saturday night to make sure everyone would be paddling the most appropriate run for their skill level on Sunday. The instructors were great. We have some awesome paddlers in our club. It is good to see most of them give back to the sport by teaching beginners.



Don Spangler

## Warm-up Exercises

Zog Aiken was our chief cook. He pulled off one of the best food set-ups ever. Zog hooked up with Rob Haynes and Julian Bond from Kelly's Garden Restaurant in Frankfort. They bought the food wholesale and put on one hell of a chow line. Rob and Julian also took the clinic and had so much fun that they have already volunteered to help with meals again next year. If you find yourself hungry in Frankfort, check out their place. It is on the St. Claire Street Mall across from the Old Capitol Building.



Don Spangler

## Clinic Put-In at the confluence of the Obed & Emory

They are currently open for lunch and will soon be open for dinner as well.

Our local outfitters played an important roll in this year's clinic. Gerald Patrick of Phillip Gall's was our gear procurement person. Corey Council of Canoe Kentucky provided some boats and gear at the orientation as well as a boat trailer and van for the clinic. These guys helped us out tremendously. I hope you will give them your business.

Butch Quire was our shuttle guru once again. He assembled a team of experts that kept things running great all weekend: Ellen and Ryan Harding, Carl and Justin Richards, Tim Kraznanski, Mike Weeks, Jerry High, Tubbo, Mike Molnar, Mario Andretti and Ricky Rudd. I'm sure there were more. Great job folks, no tickets, no totals and you only partially demolished Corey's trailer.

Butch was also the entertainment chairman for Friday night. He assembled an outstanding acoustic ensemble that consisted of himself, Molnar, Hebble, Big Carl and Mark Branch. They did a fine job of entertaining the mass of campfire dwellers. At least I think they did. I was well in to happy hour by then. Zina Merkin did an exceptional job of putting together informational packages for the students. She spent months e-mailing and calling paddling related companies and conning them in to donating stuff for the students. It is amazing how much stuff she accumulated. Dave Merrifield was our set-up coordinator. He pulled the big trailer loaned to us by the Kentucky YMCA office. He also revamped the plywood table tops we use for our kitchen. Through his generosity we were able to use his truck to haul water all weekend. Dave has been the set-up coordinator before and really knows how to work it. Thanks dude. Incidentally Dave is also coordinating this year's trip to the Madawaska Kanu Centre in Ontario, Canada, what a guy. Jim Daniel was our chief greeter this year. He saw to it that everyone arriving Friday night was met with a



*Instruction starts at the Put-In with Instructor Fred Tuttle going over Basics and Plans for the Day*

smile and some helpful instructions about the weekend's events. Everyone was seated in the appropriate section for the weekend; smoking, non-smoking, window or isle.

Valerie Vantreese, treasurer of the BWA, did a fine job of keeping our money straight. She and President

on Sunday. Ouch, we hope you guys heal quickly. Our thoughts are with you.

I also want to say a personal thanks to several folks who helped me with the planning of this thing. Don Spangler was and is my mentor. He was there every step of the way with advice and encouragement. His experience with past clinics was invaluable and he was a voice of reason when I suggested some new things. Also, thanks to the BWA steering committee for their hard work and for always being responsive to my questions, concerns and calls for help.

Thanks to Ellen, Ryan, Duke, Zog and Butch for helping me maintain my sanity during the weekend. Your words of encouragement helped me deal with the last minute freak-outs. My time spent in the Harding's mobile clubhouse, psychiatric ward, pub and safety vehicle was very therapeutic. You guys are great! Let's go boating'.

Bill Lynch  
1998 Spring Clinic Director



*Don Spangler*

Bruce Rishel also solved the last minute kitchen tarp crisis. Way to go team!

Thanks to Mike Weeks for engineering the Saturday night campfire. This guy knows arson! Thanks to the Wartburg cops for leaving us alone. The weather and water committee did an amazing job this year. We had temperatures in the seventies and water levels of 2600 cfs on Saturday and 2000 cfs on Sunday. The beginners had plenty of water to run the confluence to Nemo run and the intermediates had great levels on Clear Creek.

We did have two injuries over the weekend. Jeff Allen, a novice paddler, dislocated his shoulder while trying to roll in Lilly rapid and Archie Townsend cut up his face during his second or third run of Nemo



*Don Spangler*

# July 1: Time to renew your membership and not miss the next issue of Bowlines!

Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$15/individual; \$20/Family/year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club kayak, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, and a stream gauge guide

Send in this or a copy with check to Bluegrass Wildwater Association, P.O.B. 4231, Lexington, Ky. 40504

Name:

Home Phone(s):

Work Phone(s):

e-mail(s):

Address:

Street:

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State:

Zip:

May 1998						
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## Ocoee Summer Release Dates for 1998

- Circle = 6 hr day
- Triangle = 8 hr day
- Square = 10 hr day

Release dates for the Upper Ocoee are the same as the lower Ocoee

**Next Issue: Boaters & Boater Stories.....**send the bowlines a couple paragraphs about an interesting boater you have know or your best boating story!



BlueGrass Wildwater Association  
PO Box 4231  
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