

BOWLINES

Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association Nov/Dec 1998

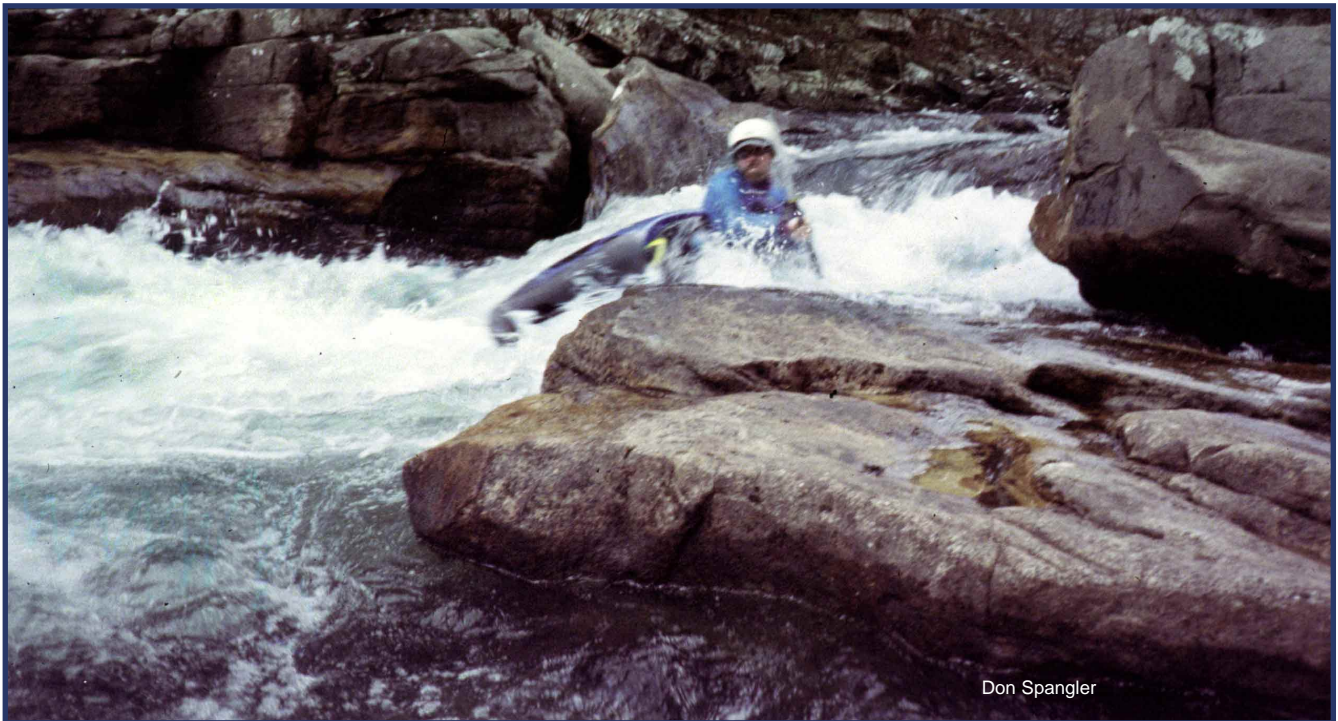


In This Issue:

Save Black Mountain!

Corkscrewed on Section IV
30th Anniversary of the National Wild & Scenic Act
Russell Fork Festival Recounting
Chain Saws on the River?

A Stronger Than Ever Year!



Don Spangler

The Prez, Beel with a stronger than ever low brace!

Hey folks, another year has come and gone and the Bluegrass Wildwater Association is stronger than ever! As 1998 draws to a close we can reflect on a fun year of paddling and fellowship. All of the BWA events went extremely well because of your enthusiasm and generous donations of time and energy.

The National Paddling Film Festival was bigger and better than ever this year. We saw some excellent films and had an outstanding silent auction. The safety poster contest was a fine new addition that helped get kids involved with the NPFF. A big BWA hand goes out to the NPFF Coordinator Barry Grimes and the Film Festival Committee for organizing this huge event.

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. As this year's clinic director I know how hard the club worked to pull this thing off. Thank you all for sharing your knowledge and experience with the newbies.

Continued on page 2

Stonger than Ever...cont.

During the Summer months the club participated in several conservation events. We had a clean-up on Elkhorn Creek and participated in a clean-up on the Red River. Our conservation Officer, Steve Powers, conducted water quality and habitat studies on the Russell Fork. He hopes to bring attention to the fragile nature of the area by documenting the types of aquatic life in the river. Hopefully, land development officials will see from his information what a wonderful and fragile gift we have in the Russell Fork. Thank you Steve for all your efforts.

In late July 10 of us headed to the Madawaska Kanu Centre in Barry's Bay Ontario, Canada. We were a mixed bag of beginner, intermediate, and advanced canoeists and kayakers. The instruction was top notch and big fun was had by all. Thanks go out to Dave Merrifield our accountant and to Ben Askren our road manager.

In August we had the club party. Past-President Bruce Rishel orchestrated the shindig down by the Ocoee. We camped at OAR and were unencumbered by the local constabulary. There was fine food and drink for all. Winners of the food competition were: Duke Urch for his glazed Salmon, Valerie Vantrees for her South Western baked beans and the team of Prince Vittatow and Marrea Matthews for their delicious cobbler. Thank you Bruce for throwing a great party!

Speaking of parties, In September there was the Russell Fork Rendezvous. Wow, what a party!!! Brent Austin and company put on one hell of a bash with the intent of raising a unified voice to the concerns of the Russell Fork River.. There were bands all night long, arts and crafts, good food and kind energy. Thank you Brent for sharing your vision with us and taking your time and talents to make this such a memorable event.

In November our pool sessions began. Our safety officer, Ben Askren, scheduled the pool at the Cross Keys YWCA for another fun season of indoor roll practice and instruction. He has also scheduled Red Cross lifesaving classes to be held in January. In addition, there is talk of a river rescue clinic to be held in the spring. Ben has worked really hard this year planning these events to help us become safe boaters capable of helping others in need. Thanks Ben.

So, as we close out 1998, our cycle of club activities continue and the BWA grows. Our mentors grow wiser and yesterday's students become today's teachers. Thank you all for making this a fantastic year. On behalf of the Steering Committee I wish you the very best during this holiday season. May Santa be kind to you and may God bless you during the new year.

Bill Lynch
President

BOWLINES

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

Club Officers 1998-99

President	Bill Lynch	502-682-3967
Vice-President	Ben Newman	606-278-5694
Treasurer	Richard Smithers	606-887-5906
Secretary	Dave Merrifield	606-223-5943
Safety	Ben Askren	606-255-2768
Program	Tim Miller	606-224-3827
Newsletter	Don Spangler	606-277-7314
Conservation	Steve Powers	606-264-9678
National Paddling		
Film Festival Co-ordinator	Barry Grimes	606-623-9067
Equipment Coordinator	Mike Molnar	606-263-4430
At-Large Members:	Zina Merkin	606-268-2508
	Amy Shipman	606-278-4236
Past President	Bruce Rishel	606-245-8096

Join in on the Fun!

BWA website: 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: donspang@aol.com or to princv@sprynet.com



BWA Classified Ads

A videotape of the 1998 Interpretive Freestyle Canoe Exhibition held at the '98 Southwestern Canoe Rendezvous in Houston, TX is now available. The tape includes individual performances by members of the Freestyle Committee, a group "flash" number, and a demonstration of Greenland kayaking skills. Send a note saying you'd like a copy and a check for \$20 to Marge Cline, 1343 North Portage, Palatine, IL 60067.

For Sale: Perception Dancer XS, teal, used 5 times. \$450 with sprayskirt.

Steve Boggan
email address = Dayspring7@aol.com
call 277-7227

Save Black Mountain!

By Tom Hansell

Where is Black Mountain and why is it important?

Black Mountain forms the border between Harlan County, Kentucky and Wise County, Virginia. At 4,139 feet, Big Black is the highest peak in Kentucky. All of the land in Kentucky above 3000 feet is on Black Mountain.

Because of its altitude, Black Mountain is home

to many rare and endangered species. The Black Mountain Dusky Salamander, the Indiana Bat, the Red Backed Mouse, the Turk's Cap Lilly and the



Drawing of Black Mt. Dusky Salamander by 4th graders at Wallins Creek Elementary in Harlan County, Ky.

Painted Trillium are just a few of the rare plants and animals that live on Black Mountain. The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission says, "Ecologically and biologically, (Black Mountain) is the crown jewel of Kentucky". Black Mountain is an important part of the cultural and natural heritage of Kentucky.

What is the threat to Black Mountain?

Over one thousand acres of Black Mountain have already been strip-mined. Jericol Mining, Inc. has asked the state of Kentucky for a permit to extend their existing strip-mine to within several hundred feet of Kentucky's highest point. Jericol's permit application is for a 460-acre contour strip-mine. In contour strip-mining, the forest cover is destroyed and the top-soil removed to expose the coal seam below. Under federal law, contour strip mines have to be restored to their original contour. Another section of Black Mountain may eventually be mined using the mountaintop removal method. In mountaintop removal, the land does not have to be restored to its original contour. In both strip-mining methods, the dirt and rock resulting from strip mine blasting will likely be dumped into mountain hollows destroying freshwater streams and animal habitats.



The FAA radar station at the peak of Black Mountain

Who owns Black Mountain?

U.S. Steel bought Black Mountain in the twenties. The coal underneath the mountain was to fuel their steel mills in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Anti-trust laws and corporate mergers have split the ownership since then. Today, Penn Virginia Resources Corporation, and Ark Land Company – a subsidiary of Arch Minerals, own most of Black

Mountain. Many people feel that because it is the highest point in the state and is home to so many rare and endangered species that Black Mountain really belongs to all Kentuckians.

What is the legal status of Jericol Mining's permit application?

Currently, the state is reviewing the permit application. The deadline for public comments is December 11. The state will announce if the permit is granted or denied by January 13, 1999. The Kentucky Resources Council is filing a motion to declare Black Mountain as "lands unsuitable for mining". If it holds up in court, the motion will stop mining on Black Mountain. Perhaps the best way to preserve Black Mountain is for the state to buy a part of the mountain for a state park. It is the highest point in the state, after all.

River Issues:

The headwaters of four rivers flow from Black Mountain's steeply wooded slopes. The Poor Fork of the Cumberland River, The North Fork of the Powell River, The North Fork of the Pound River (which eventually flows into the Russell Fork), and the Clover Fork of the Cumberland River all begin on Big Black. If the headwaters of these rivers are damaged, recreational uses of the rivers such as paddling, fishing and swimming will also be effected.

Native Brook Trout have survived in the upper tributaries of the Cumberland and Powell Rivers. The state of Kentucky has designated Fugitt Creek and Breeding's Creek - two tributaries of the Clover Fork - as Cold Water Streams and worthy of special protection under

Continued on pg.4

Save Black Mt.!.....Cont. from pg.3

state water quality laws. Yet when I hiked these creeks in March, I witnessed huge clearcuts on steep hillsides above the streams.

On Breeding's Creek, I saw where bulldozers had used the creek bank as a loading dock for log trucks. Local residents told me the logging was in preparation for future strip mining

"Once you mine the coal, and strip the timber, the jobs are gone, and you're left with this vast wasteland, what is there left? Some areas of this state belong to the people of the Kentucky and should be protected".

• *Earl Ball, Jr. 5th generation Harlan County native.*

At the head of the Clover Fork on the Kentucky side – above a nice stretch of canoeable class II water – lies a creek called Razor Fork. A strip job road starts at a coal tippie and leads up the creek. When I flew over Black Mountain last spring, the brown gash of the Razor Fork strip mine was a stark contrast to the budding hillsides above. We followed the strip mine bench for about a mile, where it turned into a muddy clear-cut scar. Trees have been pushed down to the creek in preparation for the future mining. Beyond the destruction, a steeply timbered ridge rises to the to the highest point in Kentucky. They are heading that way.

"It's been timbered and mined and tortured. I think the state has a resource that they don't realize they have. It's a unique area of Kentucky. There's no place in the state like that".

- Doug Sizemore, native of Lynch, KY which sits at the base of Black Mountain

How can you help save Black Mountain?

Come see Black Mountain:

" I wish that the people really could see this place for themselves. When you see it for real you wonder how we can treat it like this and sustain ourselves. It breaks my heart because it's such a beautiful land"

- Hazel King, 84 of Louellen, KY which lies between Little Black and Big Black Mtn.

To get to Kentucky's highest point, take state route 160 from Lynch, KY towards the Virginia line. At the

crest of the mountain, right at the state line, look for the sign directing you to the FAA radar tower. Follow the

paved road a little past the radar station, which looks like a giant golf ball, to the cluster of radio towers. Kentucky's highest point is at these towers.

To see the communities most directly effected by strip mining on Black Mountain, take state route 38 up the Clover Fork. Black Mountain is on the left.



Mountain top removal strip mine near Louellen, Ky. in Harlan county, Ky.

Write a letter to your local paper, or write to:

**Reader's Forum,
The Courier Journal
P.O. Box 740031
Louisville, KY 40201
Cjletter@louisv02.gannett.com**

**Letters to the Editor,
The Herald Leader
100 Midland Ave
Lexington, KY 40508
hledit@lex.infi.net**

Write your elected officials:

**Governor Paul Patton,
700 Capitol Ave
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502)564-2611
governor@mail.state.ky.us**

**Your State Representative or State Senator
State Capitol Annex
Frankfort, KY 40601**

Tell then Black Mountain belongs to all Kentuckians and should become a state park.

Write the state Office of Surface Mining:

**James Milam, Director Division of Permits
#2 Hudson Hollow, U.S. 127 South
Frankfort, KY 40601
Tell him to deny Jericol mining's amendment #2 to permit #8480140**

**For more information:
Kentuckians for the Commonwealth**

P.O. Box 1450
London, Ky 40743
blauderdale@kih.net

Kentucky Resources Council
P.O. Box 1070
Frankfort, KY 40602
(502)875-2428
FitzKRC@aol.com

Appalshop Community Media Initiative
91 Madison Ave
Whitesburg, KY 41858
(606)633-0108
cmi@appalshop.org

On the World Wide Web:
www.appalnet.org

Pass it on! Talk about Black Mountain with your family, friends, and neighbors

Sources for this article include:

Black Mountain: Mine it or Save it
Informational brochure by Crystal Rife and Edna Rogers
Southeast Community College Appalachian Center

Kentucky Alive
Newsletter of the Kentucky Biodiversity Council
Summer 1996 edition

Black Mountain Video
Produced by Appalshop's Community Media Initiative

Notice of intention to mine
Harlan Daily Enterprise
October 21, 1998

Kentucky Resources Council

Photographs by Roy Silver

Drawing of Black Mountain Dusky Salamander by
Wallins Creek Elementary Fourth Grade Class

Tom Hansell works for Appalshop, a grassroots media arts center in Whitesburg, KY He is currently producing a documentary video about the Russell Fork river. (Editor: The BWA has been a supporter of Appalshop and this video.)

Strainer Clearing on Yellow Creek

Yellow Creek at Daddy's Creek Canyon in the Emory Obed is an awesomely beautiful creek. It has large boulders with an overhanging canopy of mostly pine bordered with rododendrum and azaleas.

The Bluegrass Wildwater Association was represented by Marrea Matthews, Don Coaplen, Valarie Vantresse, Bruce Richel, and myself. Don's brother Dan, an independent boater and John Rose of Dagger Canoe rounded out the group that descended into the Yellow creek stream bed.



The BWA Chain-Saw Gang

Each of us carried a chain saw, oil and gas. It became immediately apparent who knew how to handle a chain saw. Dan and John took control of the big strainers with their long bladed saws. By big strainers I mean those you could not get your arms around. Just by guessing, we figured some of the big trees were 60 to 75 years old. The rest of us worked on smaller strainer groups.

The women in this group, although not as experienced as the fellows, certainly put on a show. Valarie had the bad luck of getting the saw which never seemed to start easily. She built up quite a few techniques in jerking that starter cord. But, once it started she was relentless in clearing each and every limb. Marrea liked to analyse where the best saw cut would be made and where to cut so the saw wouldn't bind. I followed the rule of not cutting over my head and handing it off to a fellow when you had to wade water and cut.

It turned out being a full day of hard labor for each and every one of us. I want to compliment the guys with us that day. They didn't seem to mind hanging out with women welding chainsaws. And you know, I like to think it will make some boaters' day a lot more fun on Yellow creek.



A lean, mean sawing machine!

SYOTR
Prince Vittitow

30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT

Beuren Garden

When the BWA sponsored the Russell Fork Rendezvous, in retrospect, we missed a great opportunity to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing by President Lyndon Johnson of the landmark legislation creating the National Wild And Scenic Rivers Act on October 2, 1968. I wasn't aware of the exact date prior to reading Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt's article "Streams Of Consciousness" in the October issue of RIVER magazine (P.O.Box 1068, Bozeman, Montana 59771). (A magazine for people who love rivers-call me and I will copy the article and send you a copy. Better yet, subscribe and receive a micro Leatherman tool with an intro. Subscription).

Oh well, at least we celebrated a free flowing river on the anniversary weekend!

The NWSRA was the first federal law to actually protect RIVERS. It has aided in stopping many ill-conceived dams, mines, and other river destroying projects ever since enactment.

This anniversary brings to mind the inspiring experience Don Spangler and I had when we attended the 20th anniversary conclave and banquet in Washington, D.C. ten years ago. We met former Interior Secretary Morris Udahl, the Craighead brothers who drafted the legislation and other heroes of the river conservation movement. Frank and John Craighead saw American rivers being destroyed by dams, pollution, dewatering and diversion. According to Verne Huser who was running rivers before the passage of the act, John Craighead wrote in Montana Wildlife, "To maintain wild areas we must preserve the rivers that drain them."

How can I ever forget my daughter Jeannie walking into the banquet, surprising me, in an army field jacket? The next day, in a workshop, she had probing questions for the chief engineer from the Denver water dept. when they were actively trying to obtain approval for a dam on the South Fork of the Platte, which hasn't been approved yet). The next day she went back to Chapel Hill as Don and I headed back to Lexington full of inspiration to save a bunch of rivers.

American Rivers, formerly ARCC, was 25 years old in October. The Clean Water Act was also enacted in October, 26 years ago. October may be dismal for the stock market, but it has been great for rivers. October 1998 would be an appropriate time for all of us to rededicate ourselves to preserving our rivers. Maybe we can even lend our support to removing another damaging dam somewhere, such as is currently ordered on the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec in Maine.

When we support, with our dollars and our time, our

favorite river organizations, we help provide the power of numbers that can influence legislation affecting our rivers.

From a beginning protecting only 12 rivers to over 200 now protected the National Wild And Scenic Rivers Act has to be one of the all-time greatest legislative achievements of the Congress and the people of this country. Wouldn't it be great if the current Congress could accomplish something?

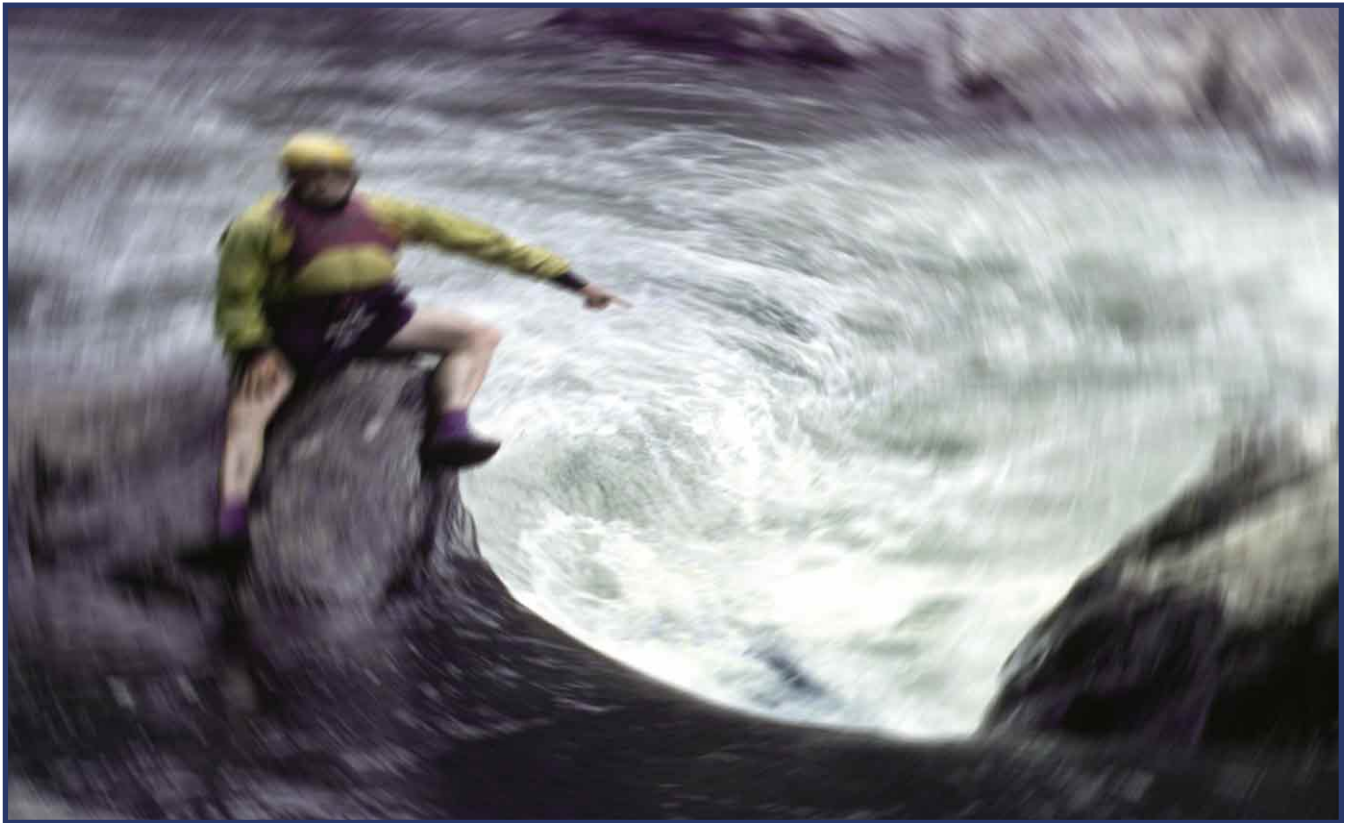
Tom Cassidy of American Rivers (according to Verne Huser in RIVER, Oct. 1998) says "we are in a downcycle as far as adding new rivers to the system". He calls our present predicament with a handful of short-sighted and presently powerful conservative politicians in Congress troubled and challenging"

I remember well when Chuck Hoffman and other activist conservationists from the Lexington area (Ky. Rivers Coalition) traveled to Washington each year to the annual "Dam-fighters Conference" working and sleeping in a tiny Washington office. They assisted mightily in saving the Red River Gorge (KY) from a dam. They faced their most important test when a dam on North Carolina's New River was approved by the Federal Power Commission in 1975. ARCC and others halted the project and secured a Wild And Scenic designation for the New. (Yes, the same New we run in WV). This success set an important precedent, according to Huser. "Many of the rivers in the WSRS were rivers that nobody wanted for dams. But on the New, ARCC proved that the 1968 act had the strength to protect a river in a face-off with a water project."

In the early eighties "ARCC helped de-authorize billions of dollars worth of environmentally damaging water projects". The BWA, after spending a week on the St. Johns River in N. Maine, lent our efforts to helping stop the authorized massive Dickey Dam. The St. Johns flows free today and is still a wonderful canoe camping experience in the North Maine Woods. (Thanks Sam). Don, Ed, Karen, Sam, me and others who have since moved have fond memories of our first "wilderness tripping" experience. We shared Ky. Bourbon around a campfire with a young man named Cohen who was running for Congress in Maine and we met a Maine paddler from Orono who later made and shipped me a personalized wood paddle, gratis. Yes, you meet great and unique people on rivers!

We support the AWA generously. We need to also continue to support American Rivers. All paddlers who love rivers should support with individual memberships in both organizations, as well as hard working regional groups like the West Virginia River Coalition. It wouldn't hurt to vote, too.

Corkscrewed On Section 4!



“Just before I went over I grabbed my legs and formed a ball. Although I looked like Greg Louganis in fast forward I never felt a thing and popped up in an eddy on river left. “

Lloyd Funkhauser

I never thought I could write this story because I have a scar on my brain with the words Corkscrew etched into it. It occurred when I was almost stuffed under a rock during an unscheduled swim on the Chatooga River. You might say unscheduled is a funny way to describe a swim but in this case it was. My first three years of paddling were so stressful that I would read a guidebook and worry about every rapid before I even saw it. Subconsciously I had already swum every big rapid. So on the day of this swim it was a big surprise because I was feeling good.

It has always been amusing hearing someone explain their swim and I have heard countless stories over the years. Since I took a swim and lost a boat at the same time I am bound by tradition to tell my tale of woe. The challenge is how to shift the blame away from myself.

In 1992 I was one of those rare people still paddling a

fiberglass kayak. A University of Tennessee student once asked me if he could carbon date my kayak. I finally succumbed to peer pressure and technology and bought a Perception Corsica. It was the hot creek boat at the time. I basically went from a 13 foot 2 inch boat to a 10 foot 9 inch boat. It was like going from a Mack Truck to a Mustang. I had to practice ferrying because the boat turned so easily.

It was a beautiful Memorial Day weekend with a very large contingent of BWA paddlers. Don Spangler, Beuren Garten, Fred Tuttle, Dave Martin and Rich Lewis were a few of the people on the trip. There were others but I can't remember. I do recall a TRSA feel to the trip and Don guiding a raft full of victims (I mean friends).

Surfing rapid, Screaming Left Turn, Rock Jumble, Woodall Shoals, Seven Foot Falls and Raven's Chute were all a blast. I was having a great day on the river with no swims, flips or negative thoughts. Even as we

were approaching the famous 5 falls section I felt calm and perhaps a little cocky.

First Falls looked dramatic but posed no problems because the lines were easy to spot. Corkscrew was next and everyone got out to scout. Corkscrew has 3 holes you must avoid. If you hit your line it is a piece of cake. The first boat through made it look easy. I liked that line and went for it. I thought I was on line until I caught a micro eddy I didn't want or had noticed from shore. Instantly I knew I was in deep shit. Water was flying by me on both sides and I wasn't sure exactly where I was but I decided to peel out and hope for the best.

I peeled out into a hole which was apparently not too far below me. I flipped instantly. I set up to roll but discovered that all I was doing was scraping rock. When I tried to switch to my off side my paddle was yanked out of my hands. I did not try to do a hand roll. As a matter of fact it never occurred to me. I really don't think it would have helped.

It was time to abandon my boat. Luckily I didn't stay in the hole. As I was going down stream in very fast water I saw Rich Lewis throw a rope. It missed! I heard someone telling me to swim to river left so I started swimming in that direction. Then someone was screaming at me to go river right. This is when I remembered Left Crack in the Rock! Those words saved my life. Although I didn't make it to the other side of the river I avoided Left Crack in the Rock.

A huge boulder sits between Middle Crack and Right Crack. As I was approaching the point where water either goes left or right I began to tire and realized I wasn't going to make it. This is when I first got scared. My forward momentum stalled for an instant and then water began to take me to Middle Crack. I HATE VER-TICLE DROPS! THEY SCARE ME! Just before I went over I grabbed my legs and formed a ball. Although I looked like Greg Louganis in fast forward I never felt a thing and popped up in an eddy on river left.

Man was I happy. People were already betting that I was going through Jawbone and Sock-em-Dog with HydroElectric Rock finishing the Trifecta. My euphoria lasted for about 30 seconds. That's when I saw my boat vertically pinned in Left Crack In The Rock with about a third of it sticking out of the water. When we got a rope attached I was ecstatic. When we pulled the grab loop through the plastic of the kayak with a triple Z-drag I was again depressed. I started feeling like I was manic-depressive. I abandoned the boat.

There I was sitting on a rock staring at my pinned

boat. I was feeling sorry for myself because I was embarrassed and economically challenged. Spangler had invited me along on a boating trip to California and now I didn't have a boat and really couldn't afford a new one. What could be worse?

While paddling the last mile and a half on Dandy Don's raft I had a chance to reflect on life's twists and turns. What happened? One minute I'm on top of the world kayaking one of the south's classic whitewater runs and the next minute I'm paddling a raft across a lake.

Then it dawned on me. Although I lost a boat I was very lucky. A throw rope missed me. Strike One! I almost swam into Left Crack in the Rock. Strike 2! I did swim through Middle Crack in the Rock. Strike 3! I could have struck out but I didn't. I shouldn't have paddled Section 4 in that boat. I should have spent more time learning how to handle the new boat. It was a lesson I will never forget.

Epilogue:

One day after the accident I drove to Dave Coffee's cabin in the Smokey Mountains with Bob Pfannenstiel. His cabin is within walking distance of the national park's boundary line. The last few miles of the drive is in a hollow followed by a very steep drive up a mountainside and at night is very dark. Once we got into the hollow I thought Dave was behind us for a few miles but I wasn't sure. As it turned out he pulled in right behind us at the cabin. He had never met Bob and didn't know he was coming.

Once inside Dave said that he had been following us for a few miles wondering if that was me but was perplexed by the second kayak. Without cracking a smile he said, "I figured you were going to the Chatooga because you brought a spare boat."

**Do you have a swim story
to beat this one?**

**Share it with the rest of
the BWA....we may all
learn things from it...at the
very least confession is
good for the soul!**

Jamming, drumming, dancing, biking, and of course, paddling, was the scene!

The 1998 Russell Fork River Rendezvous

Jamming, drumming, dancing, biking, hiking, and of course, paddling, was the scene. There is no river festival quite like the Russell Fork River Rendezvous. With an odd mix of "festivarians" from the average white water paddler, to environmental groups, to musicians and fans, to people with spiritual connections to the earth, a diverse group of people gathered together in the name of the Russell Fork River Rendezvous. This group celebrated the river, addressed issues affecting the river, paddled their butts off, or engaged in other activity outdoors, and was attended by anywhere from 500 to 800 people. The event cleared over several thousand dollars thanks to the generous donations from musicians, volunteers and the paying attendees.

The event was remarkable for its overall sense of fellowship, kindness and sense of purpose and connection to the river. It was a magical event. Even Joe Griner, of the AWA, commented the event was different and was magic. That is the whole point of the event, I commented. Without commercialism, corporate sponsors, or auspices of personal profit, the mere people-power was a true testament to the connection people feel with our increasingly scarce natural resources, such as the Breaks and the river that runs through it.

The event actually began Thursday afternoon when preparations began for the following day. Friday, as more people strolled in the P.A. system, set up by Joe Pannzo, began to blast out what turned out to be a very masterful scheduling of all the bands. Clearly, the music rocked! The caliber of the musicians was high and the performances were excellent. The music continued until nearly 5:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

The fourth annual race came off without a hitch. Chris Hipgrave won with a time of 9:58 through the gorge. Absolutely amazing!!!

Those rushing back to the festival found the music had already begun at noon. The Festival was interrupted throughout the afternoon with (yuck?) rain that damped the spirits of the musicians, but brightened those on the river. By 6:00 in the evening, the rain had ended, the sun was setting, and the moon was rising. Smells of warm food were wafting throughout the campgrounds, from sources such as Serene Joy Bus, Kentucky Heartwood, and D.J. and Serena's.

As dusk settled in, the music was awesome from a number of musicians while a very mystical fog was rising into the clear skies overhead. Saturday evening posted a large attendance to a large drum circle which was situated at a fire some distance away from the bandstand. There, amazing drumming took place amidst occasional poets, belly dancers, and one drunken

white boy who kept trying to jump over the fire. Unbeknownst to many, this same individual had prior experience dealing with these type situations before in remote jungle encampments along rivers in foreign lands. Not everyone was amused, but I was.

The music continued into the wee hours of the night and did not cease until nearly dawn on Sunday. But early birds were up and at it, heading off to the river, a good climb spot, favorite mountain bike trail, or to hike into the Gorge to see El Horendo. Others slept in, while others who never went to sleep simply meandered around the campground.

Thanks to the many people who volunteered to help clean up the facility. By Sunday evening the vast majority of all garbage and rubbish had been picked up. Before Monday, all the firewood throughout the campground, and all signs of the event were entirely removed. The campground was returned to the Kiwanis in better shape than it was before. In every aspect, the campground was now a fairground again, and the magical metamorphosis that was the Russell Fork River Rendezvous was completed.

In virtually every sense, holding the Russell Fork Festival on the first weekend proved to be most beneficial event. The weather was warm and even with a minor bit of rain, it was easy to remain comfortable. On the whole, the weather was excellent. Friday night was clear and cool, daytime temperatures were in the 70s, and the rain we had was intermittent during the day on Saturday.

Water levels were sufficient for the race. In fact, times were faster than the year before when increased water was in the course. This also tends to weed out persons who have not had much experience on the river, thus lessening the safety risk for those who have only been on the river a few weekends in a row but have decided that they are ready to run the race. There were no mishaps among the racers, and everyone ran good, clean lines. We had 26 people in the event, comparable to last year's race when there was more water and fewer conflicts with other river events. In fact, traffic from the festival benefited from people who were in the area for the Gauley. The first weekend of October appeared to be the best for the Rendezvous. Therefore the 1999 Russell Fork River Rendezvous is scheduled for the first weekend in October, until further notice.

See ya on the river!

Brent Austin

Russell Fork Race Results



New course record set on flows about 20% lower than past races.
 Andy beat all the two bladers except the wavehopper paddlers!!!!

1. Chris Hipgrave	9:58	wavehopper
2. Jeff Snyder	10:23	wavehopper
3. Boone Brothers	10:51	wavehopper
4. Andy Bridge	11:23	C-1 !!!!!!!
5. Jason Hale	11:28	
6. Jon Stockdill	11:30	
7. Greg Hoskins	11:34	
8. B J Johnson	11:36	
9. Bryan Jennings	11:49	
10. Eric Strittmatter	11:52	
11. Bryan Kirk	11:53	
12. Joe Pugh	12:02	
13. Chris Hull	12:06	
14. Shannon Carroll	12:10	k-1-w
15. Matt Terry	12:21	
16-17. Allistair Donald	12:28	
16-17. Eric Hendrickson	12:28	
18. John Lord	12:31	
19. Willy Witt	12:45	
20. Brent Austin	12:58	
21. Joe Baranski	12:59	
22. John Grace	13:10	
23. Harry Field	14:57	C-1
24. Hope Concannon	13:28	K-1-W
25. Paul Fantetti	16:22	O-C-1
26. Colby ???	????	Strider

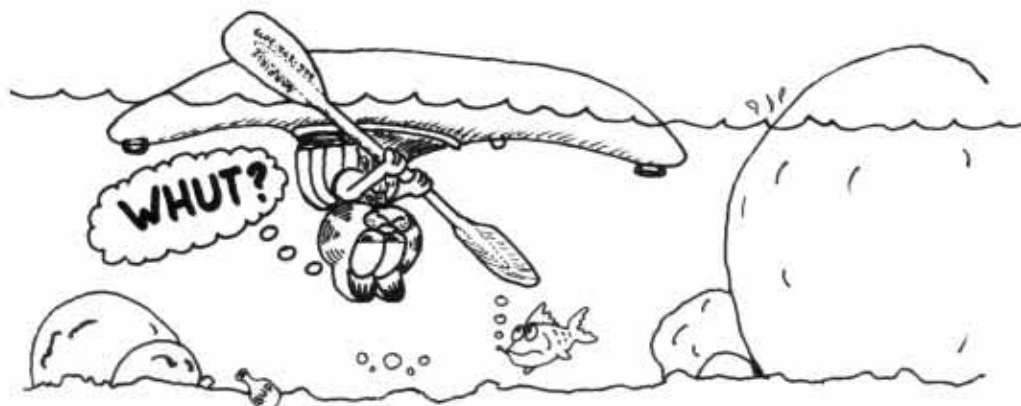
A Photo Essay of the 1998 Russell Fork Rendezvous

John Galik



BWA Winter Roll Sessions

Where: Cross Keys YWCA, off Alexandria Drive
When: 7pm to 9pm (fridays) Dec. 11,18, Jan. 8,15,22,29, Feb. 5,12,19, Mar. 5
Cost: Members 5.00 , 35.00 season (3.00 under age 12, 21.00 season)
Non-Members 8.00, 55.00 season (5.00 under age 12, 35.00 season)
Equipment & instructors may be limited at times (Both are volunteered).



Pool Rules enforced by the Life Guard:
No Swimming unless instructing (exiting a boat)
No ender/Squirts off the diving boards
No Standing/sitting on the decks of boats

Thanks to Canoe Ky for supplying Demo Equipment!

Next Issue: The National Paddling Film Festival 1999



BlueGrass Wildwater Association
PO Box 4231
Lexington, Ky. 40504