

# BOWLINES

Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association since 1976. November/December 2010

In this issue:

Russell Fork 2010 Badlin  
The Russell Fork & the Lord of the Forks Race  
Our Stikine Connection  
Before Sunrise....Stikine in a Day!  
Off the Cuff: Comments from the Forum Worth Remembering  
Winter Roll Sessions Info

Coming this Winter: CPR & First Aid  
Classes.  
Info will be posted soon.



Doing the Dance at Fist

Well, the Baddlun this year was BADASS! 20 entries this year made this the most successful Baddlun event at the RF yet. I remember when the RFRR Race (now LOF Race) first hit the milestone of 20 contestants. At least one senior (YT), a good number of fems including our local hero Sarah Mello, and some awesome boaters, including BWA members, both current and former, participated in this year's event. Jay Ditty (he promised to renew his BWA dues, lol) an outstanding C-1 paddler, won the event. The whole competition is an awesome feat of athleticism and a big BWA hand goes out to Brian Mattingly and Sarah Mello for their efforts and contributions to make this the coolest event at the RF since the RFRR and LOF race came into being.

Continued on pg. 3

# Looking Ahead

## Coming BWA Meetings

### Meetings:

**Panda Cuisine** <http://www.pandaky.com>

2358 Nicholasville Rd

Lexington-Fayette, KY 40503

(859) 299-9798

## New BWA Members

### October:

**Bill, Frank & Kelley Shelton**

**Bryce Haneline**

**Ron & Gabe Hunt**

**Josh Johnson**

### November:

**Annette Trotter**

<http://www.surfky-bwa.org> URL  
will be redirected to new permanent URL:  
[www.bluegrasswildwater.org](http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org)

## National Paddling Film Festival

**Buffalo Trace Distillery  
Frankfort, Kentucky  
February 25-26, 2011**

The 2011 NPFF Guest Speaker is Doug Ammons, a Montana native and a world class kayaker for the last 25+ years. He has done dozens of expedition first descents of rivers around the world, as well as steep creeks and rivers in the Rocky Mountains in the US, Canada, and Alaska. He is particularly known for his outrageous solo descents of highwater and extended wilderness Class V+ and VI runs.

For more info and to buy tickets,  
enter into the competition, etc.:

<http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/NPFF/>

**The BWA wishes to thank to thank Canoe Kentucky & Phillip Gall for their support.  
We urge you to patronize them for your outdoor needs.**



Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, POB 4231, Lexington Ky, 40504

### Club Officers 2009-2010

President	Allen Kirwood	859-351-3823
Vice-President	Clay Warren	859-326-0602
Treasurer	Fred Coates	859-223-7200
Secretary	Aleigha Barker	502-584-7545
Safety	Hanley Loller	859-806-9843
Program	Phil Bubba Sisk	859-396-7445
Newsletter	Don Spangler	859-277-7314
Cyber Communications	Don Perkins	859-887-0794
Conservation	Bethany Overfield	859-519-5691
Film Festival Coordinator	Brandon Jett	970-778-1002
Russell Fork River Festival Coordinator	Steve Ruth	606-754-4348
Equipment Coordinator	KC Franenstein	859-420-1514
At-Large Member:	Jason Powell	859-816-4308
Membership Coordinator	Heather Warman	502-695-7666
Past President	Hanley Loller	859-806-9843

### Join in on the Fun!

Join the BWA! BWAMembership \$20/individual; \$25/Family year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club equipment, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, a stream gauge guide, and web site with a listserve for member's messages.

Meetings are held at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each month at location announced on our website: <http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>  
Submission of newsletter articles can be on CD (Mac or PC) or typed. Pictures can be digital or ready to be scanned. Please include stamped envelope for return. Preferred method: Files can also be e-mailed to: [DonSpang@aol.com](mailto:DonSpang@aol.com)



## Enjoy this issue of Bowlines?

**Check out Bowlines Online Archive with many great issues going back to 1998!**

### Issue Archive:

[http://www.surfky-bwa.org/html/bowlines\\_arcN.html](http://www.surfky-bwa.org/html/bowlines_arcN.html)

A must read for all members, our 30th Anniversary issue:

[http://www.surfky-bwa.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv\\_Aug06.pdf](http://www.surfky-bwa.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv_Aug06.pdf)



<http://www.phillipgalls.com/>



Brian Matternly at El Horendo

Bart Bledsoe, who just started paddling the RF at release levels last weekend, competed in the Baddlun this year as well. That bro is a heck of an athlete out there and I love paddling with him. What a great head he has for this sport, not to mention he is in great condition. This event is not just about the win. The fact that these boaters complete this event, is no small undertaking. All of them, every single one of these contestants are in great shape and good solid athletes.

The Baddlun coincided with perfect weather in the 80s both days, and Elkhorn City's Paddler Appreciation event at Carson Island. There was a really good crowd at the event, many BWAers and boaters from Kentucky of course, but also plenty of folks from all over. I love the interface the boating community enjoys with the local folks in Elkhorn City. They really mean it when they appreciate us. (Don't forget to buy your gas, food, anything you can, in EC, btw).

Saturday had some first time runs on the RF gorge at release for a few folks. I watched Mark Dossett have

some big excitement a Climax, but he seemed to have good runs everywhere I saw him and Gerald's group beforehand. With our group we had a bro named Caleb who came with Fred from Cincinnati and had his first run down and wanted a lead down from me. I didn't think I knew him until we met and he reminded me. Interesting side story, Caleb reminded me that we had met one time and one time only a number of years back. I went to the Elkhorn when it was running juicy, perhaps 2.5 to 3 feet to do a solo run. Caleb was there and asked if he could run with me and help with shuttle. We did not know each other. I used to run the dam all the time at those levels, and it is pretty easy to do, provided you hit a good boof and do not pencil in. On this day, I did not boof well, and ended up in the hydraulic and had to swim out. Caleb walked it. We paddled down and I never saw him again - until this weekend when he realized that I was the same guy. He seemed undaunted to follow me though. For all I knew, I had cured him of a desire to ever boat again. But, that is not what happened as he ripped it up on the RF and I was thrilled to show him the run.

John Mello paddled solo to catch up with us on Saturday near Fist. I love paddling with that brother -

he is super strong and smooth out there. He had taken his bud Bill down the Upper for his biggest water experience and bolted down to find us. Supa cool. Dustin and Phillip were with us too. My old school paddlin buddies, still stylin it out there. Good day, paddled down to the festivities at Carson Island and - not surprisingly, I went to bed early - perhaps by 9, while my senior division bro, YT, by his own reports, stayed up til nearly 11. Hmmm, and he should have been more tired than me.

Sunday was a great crew of BWAers and friends putting in at Bartlick. I love boatin with my peeps and we had a ball on the Upper. At Garden Hole, some of the crowd declined running down into the gorge, so we cruised on down with Brandon paddling down to Camp Branch to check out that section with full release in it ( I think he liked it - we will get him in the RFG before he knows at release), and Wes Prince joined our group of 6. Me, John Mello, YT, Wes, Bart and Jeremy Waters put on the gorge around 12:30 and did not see really anyone until we got down to Triple Drop. Small crowd in the gorge on Sunday, with day time highs in the mid 80s. (No dry suit for me this weekend! Felt like summer time out there).



The adoring crowd waits for the racers on a warm & sunny rock.

We paddled down to Carson Island with some other good friends, loaded up and drove home by dark. Gotta love that kinda day.

Great weekend, with great friends. Can't wait to be back next weekend too.

SYOTR,

Brent



## Jay Ditty, Winner of this years Russell Fork Baddlun

Jay is from Ashland Ky, (his sister is tennis prodigy, Julie Ditty), and his father is a physician in Ashland. Jay is married to Charlotte, they have a brand new baby boy named Sawyer. They now live in Morgantown WV where he is an ER Doctor.

He has been coordinating and assisting with the LOF race since he took it over from Greg Hoskins who took it over from Brent Austin. Jay has been a Bluegrass Wildwater Association member since the late 90s when he live in the Lexington area while going to school. Great resource and first class C-1 racer.

## 2010 Russell Fork BaddlunResults

1 - Jay "Cylon" Ditty	2:26:31
2 - Brian Menzies	2:28:04
3 - "Shoeless" Charles King	2:28:55
4 - Gareth "Golden Boy" Tate	2:29:51
5 - Delaney Albright	2:34:18
6 - Chris Galloway	2:39:32
7 - Drew Austel	2:44:10
8 - Joey Jerrell	2:44:46
9 - Brian Mattingly	2:45:58
10 - Taylor Fearington	2:49:08
11 - Matthew "Trek" Walker	2:49:44
12 - Jon Dale	2:56:50
13 - Jason Dillow	2:58:10
14 - Bart Bledsoe	3:02:09*
15 - Matt Rudolph	3:09:21*
16 - Dave "YTSnake" Thomas	3:10:55
T-17 - Anne Sontheimer	3:16:00
T-17 - Laura "4Real" Farrell	3:16:00
T-19 - Sarah Mello	3:41:10
T-19 - Lila Menzies	3:41:10

\* swimma! (blow those whistles)

# Russell Fork and the Lord of the Forks Race



This year, for the first time, the RFRR and LOF race were split. This was due to the fact that I had sucked our RFRR coordinator, Steve Ruth, into my “Hillybilly cruise of the Breaks of the West” (Grand Canyon) that put on the week following in AZ for an 18 day trip. Another first was that the LOF race started below Fist at Skunk Beach (aptly named by nefarious local boaters in the nineties – we shall go unmentioned). Many of you will note the remarkably faster times than in years past, which is due to this starting point. Fist changed this past May in the high water event and is now extremely dangerous with the approach hole larger and feeding directly into the sieve/undercut. Anyway, I expect that the RFRR and LOF Race will reconverge next year on the same date

whichever date that may be.

One issue going back to when I did these events: the first weekend is better weather and draws more non-boaters to the area, something needed to attract increased interest in the ecotourism potential there. Draw back of course is that it is lower water (800 as opposed to 1100) and conflicts with the Gauley season overlap. In the 90s I sacrificed the high water weekend in favor of increased interest from all kinds of different folks and argued that if you were not already familiar with the RF, you should not race it. I still think it was the right decision for that time period. I am not in the racing scene and have not been for a long time. I totally defer to today’s racers on that. Also, I know Jay Ditty is long overdue to pass the mantle and it is my hope that someone will step up from the BWA, a racer, and take over coordinating this world class event that we have been connected to since the beginning.

Brent Austin

## Lord of the Forks Race Final Results

Place	Name	Boat	Time	Comments	Place	Name	Boat	Time	Comments
1	Mike Dawson	Stinger	6:29		29t	Ben Blake	Greenboat	7:40	
2	Bryan Kirk	Tornado	6:47		31t	Delaney Albright	Greenboat	7:41	
3	Isaac Levinson	Stinger	6:47		31t	Michael Patterson	T-canyon	7:41	
4	Geoff Calhoun	Greenboat	6:50		33	Chris Gallaway	Greenboat	7:42	
5	Chris Gragtmans	Greenboat	6:54		34	Russell Marcus	Greenboat	7:44	
6	Keegan Grady	Remix 100%	6:59		35	Adam Bixby	Corsica	7:46	
7t	Chris Hipgrave	Stinger	7:06		36t	Eric Henrickson	Stinger	7:48	
7t	Clay Wright	Stinger	7:06		36t	Eric Nies	Stinger	7:48	
9	Charles King	Greenboat	7:09		38	Paul Stamilio	Greenboat	7:50	
10	Ben Ledewitz	Greenboat	7:12		39	Brad McMillan	Greenboat C1	7:51	C-1
11	Eric Chance	Tornado	7:13		40	Matt Walker	Stinger	7:54	
12	Dustin Marquart	Greenboat	7:15		41	Kyle Hull	Jefe Grande	7:55	
13	Dane Jackson	Crossfire	7:20		42t	Keith Sprinkle	Stinger	7:58	
14	Nick Troutman	Greenboat	7:21		42t	Chris Wing	Momentum	7:58	
15	Jess Albright	Greenboat	7:22		44	Anne Hubner	Zet-Raptor	7:59	3rd place K-1 W
16	Strohmeier	Diesel 80	7:24		45	Jon Dale	Greenboat	8:06	
17t	Laura Farrell	Greenboat	7:27	1st place K-1 W	46t	Katrina Van Wijk	Greenboat	8:08	K-1 W
17t	Howard Tidwell	Tornado	7:27		46t	Jonathan Absher	Pirouette S	8:08	
17t	Jay Ditty	Stinger C1	7:27	C-1	46t	Mark Taylor	Jefe	8:08	
20	Scott Magley	Greenboat	7:28		49	Stephen Page	Corsica	8:13	
21t	Jeff Clewell	Greenboat	7:29		50	Kirk Eddlemon	Nomad 8.5	8:15	
21t	Clay Warren	Greenboat	7:29		51	Stephen Forster	Greenboat	8:18	
23	Mark Robertson	Greenboat	7:32		52	Brian Jennings	Mystic	8:23	
24	Adriene Levknecht	Stinger	7:34	2nd place K-1 W	53	Sarah Mello	Greenboat	8:25	K-1 W
25	Chris Gragtmans	Nomad 8.5	7:35	Ironman	54	Dewey Gibson	Burn	8:38	
26	David Herman	Greenboat	7:36		55	Mark Miller	Burn	8:40	
27	Brian Mattingly	Greenboat	7:37		56	Chuck Armentrout	Stinger	8:46	
28	Jon Crain	Greenboat	7:39		57	Willy Witt	Jefe Grande	8:50	
29t	Steve McGrady	Greenboat	7:40						



# Our Stikine Connection...

*"It was everything I had dreamed it would be.  
A brutally consequential puzzle immersed in perfect beauty."*

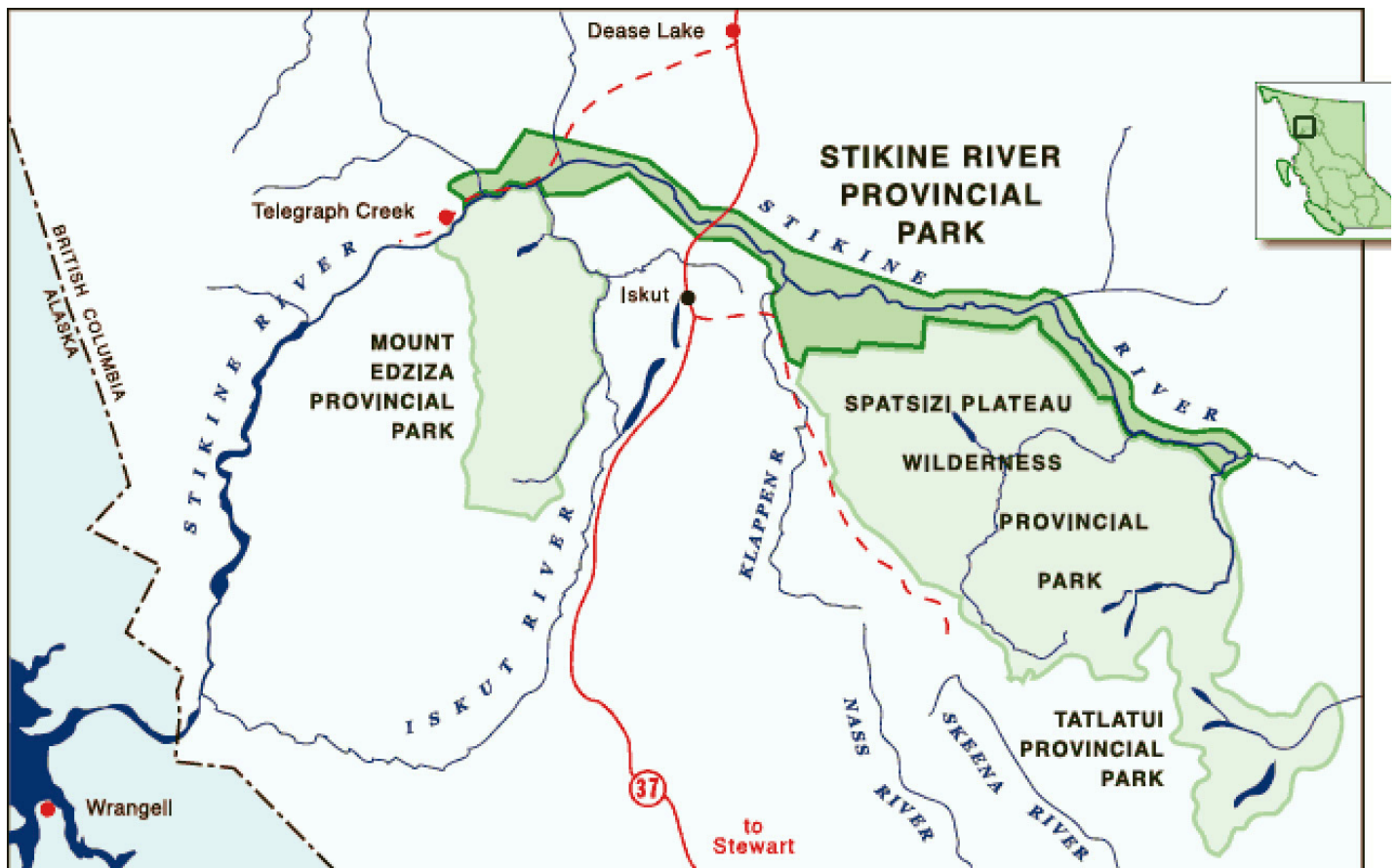
*Jeff West*

*By Don Spangler*

Expedition whitewater paddlers nowadays often think they have to travel to remote corners of the earth to find extreme runs. But one of the most spectacular and extreme whitewater runs in the world is in North America, just across the border in British Columbia, Canada. The run is so extreme and difficult that in the almost 40 years since it was first run only a handful of paddlers have been successful at running it. I am referring to the Grand Canyon of the Stikine.

The Stikine which flows into the Pacific Ocean out of Canada and through the southern tip of Alaska below Juneau is called the “Great River” by the Tlingit natives who live in the coastal lands. This “Great River” is born in the ice caves, glaciers and mountains that surround the Stikine Valley in northwest British Columbia some 600 miles inland. The headwater tributaries of the Stikine flow remote, wild and spectacular, gathering size and force as they flow toward its Grand Canyon. The native people of the main valley, call themselves Tahltans. Some live in the only permanent settlement along the river, Telegraph Creek just below the canyon, but they think of the whole valley as home. Most of river valley has changed little since it was first explored by fur traders of the Hudson Bay Company in 1838. Gold was discovered in 1861 on the lower Stikine below the canyon, but it had long fizzled out by 1867. In 1866 Western Union rushed to run a telegraph line from San Francisco through British Columbia and Alaska across the Bering Strait to Russia. It passed across the lower Stikine but the effort was abandoned when Western Union saw it had lost the race. John Muir traveled the lower 1/3 of the Stikine in 1870, calling it a Yosemite a hundred miles long. It is thus understandable that much of the Stikine area is now part of four provincial parks created in the eighties.

Caribou, sheep and wildlife are still watched over by their old predators such as the coyotes and wolves. Grizzlies and black bears also roam the valley. A large heard of mountain goats watch over the Stikine and the recent occasional river visitors from the steep walls of the canyon. Above and below the canyon, the river remains remote and provides exploring canoers with a true wilderness trip experience. Arctic grayling and rainbow trout are found in the river and in the tributaries. From



the mouth of the Stikine to the Grand Canyon, Chinook salmon and steelhead are plentiful and provide bald eagles by the thousands a feast at the Stikine's estuary. This "Great River" remained largely unknown until a paddler from US saw it on the map while on his way to run another river. That was the legendary Rob Lesser.

Rob Lesser first scouted the Stikine was in 1977 when he chartered a plane to fly over it while he was on his way to Alaska to paddle the Susitna with Walt Blackadar and Barney Griffith. What he saw excited the whitewater paddler and explorer in him. In 1981 he returned along with Don Banducci, Lars Holbek, Rick Fernall, John Wasson and an ABC television crew with a helicopter to film a first run of the canyon for its American Sportsman program. The American Sportsman was the first national TV program to bring the sport of whitewater paddling to the public's eye. It, along with National Geographic captured the attention of us early paddlers of the time. We waited for that once a year 15 minutes or so that we could watch an expert paddler run rapids we had not even dared imagined was possible!



Rob Lesser

Rapid with names like Entry Falls, Wasson's Hole, The Wall, V-Drive, Pass or Fail, The Hole that ate Chicago, The Hole that ate the Hole, and Scissors only hint at what awaits a paddler in the canyon. The size and difficulty of what is often a river wide rapid is not for the feint of heart. A run through the Grand Canyon of the Stikine is a test for admittance to a very exclusive club of top paddlers who have the skill, courage and daring to do so.

That first run of the canyon in 1981 was historic and ABC would show the world video of one of the great exploratory efforts in whitewater paddling. But it was also a great disappointment to Rob Lesser and his adventurers. The helicopter was great for scouting and ferrying people or gear in this first effort. But things fell apart when the film crew decided they had enough footage for a program and were leaving along with the helicopter. Because of this lost of logistics, the exploratory paddlers were forced to quit before the whole river canyon had been run with the hope to come back another time to do the whole run.

In 1985, when ABC aired that run of the Stikine Canyon, Rob returned to the Stikine with Lars Holbeck and Bob McDougal for a complete descent. The team also included a raft with seven members from California and a zodiac with Roland Jonas from Calgary. This time a Canadian film crew with a helicopter stayed with them the whole trip and the resulting film was called "Hell & High Water".

The Grand Canyon of the Stikine has a reputation among paddlers as described by kayaker Doug Ammons as "one of the most challenging [kayak] runs anybody has ever found". Doug an early explorer of the canyon is noted by Outside Magazine as being in the top 10 adventurers since 1900. For a fuller history of Stikine Canyon runs read Doug Ammons "A Short History of the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River" which is on his website (<http://www.dougammons.com/>). Doug did a trip in the canyon in 1989 with Rob Lesser and Bob McDougall that met met with a near disaster. Learning from that, he would come back in 1992 to become the only one to ever run the Grand Canyon of the Stikine solo.

The Stikine Canyon squeezes a large volume river that has cut through layers of volcanic rock to form narrow, thousand foot near vertical-walls. For some comparison many of us can relate to, the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon has an average gradient of less than 10' per mile, the canyon of the Stikene has an average of 45' per mile. By those few who have run it, it is considered to be

one of the most demanding authentic class V whitewater runs they know of. The canyon run is some sixty miles with dozens of incredible class V rapids. That explains why after some three decades since that first run only around some 50 paddlers have managed to accomplish that feat! A number of those who have tried over the years, including Rob Lesser and his groups, have met with near disaster and death. At times they ended up crawling out of the canyon after making it only part way through .... barely making it out alive.

This year a friend of mine who is known to many others in the BWA, Jeff West, etched his name in the history of the Stikine when he ran the Grand Canyon of the Stikine. Not just once, but twice! The second time he paddled the whole canyon in a single day! His partners in this feat were Erik Boomer and Todd Wells.

Erik Boomer who is only 26, has now completed five Stikine trips. His first Stikine trip was when he was 19 when he and an 18 year old buddy of his ran the canyon on their own. Boomer has gone on to pioneer all kinds of huge waterfalls in the northwest. He loves paddling and makes his living as a photographer



Jeff West

Todd Wells, 18, is described as the northwest's best up and coming new paddler. He attended World Class Kayak Academy. since they ran the Stikiner a couple of months ago, he has been in Mexico and Costa Rica running some the biggest, gnarliest waterfalls in those countries. Jeff believes he is on the fast track to becoming an international paddling legend.

I first come across Jeff West years ago on the Ocoee. He was a videographer for a rafting company and I would watch him run a rapid, rush to get set up and then video a group of rafts running the rapid, then get back in his kayak and rush to get ahead of the group before the next good rapid. Years later he was on two of my Grand Canyon trips. Jeff had the same enthusiasm and zest to run everything and then, if possible would carry his boat back up to run or play the rapid again. He impressed me by eschewing the routes many would take by going into the meat of a rapid, like heading head on into Crystal hole rather than skirting it like I always have. At the end of the day while the rest of us were resting and having a toddy he would take his boat and play the closest rapid, thus entertaining us. Then, after the rest of us were relaxed and rested enough to start the nightly camp chores, he would be right there to do more than his share of them. What a great guy to have on a wilderness trip!

Jeff has been associated with the BWA for many years. He has volunteered as a judge at the NPFF and has run rivers with us. With his Ace Funyak business at the Ocoee he has rented us boats and some of us were fortunate enough to receive whitewater paddling instruction from him.

With his intense love of all things whitewater, Jeff West has lived the life that many of us envy. Now, with two successful descents of the Grand Canyon of the Stikine, something that caught our imagination (if you are an older boater) years ago when we watched Wide World of Sports, he has shown that dedication and determination can lead you to do amazing things. I know I speak for the BWA when I congratulate him for his successful runs on the Stikine.

Don Spangler



# Before Sunrise.... Stikine in a Day

*Jeff West  
Photos by Erick Boomer*

Erik Boomer

“Bear”, I yelled and frantically set up in my mummified sleeping bag. It was still dark and I turned my flashlight on expecting a Grizzly. Laughter came from a few feet away. Boomer and Todd are already in their dry suits, packing their kayaks. It is 5:13 am and I overslept by 13 minutes. I climb out of my sleeping bag and slide into my carefully folded Kokatat dry suit. I pull my river shoes on. I had laid my gear out the night before so I could step into it much like a fireman would jump into his suit if the alarm sounded. We are camped at the put in for the Grand Canyon of the Stikine. We are going to try to paddle the entire 50 some odd miles of this class V+ beast in one day.

It is completely dark at 6:00 am, but we are packed and slide our kayaks into the water. Its cold, we are more than a 1,000 miles north of the Canadian/U.S. border and only a few hours from the Yukon. Barely able to see we float downstream motionless, trying to conserve energy. Our hands are tucked in between our vests and chests trying to stay warm. The first six miles of

the Stikine could not be easier. Gentle rolling hills border a broad river with mild current. We float in silence. I visualize each rapid, mentally trying to thread a line through the massive features, dodging gigantic holes. Reminding myself, do not EVER let go of this paddle! DO NOT FREAKING SWIM!!!!!!!!!!

Twenty minutes of floating, and blue streaks of light begin to cross the sky. I can make out the silhouettes of my buddies, Erik Boomer and Todd Wells. Each floating motionless and spinning in the current. We float for another twenty minutes, and it is time to warm up. In fact, there is enough daylight at this point to paddle the first rapid. We are on schedule, but realize we could have started twenty minutes sooner. Knowing we may need every minute of daylight, we feel late!

We start paddling. I have my ritual warm-up routine, regardless of kayaking class I or V, it is the same drill: forward, forward, sweep, sweep, draw, draw, repeat. I paddle in a straight line alternating between the three things that will



hopefully keep me on line today: forward stroke, forward stroke, forward sweep, forward sweep, stern draw, stern draw. It feels good, I feel good, Boomer and Todd are getting fired up too and we fall into formation. Boomer knows the run. This is his sixth time to put on the Stikine. Todd and I are on our second trip. Boomer leads, Todd follows, I sweep. The day is starting and I could not feel more ready for what is about to happen. Its 6:55 am and we are charging through the last of the flat water. The river meanders back and forth as we approach Entry Falls. The Stikine takes a sharp turn to the left and is funneled between two massive and narrow 400 foot cliffs.

The cliffs look like giant gates opening from the greatest of all arenas. The current pulls us in like nothing I have ever seen. Boomer charges forward, passes the middle boulder, breaks right and disappears into the largest whitewater chaos few are fortunate to see. I see the line; follow the screaming tongue to the right and charge through the massive crashing waves. The Stikine in a day, hopefully, maybe.

#### The Dream:

Paddling the Stikine had been a great wish of mine for many years. Everything about it seemed amazing. After driving 70 hours from the southeast we were forced to rush our first Stikine trip due to weather and levels. The river was high and dropping about a 1,000 cfs per day. It had to be lower than 17,000 for us to put on. We were hoping for a two day window where the flow would be low enough before the incoming rains hit. We originally planned a 3 day trip, but with the high level and a large storm rolling in we had to rush the drive, put in a day early and finish before the rains came. The rains never materialized, so when we finished the first trip we still had two days. We were tired, but with a full day to rest, we decided to go for a one day express. We packed enough camping gear to turn our one day mission into another two day trip if need be.

#### Nerves:

The nervousness of starting our first trip was almost overwhelming for me. I had trained for a year to do this, but I really had no idea what to expect. The car ride from Tennessee had been a



roller coaster of emotions. It took the first three major rapids, Entry Falls, Wicked Wanda and Three Goats to build my confidence. I had never seen anything like this type of whitewater. Stacked, huge, complex rapids with monster holes, crushing diagonal waves, 3 foot tall surging eddy walls all surrounded by 1,000 foot cliffs. The Stikine makes other rivers seem two dimensional. I had always thought of water flowing downstream, side to side and sometimes upstream. Additionally, on this river the water is constantly exploding upward and sucking down. It felt like a giant roller coaster and monster trampoline combined. Waves would throw you into the air. Seams would pull you into deep mystery moves. The crashing diagonals were the painful part. These waves are so massive that when you hit them it knocks the breath out of you. Imagine the ghost of Paul Bunyan standing next to the rapid. Instead of swinging an axe he has a giant 30 foot long wiffle ball bat. As you charge your way through the rapid he squares up and knocks you into tomorrow. I have never been hit so hard by water. I can see how big water paddlers can

have good lines, stay upright and still break their ribs. And when you flip, you better hold on to your paddle like never before. The current wants to wrench the paddle from you. Dropping a paddle on this river could easily kill you.

The beauty of this canyon is without a doubt the greatest my eyes have ever seen. The whitewater offers the most amazing, fun and consequential puzzle imaginable. The canyon is colored in every shade of gray and green. However, the end result of a Stikine trip is usually black or white. You either succeed or you are lucky to survive. Swimming here will be the worst mistake you will ever make. Surviving more than a rapid or two out of your boat is unlikely. Actually being able to swim into an eddy is highly unlikely (the eddy lines are surging walls of water you can barely paddle through). If you survive a swim and make it to shore you are then confronted with a 1,000 foot cliff. If you survive the climb to the rim, my personal greatest fear is possible, becoming dinner for a Grizzly. The epic stories of paddlers climbing out of this canyon sound terri-



Erik Boomer

fying. Some groups have tried to quit and climb out only to find themselves trapped. They have to abandon their escape, return to the river and continue downstream. There seems to be two very different types of Stikine trips. You either have the trip of a lifetime or you are terrified and barely survive. A black or white outcome through a canyon painted in every shade of gray.

#### First Trip Goes Well:

The predicted rains, which rushed our first trip, never came. The second day, like the first, was amazing. We portaged Scissors and The Hole that Ate Chicago. My only bad line on the first trip was the ABC line at Site Zed. Of course, this is the only rapid where we took photos. There is a great photo of me dropping the main drop backwards. It felt how I imagine running Gorilla backwards at 13,000 cfs might feel. It worked out. Paddling through the Tanzilla Slot that first time was incredible. There is still plenty of class IV whitewater below the Tanzilla. The Mountain Goats are there to welcome you. Finally, you

have a chance to enjoy the amazing scenery and wildlife.

#### Levels and Gear:

Our first trip was at 13,500 cfs. The one day express was at 12,000 cfs. I was in a Jackson Villain. It handled the massive water well. The bow floats over most anything. The boat stayed dry and the removable bulkhead made packing gear a breeze. I wore a Kokatat GORE-TEX® Meridian Dry Suit and Ronin Pro rescue vest. When it really matters, Kokatat is the best. For footwear, I wore Five Ten Canyoneer boots. The grippy soles and ankle support kept the portaging and scouting safe.

#### One Day Express Goes Well:

There is so much great whitewater in there. Countless and constant un-named rapids go on for miles. Garden of the Gods I and II, The Wall I and II, Wassons, AFP, The Hole that Ate the Hole. V-Drive is the craziest rapid I have ever kayaked. Imagine falling 30 feet with 13,000 cfs



The emotions swirling around in your head as you commit to each rapid is mind blowing. You realize that you are far more dependent upon your paddle not to break, your skirt not to implode and your kayak to perform than anything else. Your buddies are there, but they have their hands full and really could not do much if you crash. It is just you and your gear. You obviously need the skills, preparation and training for this type of stuff, but what made all the difference was sheer determination. Jason Hale emailed me before I put on and said, "Do not ever quit". If the rapid is not working out as planned you simply have to paddle your ass off and make it work. Before each rapid I imagined having such a burning fire in my heart that when I blew the snot out of my nose flames shot out. It is funny to think about now, but I would growl before I hit the big waves.

We were not the first or the fastest to one day it, but that was definitely the best six and a half hours of kayaking I have ever done. The Stikine is everything I

under you. There is nothing like it! We rolled into it all, but portaged Scissors and the Hole that Ate Chicago again. Running V-Drive for the second time was even better than the first. We ran Entry Falls at 7:00 am. At 12:30 pm we arrived at the Tanzilla Slot. Six and a half hours after leaving the put in. We stopped and hiked for a bit and floated the next 12 or so miles to the takeout. We finished around 4:00 pm.

had dreamed it would be. A brutally consequential puzzle immersed in perfect beauty."

Jeff West

# Off the Cuff

## Comments From the Forum Worth Remembering

### Another RFG epic.....Dislocated Shoulder

Posted by: bethany (IP Logged)

Date: November 15, 2010 02:07AM

this is going to be long. i'm sorry in advance.

i dislocated my shoulder on saturday on the rfg. this was my first attempt at running the gorge and this is my story.

i felt pretty good going into it. i've watched an endless amount of rfg footage and talked about every rapid on the rfg over and over again with gorge veterans for months now. i've been holding off on running it to make sure i was mentally and physically prepared for it. i believe i can safely say i was, despite my mishap.

as many of you know, i dislocated my shoulder in march on the little river in the smokies. i have worked tirelessly at rehabilitating it. i occasionally had some shoulder pain, but overall, my shoulder felt strong and my range of motion was good. my mental game was pretty good going in; i was nervous, but the good kind of nervous. the kind that keeps you aware but is not debilitating.

i put on with a rather large group (emily g, brandon, bart, jeff f, johnny, will, brian, dallas, bruce c, robert h, and roger--did i miss anyone?). the level was ~240 cfs.

the warm up down past camp branch went great. i was feeling good and very confident.....but.....i had trouble at door number three in let's make a deal. i tried to catch the little turn around eddy and barely caught it, but then lost it and got flushed into a rock. i flipped and set up to roll but my paddle got stuck. i ended up getting a little hung up in the rocks on the last drop and i swam. bummer. my paddle was still stuck right where it got hung up and bart fished around and found it for me. this was a relief.

i was bummed that i swam, but decided not to be too heady about it and charged ahead. from here down to third drop of triple drop i had great lines. i took the right line at tower. i found the sweet spot (with bart's help; he was there to point it out to those of us who needed the extra beta) and was stoked to see the whole rapid for the first time! Holy \$hit it's pretty in there!

Maze went well (was thankful to have a good guide through here). First drop of triple drop was a dream. So was second drop. I was feeling great! I sat and watched people run third drop. I did not feel any pressure to run it; lots of people didn't. But, damn, I wanted to fire it up

because i was feeling good. And i had watched pretty much every low water line doing my rfg homework so i felt like i had a good handle on it.

so, i decided, with everyone down there in the eddy at the bottom, to go for it. i felt like i had a pretty decent placement off of the first drop. i went as far river left as i could and then dropped off. i think i landed o.k. (spectators might be able to fill in some of this for me because i couldn't see it). i got pretty darn close to the dragon's tooth. and things were crazy and i started to flip and thought i was going to go through the right slot upside down. i decided to drop my paddle because i didn't want to hurt my shoulder (gasp!) by getting the paddle get stuck in that slot.

and so i hung out upside down, thinking to myself, that i would try a hands roll when i got to the bottom (i've been working on them at the pool).

and life upside down was fine. it was oddly fluffy. but it seemed to be taking a while (when i flipped i did not travel though the slot, i went to the left of the dragon's tooth and that's why it felt like a longer ride than it should have). and then i felt a big drop. and i was uncomfortable. and i couldn't hands roll despite finally getting to the pool. because my arm would not work. so i popped my skirt with my left arm.

i knew i had dislocated my shoulder. again. and i just floated. i quietly told brandon that it was out. and everyone worked together to get me to the side. and it hurt like a son of a bitch. and i was crying. mainly because i knew at that second that i would not be able to kayak for months. dallas got it back in for me in a matter of minutes. this is the second time dallas has done this for me. both times, it went right back in. this time it was crunchier and there were two loud pops, but i was instantly relieved. dallas thank you. thank you. thank you.

the whole crew worked with me to get me and my boat across the river and up to the tracks. bart hiked out with me. and everyone else, after working their asses off, went ahead and finished up their runs. bart offered to carry my boat. but i'm hard headed and would not let him. so i drug the java with a rope to garden hole. i had to. and i cried the whole way. and pretty much blew snot rockets all over my drysuit the whole way. and i didn't care.

i'm 99% sure that i did not even hit a rock when i dislocated. i think the power of the hole in the third drop (despite the low water) was enough to knock my shoulder out of socket. i guess it wasn't as strong as i thought. and i guess it was most likely going to happen sooner

than later again. who knows.

so, here i am. it's sunday. and i hurt like hell. and am sad as hell. and want to tell you all how upbeat i am. and about how i think i'll be back stronger than before. i know all of that is true. but i'm going to take a couple of days to just be sad. and then i'll most likely get mad. and then i'll just go and have the damn surgery and i'll be fine.

i want to thank, from the bottom--the very bottom--of my heart everyone who helped me. you were all wonderful. it was a chore getting me up that effing hill. and part of me feels really bad for putting you all in that predicament. and i apologize.

i can never thank you all enough.

love,  
bethany

**Posted by: Powhoundus (IP Logged)**

**Date: November 15, 2010 04:19PM**

I'm really sorry to find out you dislocated again. I was really hoping you would be the only kayaker I've ever heard of that only had one dislocation. I'm glad though that you had great support at hand and the evac went smoothly.

I feel that kayakers (and some other sports) should be treated differently than other athletes after primary dislocation. If a hockey player dislocates again (another sport with almost guaranteed repeat dislocation) they'll miss 6-8 mos of play but they won't die and medical care is immediately at hand. Contrast this with a kayaker in a remote Class V gorge. The injury at best will lead to an epic, possibly dangerous for others rescue and evac and at worst, may cost the paddler their life if it happens in a bad spot.

I've been gaining interest in doing some research and writing a paper that would hopefully help change the way shoulder dislocations are treated by kayakers from the initial injury. The biggest hurdle (besides the time requirement) is that obtaining data from outdoor recreation athletes is a nightmare compared to team sport athletes. It would be either very expensive (sending a survey to most orthopedists in the country - we could probably skip the ones in S. FL or nearly impossible (contacting most kayakers with history of shoulder dislocation). The premise would be that the data will support Bankart repair of kayakers after the initial dislocation. I haven't looked at the follow up data in a while, but when I was in my Sports Med fellowship it was well known that after a Bankart repair you are more likely to dislocate the opposite shoulder than the repaired one. The trade off is some loss of mobility, primarily forward flexion and abduction (to overhead position). This may require a modification of the roll to the sweep roll, as it doesn't require as much shoulder stretch in the setup. Might as

well learn it for both sides as it keeps the shoulder in a safer position from setup through the roll if done correctly.

I'm bummed that you are going to be out for so long Bethany. Work hard in your rehab and we'll see you late next Spring / Summer. Meanwhile, be sure and reach out to your friends to keep you busy and sane in the meantime!

For those that have missed this in the past, here's a link to the NOC Paddling School Blog on shoulder safety. I've never seen a better illustration of this very important topic:

[nocpaddlingschool.blogspot.com]

Wes

I saw you, actually heard you first at Pillow, but was not really sure what was up until you told me. And, I really didn't know you were worried about a repeat episode. On the otherhand, with our small group that day, it was pretty easy to stay in contact throughout the run. And, the fact is Wes, you are such a darn solid boater that I really don't keep an eye on you much at all, other than just the usual buddy check as to where each of us are on the river or approaching a rapid.

On the nose plug thing, I have never worn them ever. As a swimmer when I was a kid I did not wear them either and I think that trained my ability not to aspirate water, really hardly ever at all. I try not to flip much, but it is inevitable. I had two flips on the Gauley this season and both were at Pillow Rock at Volkswagon. I am pretty sure that I must subconsciously keep a certain amount of pressure to prevent that from occurring - even in the meat of a rapid.

I also don't think that I would want to block my ability to breath through my nose as well, since other than an occasional puffer fish breath with my mouth, a lot of my breathing and breath control involves my nose. I don't see how you all paddle with them from my perspective.

And you all look funny in pictures with them on. Wink.

Brent

Posted by: Powhoundus (IP Logged)

Date: October 01, 2010 02:26AM

**My Madawaska Trip Report**

Posted by: abtrfly4u (IP Logged)

Date: August 05, 2010 04:22AM

Let me premise this by saying  
IT IS REALLY REALLY LONG!!!

Saturday July 24th - I headed out around 8 am to pick up my Bro & head for MKC. As is par for us Boaters - our 10am departure time turned into more like a Noon departure time - No biggie - With a 7am Check in at MKC Sunday nite - We were under No Rush to get there. After about 7 hours we reached the Canadian Border at Port Huron/Sarnia. My Border crossing interview consisted of mainly being asked about My Tattoos. Todd got asked what he did for a living, and then I got asked about my Tattoos again. You'd think he'd never seen a Chic with Ink before.

After the guy had satisfied his curiosity about my art, we were on our way towards Toronto. We pulled onto Yonge Street around 10ish, checked into the Marriott for 1 last nite of a Super Sweet Bed to sleep in and headed out for a bite at Hoop's Sports Bar .... FOOTBALL!! I was in heaven! CFL was on and for a moment the happiness of seeing Pads and Pigskin masked the exhaustion my body was feeling from the drive. 2 am was approaching so we headed off to get some sleep.

Sunday we hit the Streets at Kensington Street Market Sampling some of the Local Fares..... We met a super kewl guy named Obi and hung out at one of the several Coffee houses in town having Chai and Cookies. 3 O'clock snuck up on us & we headed off for the Final 4.5 hrs to MKC.

We arrived at the Mystical Land that is Madawaska Kanu Centre in Barry's Bay, Ontario just before 8pm. A fellow boater named Mike led us in from the Subway where we'd stopped to grab dinner. After checking in we got settled and attempted to get some sleep. Fortunately, I did. The excitement hit when the Alarm went off and then I heard the Cowbell clanging Monday morning. Here we Go! School Time!

After a brief meeting and intro's of the Staff, we broke off into our groups and headed down to the River (which is just at the bottom of the hill from Camp )



I haven't seen any Butterflies, they've all migrated I don't like to boat without Butterflies, it's a Symbolic thing for me.

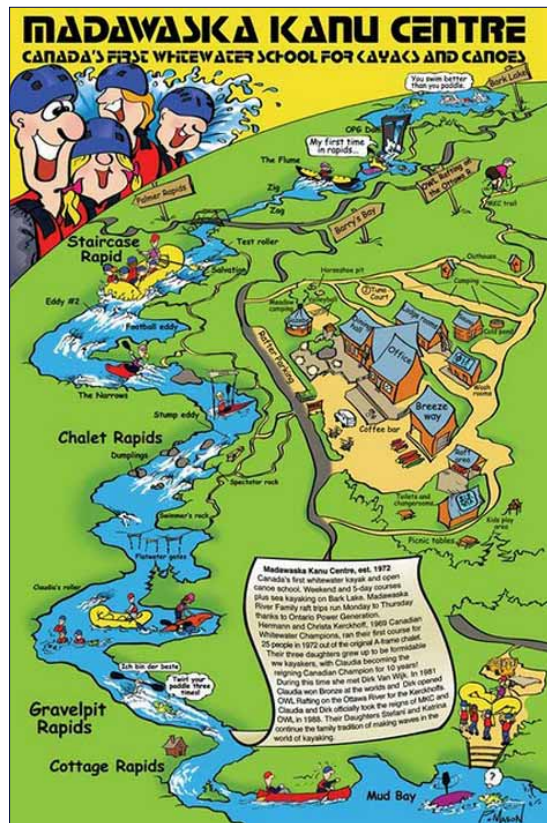
Monday is really a day of assessment. Groups are made based on what you tell them on the phone. Todd & I were in a group led by a Creeker named Andrew. As we headed down to the water I noticed beady little eyes on the puddles along the rocks, Frogs! All over! There are A LOT of Frogs on the Madawaska by MKC. The Butterflies

were no longer missed.

The water didn't get turned on until after lunch so we used the am to review strokes, Talk about our goals for the week, our paddling history, etc. - We showed (I failed) our Rolls - Had a small Roll Session and by that time it was Noon & time for lunch. After lunch the water was up and the Madawaska was no longer a scrapey little river, it was an Eddy spotted, Holey, Rock Splattered Run of Happiness! Ok, well in my mind, it was a raging river full of holes that would eat me alive, rocks that would shred my skin, and most importantly, it was fear. Fear of Failure; Of Not Being Able to Do It - No Confidence in me, The Boater. Did I mention that My Goal for the Week was to come back to Ky A Confident Boater? My River nerves were starting to Win already. I got sick. you can laugh, it's ok. My shoulders are huge now after 5 days of hard core paddling!! hahaha!

Rather than tell you all about the rapids, I'll let you check out what pics I didn't lose and see for yourself. I will tell you that techincally there are only 4 Rapids on the

Mighty Madawaska and they are, in order, Staircase (Ledges, Holes, Super Wave Train), Chalet (Less Slope More Rocks, Eddy heaven, Moving Water Gates), Gravelpit (Ich bin der beste), & Cottage (Rocky Bumpy Goodness). There are tons of little features



and between these, ie The Flume & Claudia's Roller (Surf spot). I'll also tell you that there is ALOT of flatwater on this River too - But, for teaching it's good b/c that's when you're working on stroke technique & avoiding the Boils (which are everywhere) & mastering the Brace when caught not somewhat paying attention.

We spent the 1st part of the afternoon practicing Eddy Turns and Peel Outs at the top of Chalet Rapid before

running it and then all the others ending the day in Mud Bay (massive flatwater paddle out across the lake - ugh). I got thru Chalet with a 'Clinched jaw' as Andrew said, had a Nice lil Wee Surf at Claudia's before Taking a short swim (self rescue) at Gravel Pit after hugging the shore too close trying to avoid the Hole that is Gravel Pit and getting hung and flipped on a rock. Not a bad day, but I wasn't feeling any more confident than when I started. We saw Emily Grimes just before dinner; Was nice seeing a familiar face so far from home. Positive note: Tonight was a Full Moon! We sat down by the now once again 'trickling' Madawaska winding out the day under a Bright night Sky.

Day 2 they rearranged groups and this would be our group for the rest of the week. Kevin was my instructor now with 2 other students in the group. Kevin is a Pittsburgh Steeler Fan. What more need be said. I was now boating with my Football Family. The week just hit it's upswing. Talking football and boating - it was almost better than se.... Ok - um no it wasn't; But it was great! Kevin got why I was there and he was exactly the instructor I needed. We started today up by the dam.

'The Flume' (convergence of dam flow and base water) is an awesome spot to practice Peel-outs and Eddy Turns which is exactly what we did. Over and Over. There are Eddy's on Both sides so we ran S turns for about an hour before heading on down towards Staircase. Along the way we talked about the Upcoming rapid and the Importance of Set up when running anything. We scouted 1st and then Ran the top section 1 by 1 waiting on the Go sign and gathering behind Mushroom Rock. This is where the Rapid gets fun. A sweet little Roostertail running from River left to River right with a ledgy Hole to the left and Hole after Hole on the Right that runs into a Meaty Holey Wave Train until the End. (Please note that this is what I saw & my descriptions are only my own opinion, thank you). I was a little intimidated, but I didn't drive 15 hours to be scared to try. We decided to just ran straight thru today. Kevin eddy'd out at Football Eddy just below the ledge and gave me to go paddle - Ok Andi, Remember to Set Up Angled Slgightly River right - Off I went - HELL YEAH!! Caught the Roostertail, Punched the 1st wave and Paddled Paddled Paddled! had a few bow corrections to stay on line - Sweetness! Whooping and Hollering and Smiling the entire way down. My grin must have spanned the entire river as I caught the eddy river right, then ferried across to chill at Spider Rock & await my group & Instructor. I was Amped! Mad Congratulations & Knuckle bumps for all of us Dave & Glen ran her clean too. Awesome start to day 2. Lunch, then back to spend the afternoon at Chalet.

Kevin was already starting to push me a little further than the others. I needed it. I was getting to do some lines and other eddy's with a here's how it's done, wanna see it again, now try it. And I did, and I Succeeded. We

spent the rest day 2 Eddy Hopping across the river and then running down & then lapping Chalet. Today ended with Smiles and the Twinge of the thing called confidence looming just above the setting Sun.

Day 3 is Blue Wednesday - Usually the body needs a little break after the 1st 2 days so you only paddle half the day. A longer am session followed by an afternoon dinner at the Lake that supplies the Madawaska. We had ended at Chalet and we were getting Video's by Claudia this morning. We spent all morning running the Flat water gates just below the Whitewater Gates, 1 & 2 forwards requiring a nice carve from rt to lt.- #3 backwards paddle - 4 coming upstream as a peel out then the last 2 forward. After the video session which consisted of Flatwater Gates, Fwd Paddle, Dufek, Paddle Back, Profile Fwd paddle, Then S turns at Dumplings (a feature on Chalet) we ran the rest of the River in order to make the 1pm Take Out shuttle. No Rock Dancing at Gravel Pit for me this time and I led the group thru Cottage and on to / in to Mud bay. I kept feeling like there was something behind me in the water on the paddle across the lake to the bay. It was just my Confidence catching up to me.

Video Session Review was at 2 - Claudia's Assesment of Me follows:

Paddling into Gates: Smooth as Butter  
Gates: Work on Dufek at 4, Lookin Good Andi we need to get you up here running slalom. (I swear it!)  
Fwd Paddle: High Punch on Left side - Work on shoulder rotation - as a Woman we have to work a little harder to get the power so try to over rotate if you will.

Profile of Fwd. Paddle: Rotation, Pretend you have #'s on your front and back and you want to show them to the judges on the side of the river, 10% fwd tilt  
S Turns: More momentum in, closer to eddy line approaching.

So now that you all know what I need to work on - if you've made it this far reading - Stay on me for it if you boat with me and see me having a lapse of reason and forgetting to apply Claudia's advice.

Lake was nice. Super Windy. It's starting to get cooler and windier during the day and def. cooler at nite. Rain's coming.

Thursday was an amazing day for me and it rained some too!. We started out working at Chalet. By lunch, I wasn't only running the rapid minus the clinched jaw, but I was running it and catching just about every Eddy, thru every gate except for 3 of them. There's this little bitty Eddy at gate 12 that requires a High Eddy approach from Eddy 11 a hard carve into the line followed by another hard carve in the other direction to catch the eddy. An S of carves. I was now going to try this after the other guys in my group had ended up downstream. Kevin was pushing me and I loved it. He took the same, I'll show ya twice

then you do it approach. Ok, got it. Ok, Nope! Got the Entry and 1st carve, but wan't even close the making the 2nd so I hit the Eddy behind the Back rock that made up Eddy 12. Bypassed gates 14 & 15 for the holes they encased and we headed on down. I felt Amazing. I think that Confidence had taken perch on the back of my boat. We lapped Chalet. 1 guy sat out the 2nd lap, Dave, he was 72 and super kewl to boat with. The other, Glen, took a swim trying to catch 11 so there I sat waiting in Eddy 11 for Kevin to come back up and give me my instructions.

"Wanna try 12 again?" I heard as he came up the eddy behind me. "Yep!"

"Wanna see it or follow me?" "See it." Ok, Got it! Hug the EddyLine, Momentum, High Approach, Hard Carve, Hard Carve, Yes! NO!

And over I went. Mistake - upstream paddle set still in the current. My immediate response was to eject, which I almost did, but I stopped myself. I repositioned in my boat and went for that elusive 'love roll' (which I explained the meaning of to everyone at camp that week). Not successfully mind you, but I stopped myself from bailing, set up and went for it. Swam a little and once my boat had been gathered and shuffled to me headed on down with a HUGE GRIN! If you've boated with me, you know this was big for me. On to Claudia's now where there was some surfing to be done.

I slid in, Got pushed out, ferried to the other side, paddled back in, dropped in for the surf, nose got subbed, boat went here, I went there, and over I went - Auto Roll Attempt not the usual eject thoughts - Nope Negative on the roll - Damn - Eject? No - hang out - No consequences here - Drop the Paddle, your in a slower current & deep water - Pat Pat Pat Pat - Um Ok Kevin where are ya - Oh, there ya are - 1st T-Rescue on a River! I came up smiling and laughing and already patting myself on the back for not bailing outta my boat.

Again - BIG! Last time I had 2 swims after failed rolled attempts I was so mad at myself and had no confidence and was crying and ready to walk out - The Dirty Bird and The Madawaska aren't the same beast - But it's not the beast that's the prob with me - it's my damn Mind! Today I Overcame it!

On through Gravel Pit now, again with success, picked a 'new' way through Cottage as our 'Line Reading' refresher and on to Mud Bay.

Lunch after shuttle then up to Run Staircase all afternoon.

3 Runs On Staircase Today -

Run 1 we caught Football Eddy just after the drop on River left.

2nd Run we attempted the Harder Eddy at River Right just beyond and above the holes - I got the tail end and just didn't have it in me to get back in to it so I washed

out of the tail of the eddy went on down - and into a hole - Kick A\$\$ low brace left to keep from flipping followed by a hard deep fwd. stroke to pull out of the hole (though this was pointed out by Kevin at the end of the run and not through any actual knowing of my own at the time).

Run 3 was the Run the Meat and Enjoy the Ride. Clean Run All Smiles All Amped  
Confidence wasn't on the back of my boat anymore - She was hanging out on my shoulder.

Friday was the Big River Trip on the Ottawa Middle Line. All I'm going to say about the Ottawa is that I had a Super Clean Run with as Kevin put it - Awesome lines out there today Andi! You've really got it now, eh? It was definitely the 2nd Best day I've ever had on a River (one day on the Elk will always be numero uno). Lots of flat-water, But it's worth it for How Sweet the Rapids are. All are different and they get more challenging as you go. My favorite, Lower No Name. The One that brought it all together - that sealed the journey I've been on since my 1st BWA clinic 2 years ago- The one I will remember forever ~ Butterfly!

There was Canoe carnage from the Tandem class at LNN (see above) and we all got a kick out of seeing who could get what gear first as it floated by. The day ended with all the groups meeting back up, loading boats and gear, and heading for ice Cream in the near by town. On the over hour ride Home I was the only 1 who didn't fall asleep so I got to chat with and listen to boating stories from Kevin and Andrew. Nothing beats telling boating stories at the end of a great day on the river with fellow boaters.

The Steak Dinner we had that Nite with the Entire class came pretty close though.

As I slid into my sleeping bag on my last (freezing) cold nite at Madawaska Kanu Centre I could only think 1 thing - After 5 days on the River I had Found what I came to Canada to find - I found my Confidence!!! Then suddenly the words just rolled right outta my mouth,

"Ah, ya'd never really lost it, eh?"

I giggled for a moment then zipped up my bag and snuggled in for my Last Nite on a Trip of a Lifetime! I drifted off to sleep as the Journey I started 2 years ago ended and a New one was about to Begin!!

We're already saving for Marleigh & I to go back next Summer for Family Week

Hope to See ALL of You on the River Soon.....

I'll have video of me Running Staircase from Mushroom to Eddy posted shortly.

andi

# Learn to Roll Your Canoe or Kayak this Winter

Learn to wet exit, bow rescue, and roll. Meet BWA members and be involved.

**Time:** **Friday Nights: 08:00 PM - 10:00 PM**  
December 3, 10, 17 January 7, 14, 21, 28  
February 4, 11, 18 March 4, 11, 18, 25

**Location:** **Jefferson Fitness Club, 508 Maryland Ave, Lexington**

**Cost:** **Member - \$5.00 (USD)**  
**Children age 11 and under free w/ paid member**  
**Member - child age 12-18 - \$2.00 (USD)**  
**Non-Member - \$10.00 (USD)**  
First roll session ever? \$5 discount on your first BWA roll session.  
**Non-member child - \$5.00 (USD)18 or under**  
**Instructors - Free**  
Volunteer to help instruct a student for an hour or more.  
Must be approved by Hanley

**Important**  
Wash your boats, inside and out, before arrival.  
Parking is in the lot adjacent to Jefferson Street and we will be coming in by the side door immediately adjacent.  
  
From Jefferson Street, the parking lot and sign look like this. This images is looking directly at the side door across the parking lot.  
  
For inclement weather closures, contact Jefferson Fitness at 859-255-2582.

*Demo boats are made available courtesy of Canoe Kentucky - feel free to try them out.  
Call them the day of the session to have a specific boat brought to the session:  
1-888-CANOE-KY.*

<http://www.canoeky.com/>



**Coming this Winter: CPR & First Aid Classes.  
Info will be posted soon.**

## BWA meetings

Meetings held Second Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm  
To eat during the meeting come a little early so you can place your order before the meeting starts.  
For up-to-date info on meetings always check <http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>



**Bluegrass Wildwater Association**  
PO Box 4231  
Lexington, Ky. 40504