

BOWLINES

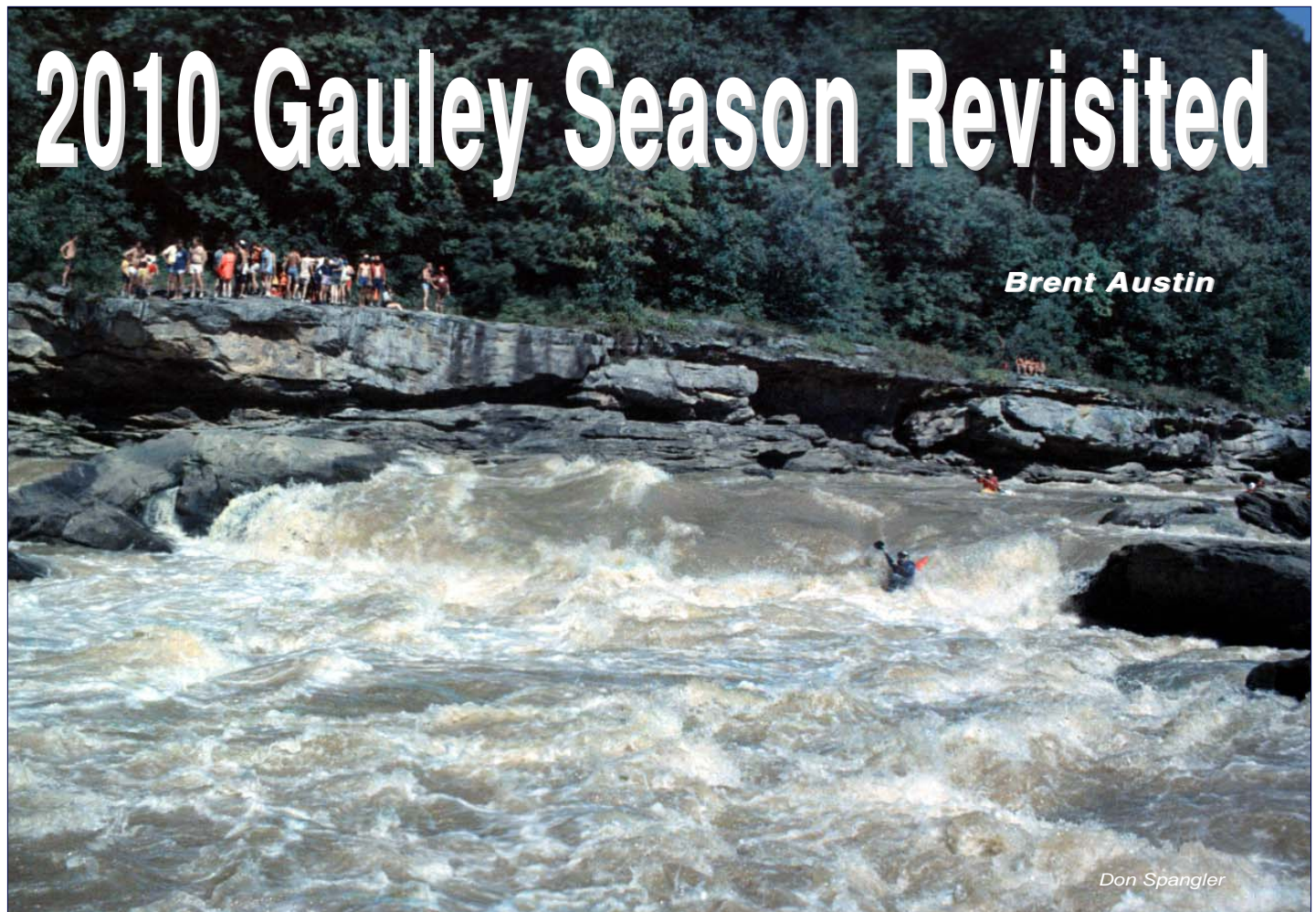
Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association September/October 2010

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

We need new pool for Winter Roll
Sessions. Contact Hanley Loller if
you have a suggestion for a pool.



Sweets Falls with the Peanut Gallery on the left.

This was a warm Gauley Season until the first real cool day on the river in the upper 50s on Sunday September 26, 2010. Otherwise, the weather has been generally in the 80s and 90s. The water coming out of the dam has been warm. The crowds have not been unduly large as in years past. Nothing like the volumes of hard boaters that used to pour into the Gauley each season during the heyday of the nineties. Still, good crowds and good friends were found on the river and off.

Of course, by the time mid August got here and everything was drying up, all I had been thinking about was weekends on the Gauley. And, as the season started and we started thinking about the First

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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

August:

Don and Eli Austin, Logan Burden • Chris Baxter • Danny Carrier • Gerald DeLong • Jordan Grevious • Angela and Stuart Lang • Joe and Tammy Laurick • Thomas Montgomery • Terry Ratliff • Enrique Roig • Greg Woosley

September:

Hugo Arenda • Mike Clark • James, Macey • Riley, Jon, and Kim Coy • Douglas and Jessa Davis • Charles Elrod • Jeff Frazier • Kevin, Ingrid, John Cullen Minor

<http://www.surfky-bwa.org> URL
will be redirected to new permanent URL:
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

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President	Allen Kirwood	859-351-3823
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Secretary	Aleigha Barker	502-584-7545
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Program	Phil Bubba Sisk	859-396-7445
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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



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

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

http://www.surfky-bwa.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv_Aug06.pdf



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



Brent Austin in the Maul at Pillow Rock

Timers trip and the Marathon, I started thinking about my old buddy and friend Griffin Sanders. In 2007, when I was President of the BWA, Griffin and Clay Warren came up to me with an idea for the First Timers trip on the Upper Gauley. The idea was to help folks step up to being comfortable on runs of that size and magnitude and raise the level of paddling ability within the BWA. Of course, I thought it was an awesome plan so I threw myself behind it and participated. It was Griff's and Clay's show and while I showed some folks my lines down, they were the trip leaders and were the ones that started this wonderful tradition which has inspired a lot of good boaters to step up and enjoy this great water resource.

So, thinking back to the first weekend with Griffin, we decided once again to not camp at Battle Run or invite AW's President to camp with us. Lol. Of course, even though it was at Swiss, and we did have some fireworks go off, it was not the same raucous event as in the "Days of Griff". But, I think Griffin would be happy to see us continue getting folks to step up on the river. I know he wanted as many buds as he could get to go paddle cool runs with him. So that tradition continued this year.

Somewhere or how, the annual Marathon has kind of morphed into happening the same weekend as the First Timers trip, so we did that on Saturday and then did the First Timers trip on Sunday. Just a great first weekend. I recall Dave DeVore, Dot Edwards and Mark Dossett having first time runs down the UG and they all did very well that weekend. I paddled with new faces that were starting to dial in runs on the UG like Rebecca Lewis from Louisville and it was cool to watch my brothers like Scotty B and Justin B ripping up the UG like pros.

Of course, Brian Mattingly's Baddlun was on Sunday and while Brian Menses won, Mattingly placed second. Jay Ditty blew a tire and many said if he had not, he would have blown past everyone. Very interesting event, I must say. They bike from the bottom of Mason's branch to the dam, paddle to Mason's branch and then run up the hill with their boats. Wow.

The next weekend of the Gauley was Gauley Fest weekend, and also the Race on that following Monday. Many of us opted to camp at Sumersville Lake Campground rather than not be able to get our



Brent showing the finesse of his years of paddling Pillow Rock

vehicles in and out of the Festival and it seemed to work out pretty well. Bart Bledsoe's first run on the Upper Gauley (he still has not paddled the lower yet) was Saturday morning for a dawn patrol race run with YT and a few other racing friends, and of course he styled it without a single scout and at a rapid clip. That was a good move for us as we were at Woods Ferry well before noon and it was much easier to get out of there than it was to get in, apparently.

Sunday morning of Festival weekend was another early morning run, with a small group: me, Bledsoe, Lewis, and Wes. Great size group after paddling with hordes the weekend before. This particularly morning we had the somber experience of paddling up on a commercial raft accident that just happened and took the life of one of the company's passenger/guests. Always leaves me with such an eerie feeling when I come up on scenes like that. But, other than that, an absolutely awesome day on the river with good friends and solid boaters.

Monday was Race day, and while I was not there, our bro YT did the course in 59:18 in a Green boat. Delaney Albright did the course in 59:01. Great to have our Kentucky boaters racing.

The last weekend of the season for me is dictated only by my greater love and enjoyment of the Russell Fork Gorge which begins the first weekend in October each year. The weekend of the 25th-26th of September saw considerably smaller crowds and our group of 8 on Saturday and 7 on Sunday allowed us a bit of flexibility in the pace we wanted to make downstream. Saturday was the last of the days in the 90s and by Sunday morning, we were putting on with daytime highs around 59-60 degrees. I broke out my dry suit for the first time of the season. We also did the entire run in about an hour and a half. Good to get home early on Sunday.

It has been a great Gauley Season. I have to say, it was sure cool to see so many folks from KY in the field at Swiss that first weekend. We totally dominated the area that weekend and I am not sure there was a bigger contingent of boaters that did the marathon the whole season than what came together that first weekend. I enjoyed paddling with so many of you that I can't wait to do it some more soon, like on the RF!

SYOTR, Brent Austin

Russell Fork River 2010 Festival First Report

Brent Austin

Don Spangler

What an great Rendezvous. As Dustin Cornelison and I were paddling out, he commented that this was his 15th one. What an awesome tradition that carries on because of your efforts brother. The music was fabulous. We are a bit partial to Sarah Martin's performance of course, but it was all good. I enjoyed the Viva El Griffo fireworks too, although I saw them from the BWA/Grimes wedding party site. The moon seemed particularly bright Saturday night, in fact it "shined". The food at the wedding party was the bomb. So glad for Dan and Didi too. They are a great couple and it was a great celebration. Dan and Emily hardly remember ever not being at the RFRR. That is so cool to have this celebration of their marriage coincide.

Wonderful time catching up with friends all weekend long. Old and new. I am so glad we rendezvous each year there. Wish more kids could come and we did have some there. I love to see kids get to experience a RFRR. Christine hung tapestries all around the pop ups and made a really cool environment and we did a bit of drumming around a phat fire that was filled with firewood thanks to some local friends of the paddling community there in Elkhorn City.

The BWA/Grimes encampment was a "hub" for hungry and thirsty boaters until the festivities really kicked off back at the Rendezvous. There, a stage with an NPFF banner was situated and to the left a huge

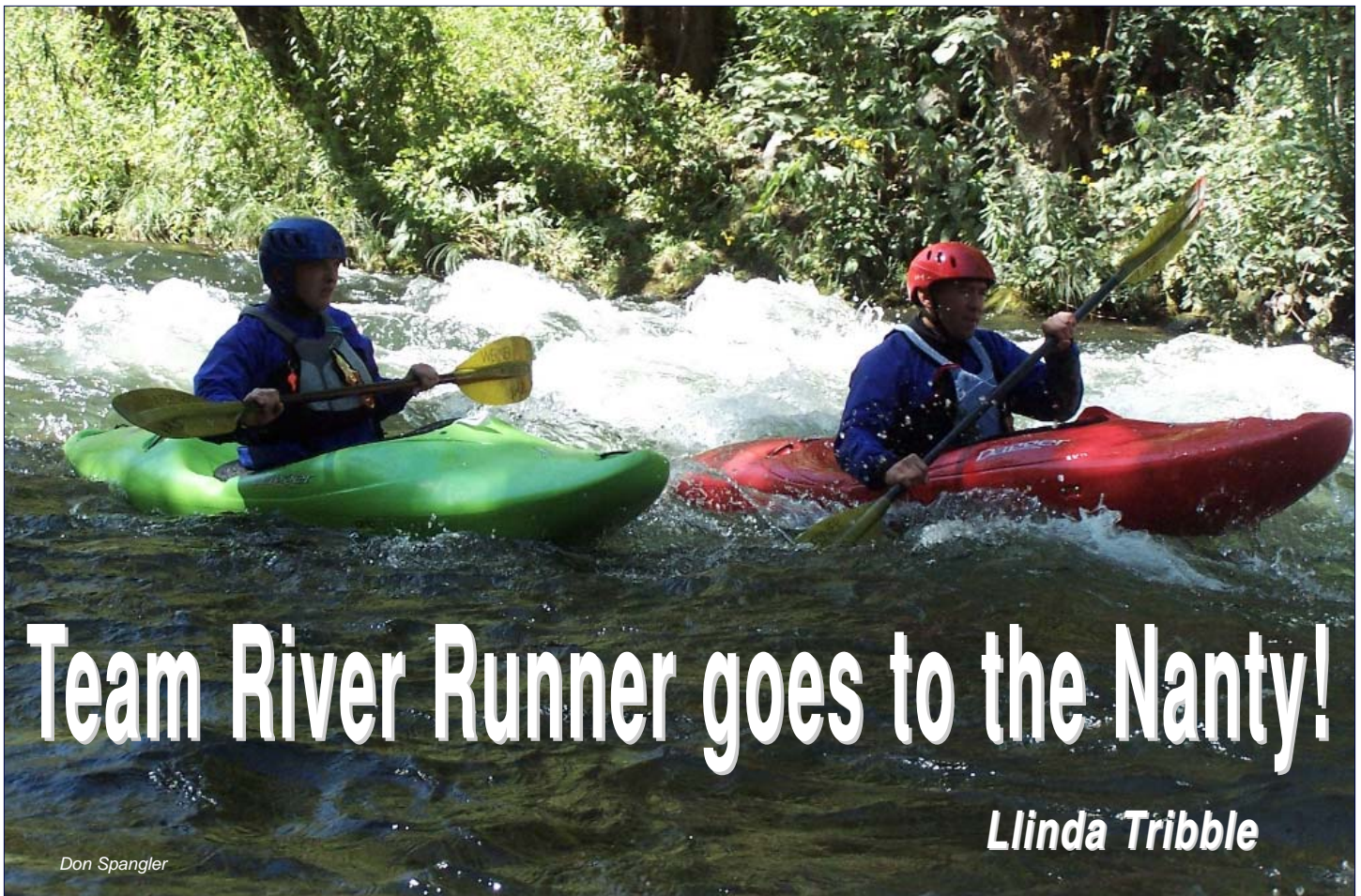
screen with whitewater action that could be easily seen from the monstrous bonfire. Just awesome

Great boating weather on Saturday, sunny and in the 70s. The water was low by release standards and although the Bartlick gauge read 870 on Saturday, don't you believe it because "Gerald's Rock" was a clear 810 at best on Saturday and lucky to be 800 on Sunday. Gerald and I both thought it could even be 790 at the rock. Cooler weather in the upper 50s on Sunday led me to don my drysuit for a comfortable day today. We just did a quick buzz down and then broke down camp.

Far as I know, no one ran Fist this weekend, but I did hear that a person swam under it from an R5. Not sure any details on that but apparently they were ok. Everything else was good to go and a big hand to Steve, Gerald, Ron and Bart (?) for cleaning the strainers out from under Maze rock a little while back before the season got underway.

Another fine day and weekend of precision boating. Can't wait for next weekend. Guess we are camping at Carson Island again. Think I might want to hang at Climax for the Baddlun, if it is nice and sunny on Saturday, and cheer on our heros. That is a helluva course let me tell you. Whew.

Brent



Team River Runner goes to the Nanty!

Linda Tribble

Don Spangler

I just want to provide a brief update on the Lexington, KY Chapter of Team River Runner (TRR) and to report on our recent trip to the Nantahala River over the Labor Day weekend. Since first forming in 2006, we knew this would be our breakout year, given the amount of hard work and dedication that has been infused into the chapter by Nathan Depenbrock of Canoe Kentucky (Chapter Program Coordinator) and terrific volunteers from the Bluegrass Wildwater Association. We have not been disappointed! The chapter has seen exponential growth in both Veteran and volunteer participation and currently ranks #2 out of all TRR chapters in participation and “getting butts in boats” as Joe Mornini, TRR Executive Director, likes to say. Our volunteers staff every-other-week, flat-water paddling sessions during the spring, summer, and fall; white-water trips when possible and pool sessions during the winter.

The goal of TRR is to have the Veterans lead the programs with the local paddling community merely offering support to them. It’s all about the Vets taking ownership and leadership of their

TRR chapters (by Vets/for Vets). This year, towards that goal, we were able to identify five local Veterans who wanted to step up to the challenge of paddling whitewater as well as taking on leadership within the chapter. After initially testing them on the waters of the Elkhorn Creek and Lower Pigeon River (I/II) we knew they were ready to step it up to the Nantahala (II/III). Nothing is more unifying than a common interest and that was played out with this diverse group of guys ranging from twenty-something Iraq/Afghanistan Vets: Scott, Cisco, Thomas and sixty-something Vietnam Vets: BJ and Richard. They all came together as a group on the water and in camp for a weekend of great weather, fun, camaraderie, and, of course, white-water action. There were whitewater thrills and chills (after all, it is the cold Nantahala) and the usual jitters as boaters were to try their skills on tougher water.

The group camped at the Lost Mine Campground and relished in the hospitality from the owner, Anne King. What a gracious hostess she was, by always checking up on everyone to



Don Spangler

make sure we were having a good time. She also donated some of the campsites for our kitchen and made sure everyone had the best possible camping arrangement. Everywhere we went that weekend people were pumped to hear about TRR and to see us on the water.

On the first day after the “cat herding”, group briefing, and shuttle, we put-in, on schedule, below Patton’s Run. (We were NOT on BWA time). There was an enormous amount of enthusiasm by everyone in attendance both on and off the water. We were all so proud, as our guys got used to the push of the water and tested their skills running the river. I won’t say who the first swimmer was, but it rhymes with spit. That early swim loosened everyone up with a good laugh. There were other swims during the trip, but our



Don Spangler

guys took it in stride and continued to run that river and most of all had fun. Our swarm of safety boaters and boat wranglers assisted throughout the day and our fabulous land crew (Don and company) provided us with a great lunch at Ferebee’s. We got to meet former Olympic Gold Medalist, Joe Jacoby, at the Ledges and the guys really enjoyed talking to him. He was aware of TRR and glad to see them on the water. It was quickly determined that there is some natural talent among these wonderful Vets. Prior to the falls, BJ was the only Vet to claim a dry hair day. When the time came some of them were game to run the falls. Only one of them made it to the bottom before flipping, but they were all ready to try it again the next day.



Don Spangler

After rounding everyone up at the end of the day and getting them back to camp...talk about cat herding. Never assume that everyone knows where the takeout is going to be after they have been scattered at the falls! Anyway, we were pampered, by our private chefs, with a fabulous dinner and everyone regaled in tales of the day. What a fantastic day on the water and we were going to get to do it again the next day!

The next day we regrouped and decided to put-in at Ferebee’s and really work the river and develop their boating skills. With the addition of Nathan to the group, several of the guys were

able to enjoy all-day private lessons. Everyone's boating and confidence improved tremendously throughout the day. When it came time for the falls, they were ready to try it again. This time, Thomas again ran the falls upright until the bottom. Unfortunately for BJ, he swam the far left line, went over the ledges, HARD and later found out he broke his tailbone! Richard swore you could hear him hit. Scott and his boat ran the falls...but not necessarily at the same time and Cisco made it cleanly through the falls. I literally broke down in tears of joy of seeing him successfully run the falls. He wanted it so badly and tried so hard. I really do feel like these guys are my kids and they all made me so proud to see them develop as boaters and be able to put some of their memories far away while they were on the water. You could not pay me to take away the memory of seeing the smiles on their faces. I love those guys.

and "Army Mom" T-shirts that they had found! We will wear them proudly every time we paddle with our "kids".

I could not have made this trip a reality without great volunteer support. Over the course of the 3-day weekend we had participation from a total of 27 Veterans and/or volunteers. Let me quickly list some of the highlights regarding the great volunteer efforts, which made this trip a success.

- On-water trip leaders: Jeff Frazier, Britt Lindstrom, and Nathan Depenbrock, we couldn't have done it without them.
- The phenomenal support of Don Spangler and his fabulous kitchen crew (Lloyd Funkhauser and Mike Weeks) who kept us well fed throughout the weekend. I think I need to hire them to be my private chefs at home...entertaining and good cooks!
- Our shuttle diva, Pat Hummel, who put in long hours and miles for us

- BWA boater support: Walt Hummel, Jeremy Peavie, Millard Blakey, James Hatch
- April Schrock (DC) arranged TRR national funding for the costs of food and camping for all volunteers and Veterans
- Additional boater support arranged through Vicki Capone (DC), included former Olympians Jason Beakes (currently on Team Dagger) and Zack Thomason.

- TRR Vets joined us from DC, New Orleans, and Nashville
- NOC donated the use of boats and gear

Thanks to everyone for making this trip a success for our Veterans...they deserve it and it's the least we can do!



Lexington Affiliate
<http://www.teamriverrunner.org/?q=node/133>



Don Spangler

You are not learning if you do not swim Nantahala Falls now and then.

The last night we again were treated to a wonderful dinner and everyone shared their highlights from the weekend. There were laughs and tears and we all had a memorable time. Everyone on this trip was truly a team.

We headed home the next day. The Vets managed to meet Britt and I in a gas station on the way home and honored us with "Marine Mom"

TRR

at the All-American Whitewater Festival



Ben Brown, of Lexington, Ky. giving a cheer to being at WISP Whitewater Park near Friendsville, Md.

Team River Runner (TRR) and Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI) hosted an All-American Whitewater Festival (also known as the 2010 TRR Rendezvous) over the Memorial Day weekend at Deep Creek Lake, MD. Britt Lindstrom and I were fortunate to represent the Lexington TRR Chapter at this great event and wanted to share our experiences and observations.

If you're not familiar with TRR, it was established in 2004 by kayakers in the Washington, DC area to help active-duty, military personnel who had been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan and were recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Since that time, it has expanded to include all veterans and also encourages participation by family members, since these injuries may affect military families as much as the Veterans themselves. The benefits of TRR have as much to do with creating a social network and support system as they do with learning kayaking skills that provide an exciting, adventure lifestyle that suddenly seemed lost due to injury. The Lexington Chapter was formed in 2008 in conjunction with the local Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center. The chapter's quick success would not have been possible

without the phenomenal support of the local paddling community, most notably Canoe Kentucky (Nathan Deppenbrock) and the Bluegrass Wildwater Association (BWA). To date, the Lexington Chapter is one of the most active groups within TRR and has experienced great success introducing whitewater kayaking to our local Veterans.

Now to the real topic of discussion, the events from that weekend. Many months prior, Britt and I had planned on making the BWA pilgrimage to the Chattooga over the Memorial Day weekend. We had never paddled this river and were anxiously anticipating the trip. In the meantime, the call for TRR paddlers for the Rendezvous was sent out. What a dilemma, we took a long, hard look at what we wanted to do that weekend. Do we paddle a river we've always wanted to go on with our local club or do we go to Maryland where we would paddle a whitewater park, the Lower Yough (which we love and hadn't been on for two years), and paddle with Veterans? At the time, the Chattooga trip was looking sketchy and we came to realize that the TRR trip over the Memorial Day weekend was about much more than what/where we would paddle. It was about spending this holiday hon-

oring our Veterans and networking with other TRR participants from across the country. At that point, the decision was easy...we're going to the Rendezvous!

The Deep Creek Lake area is beautiful and close to a number of great paddling options. Not that I have the skill for all of them, but there are a number of them available in close proximity (i.e. Yough, Cheat, and Savage). After settling in, we met up with some of the other early arrivals. However, we noticed that Darrell and Richard, two of our Lexington Vets, had not yet arrived. This was curious because we had received a call from them while we were enroute and they were in front of us and should have already been here. Upon questioning, we learned that they had actually driven to Rockville, MD to Joe Mornini's house, which was 3 hours beyond McHenry and were on their way back. From this point forward, Darrell was referred to as "Rocky".

Once that was cleared up we started the weekend off with a sedate, pontoon ride on the lake with some of the Vets, their wives, and the local organizer/fundraiser extraordinaire, Suzanne Nichols. What an endless source of energy she is. We knew it would be a weekend of new experiences when we looked up and noticed a prosthetic foot was being used as a cup-holder! We had not previously noticed Josh's injury, but it made for an interesting sight and topic of conversation nonetheless. Throughout the weekend we noticed the local outpouring of support for these Veterans and recognition of the sacrifices they have made. That night at dinner, Mel, a local who was also a Vietnam Vet, chummed up with the group and asked what was the largest expense in hosting the event. When told that it was \$6000 for lodging, he reached in his pocket and wrote out a check for that amount. It was truly going to be a weekend of firsts!

The next few days would be spent with unlimited paddling opportunities at ASCI. This whitewater park is set atop a mountain next to the WISP ski resort, giving you a panoramic view of the surrounding area and cool breezes on a warm day. It's a very nice complex, which was built to host Olympic caliber races. However, it can also be adjusted to create class II/III rapids as well. The course is made of concrete and natural rock and is just over 1700 feet long. It drops 24 feet from the top to the bottom. At the end of the course a conveyor belt transports paddlers back to the beginning of the course, all without leaving your boat; allowing the opportunity for continuous laps of the course. At six locations there are variable wave shapers that can adjust waves and hydraulics for dif-

ferent experiences. Want a "stickier" hole or improved surf wave? They can dial it up for you. Natural rocks make up the river's edge and main features on the course. This integration of large natural features, high technology, and concrete is unique among the pump, whitewater courses around the world. While it is



designed to eliminate some of the natural hazards of rivers (such as strainers, foot entrapment, pin rocks, etc) it is important to note that like other whitewater parks, the concrete surface is quite rough and if you take a swim, be prepared to lose some skin or neoprene to the course (more about that later). The entire course can be scouted from both sides of the flow.

There was a solemn ceremony with a bagpiper and a parade of TRR Veterans to open the weekend events. It brought tears to my eyes and goose bumps to my flesh seeing these young men and women with crutches, prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and invisible, emotional scars walking behind the color guard to honor those who have given all for our country and who quite possibly were among their friends. I knew they each had also endured things I wouldn't want to imagine. At that moment, I knew we had made the right decision to come to this event.

The weekend would include a Veterans' kayak and raft parade, mattress surfing, swift-water rescues, kayak football demonstrations, and general foolishness. The waterside experience was similar to any other kayaking trip. There were class V boaters down to newbies. There were boats scattered everywhere, piles of gear, excited boaters stoked to be on the water, and scared boaters trying to keep their emotions in check. (I was among the scared boater category.) Then you notice a few prosthetic legs, a foot in a sandal, crutches, a modified boat or paddle, and an occasional wheelchair. However, once everyone is in their boats all these visuals quickly fade. You're among paddlers on an equal playing field and they clearly are not defined by their disabilities. Let's go

boatin'!

For a few hours each morning, there are only two pumps feeding the course, which creates class II/III rapids. Later in the day it is bumped up to three or four pumps for class III-IV+ rapids. Without a reliable combat roll, I knew I needed to hit it early in order to have any success. Britt is familiar with my paddling skills; as well as, my anxieties, so she paddled the course first to scout out whether I could run it or not. She returned with the verdict that the first rapid was the most difficult and after that it should be smooth sailing. However, she failed to note (and I failed to personally scout) that there really are not any eddies on this course. There are lots of places where there should be eddies, but they're not clearly defined and in many cases are whirlpools and vortexes. In other words, it's really squirrely water. (Note to self, when you can scout water yourself, do it.) Anyway, Ben Brown, our local TRR wonder child (paralyzed from the waist down and paddles class III water), accompanied us on my first run. I managed to swim in the first rapid (totally preventable on my part) but was able to get to the side of the course physically unscathed. My emotional scathing came when another TRR group did not fair as well. April and Christine were in a Jackson Duo which also flipped in the first rapid. Christine is a class V boater so she attempted to keep April upright from outside the boat.

Unfortunately, her hand was caught between the boat and the unforgiving concrete surface of the course resulting in an injury, which removed the flesh from all her knuckles down to the bone. Not a pretty sight and not a calming effect for me. While medical attention was provided to her, I waited for Britt and Ben to make a lap of the course so I could calm down. Fortunately for me, when they returned they had Ashley with them. She's an accomplished boater who was a helicopter mechanic in Iraq and suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Her military training obviously took over as she took me under her wing and kept my anxieties at bay while Britt paddled ahead for safety. The course really is pretty much a non-stop course for the first few rapids. My anxieties and asthma took over and I started getting breathless and wanted an eddy, but learned quickly, there are no eddies. I struggled and fought the water for some small spot of calm in order to catch my breath. Fortunately Ashley was there to try and keep me calm like a group on patrol, supporting the weakest member. To add to the "drama", the additional pumps were added, so the water was significantly more turbulent than when they had originally made their scouting

runs. With the exception of the first rapid, I actually paddled the course okay, but didn't truly get over my anxiety for the rest of the weekend. However, just participating and watching the progress of all the newer boaters was enough to keep me energized each day.

Throughout the weekend, we took note of the healing affect the paddling had on these men and women. One vet clearly looked depressed, until he got on the water. Then it was all smiles the rest of the weekend. Another indicated that after almost 40 years, he still did not want to talk about Vietnam, but those memories fade when he's in a boat. Others with PTSD indicated they would almost rather have a physical injury because they felt they'd more likely see the day when they were actually "healed". Paddling is an escape for them from their memories. Ashley and Ben talked with local school children about their injuries and how TRR had helped them. The general tone of their talks was not to let adversity keep you from meeting your goals and tackling new challenges, clearly words of wisdom we should all remember. We met Anthony, who is paralyzed from the chest down, and had only done a sea kayak for the first time the previous January. You couldn't pay me enough money to take away my memories of him teaming up with Ben while they each paddled a ducky over and over on the course. I will remember their huge smiles and whoops of joy for the rest of my life, what freedom paddling had given them from the confines of their wheelchairs. Vets without the skills to kayak the course had unlimited runs in duckies and rafts and their families could join them.

There were lakeside cookouts and fun times throughout the weekend for everyone. All hosted by volunteers who seemed to have boundless energy, enthusiasm, and commitment for this great cause. Over and over throughout discussions with the vets, it was apparent that TRR and paddling had made an incredible impact on their lives. Whether it was a Vietnam vet or one from Iraq, paddling was helping them heal. For my part, TRR is helping me put a lot of things in perspective and allowing me to give back.

If you haven't participated in a TRR event, check it out; you will not regret having the opportunity to give back through a sport you love in order to help others get their lives back. For all our veterans, I am always honored to assist you in whatever way I can. I salute and thank you.

Making Canoe Paddles

Don Perkins

Don Perkins

Why?

I'll have to admit, I know less about canoeing than I do about kayaking. That means I don't know much at all. I do have in my possession a friend's 1970 era 15 1/2' aluminum barge, I mean, canoe that I had the goal of getting out on the Kentucky River with and do some paddling and maybe some fishing. Alas, my friend ends up spending most of his time providing daycare for his grandson, and we end up playing tennis and golf when he gets the odd day off. Ironically, this lack of having a canoe partner is how I got into kayaking. Within a year of borrowing his canoe and only going out once or twice, I had my first, then second used touring kayak. I then got a used whitewater kayak a year later. Anyway, I thought I'd eventually get out once in awhile in a canoe, and really did not like the Wal-mart type paddles my friend had.

Why not just buy a paddle made out of some modern materials? They are supposed to be lighter, stronger, and the bent-shaft ones are supposed to be more efficient. Probably should have, and would have if I paddled more often. I could say I wanted to make my own custom paddle whose blade area matched my canoeing style, whose shaft length matched my grip span and canoe freeboard height. Or that I wanted a blade style that was unique and unavailable anywhere else. Or a grip style that was custom fit or a unique style. All good reasons to build your own canoe paddle, but I don't have enough experience paddling to even know what I want with most of those choices.

The main reason I wanted a wooden canoe paddle is because there is just something about wooden paddles that is warm and inviting to the touch. They make you want to pick them up and try them out. The ones made with contrasting wood types just have a wow factor that you just can't get with modern materials. Being a woodworker in the European tradition of

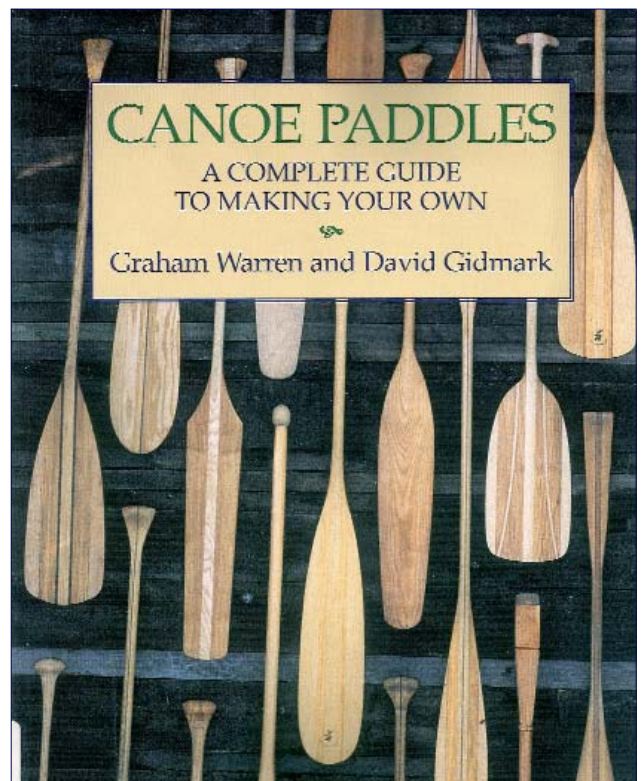


Illustration 1: Reference Book - *Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own*

straight lines and right angles, there was also a seductive challenge for me to see if I could slip back into a native North American woodworking tradition that involved carving curves, no straight lines, but perfect symmetry – albeit using modern tools.

How?

Step 1, get a reference book. There are way too many design choices for and detailed steps for making each than I could write up in this outline, and its already been done far better than I could do it. I used *Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own* by Graham Warren and David Gidmark (see Illustration 1). I was lucky in that they have a copy in the Jessamine Co. Library. It is available at online bookstores from \$16.50 to \$25.

Step 2, get the wood. I got one single board of 8/4 ash that was about 12' long (16 board feet) for \$40 a couple of years ago, and have made 3 five-piece laminated paddles with it (source was Hardwood Specialties in the Industrial Park off of Old Frankfort Pike). I had enough left over to use in 2 Kayak Cradles (Bowlines July/August 2009 issue) and enough to make at least one more paddle. I also used some walnut as a contrasting element. These contrasting elements are usually small pieces of wood. You might be able to get them from the scrap pile of a woodworker friend. You can actually make paddles with many different species of wood in any form from a special tree you have on your land, to kiln dried material from a lumber retailer. Ash is usually used because it is strong and split resistant, and fairly lightweight.



Illustration 2: Tools used in the carving step

Step 3, get the tools. Native Americans only used stone tools for felling and roughly shaping the wood for a paddle, and slate or beaver tooth knives to refine the shape. There are probably few who want to try that today, but there is a whole section in the *Canoe Paddles* book dedicated to carving one-piece paddles using nothing much more than an ax and a crooked knife. And they even instruct you how to create your own crooked knife out of a worn out file. Luckily, you can use other modern tools to speed things along, especially if you build a three-piece or five-piece laminated paddle. For these paddles, following the European woodworking tradition and its tools is actually a plus when putting together the blank and roughing out the shape. It really helps to have access to the big 3 tools; table saw, planer, and jointer to make these blanks, and then a band saw to rough out the shape (get a woodworker friend to do this if you don't have the tools). Then all you really need are many hours with planes, spokeshaves, and scrapers to finish it up (see Illustration 2). I used a block plane I already had, and bought a spokeshave and a set of scrapers. You'll need some way to sharpen the plane and spokeshave blade quite often, and you'll have to learn how to create the burr on the scrapers to get them to cut.

Step 4, select your design and build the templates. Lots of choices here. Blade shape, surface area, handle thickness and cross section, and grip styles used for various long distance touring paddles, short distance higher speed paddles, whitewater paddles, even kayak paddles. The book I used had templates for the paddle throats, grips, blade tips, and tables you would use to create a template for the blade itself. Make sure you create the blade template in full by flipping over a paper template made from the table which is only defines half the blade. I made the mistake of just trying to draw the shape directly on the blank on my first paddle – it never comes out symmetrically.

Step 5. If not carving a paddle out of one piece of wood, prepare the blank. Follow the directions in your reference book for creating the multi-piece blank. Make sure you select the straightest grain for your paddle shaft. Use the less straight grain for the paddle blade. I would modify the directions in the book. I used to use a biscuit jointer and biscuits to join together the various pieces and to make sure they are in alignment. Just make sure the slots won't be exposed as you cut and shape your paddle. I would also use a modern waterproof type-3 glue like Titebond III instead of the epoxy, or polyurethane glue suggested. Wood Magazine did a test of outdoor glues in May 2009, and the type-3 wood glues held together as well as or better than the others, and are much easier to work with.

Step 6, rough out the blank with a bandsaw or jigsaw. Just be careful with the area around the paddle throat – the transition between the shaft and the blade. The throat templates provided are for carving the edges of the paddle, they are not templates for the rough cut. I made that mistake on my first paddle and rough cut the wood off that should have been the spine.

Step 7, carve. This is where you'll spend most of your time. Follow instructions and you'll slowly sneak up on the shape of a paddle.

Step 8, finish. Use oil or marine varnish as suggested. Whitewater paddles will need a fiberglass mesh and epoxy for covering the blade area to get them to stand up to the rocks.

Tips

- If possible, have a professionally-built wooden paddle handy for reference.
- Be prepared to make more than one paddle if you don't.
- Use biscuits to align and help glue together multi-piece paddles.
- Use a type-3 wood glue instead of epoxy or polyurethane glue for multi-piece paddle glue ups.

Repeat

Now you can do what I have not. Try out the paddle, learn the pluses and minuses about it, and use that information to start making your next paddle.



Don Perkins

Illustration 3: Five-piece paddle blank



Trip Report: Ottawa Kayak School

Fred Coates

Debbie going into Sattler's Hole at McCoy on the Ottawa

Debbie and I left Thursday and spent two nights on the road then picked up Jennifer in Ottawa Saturday after she flew in from Seattle. We stayed over in Ottawa Saturday night then drove 1 1/2 hours out to the Wilderness Tours place on the Ottawa River on Sunday and checked in. We couldn't get into our cabin until 5pm so we drove up to the lunch stop at the Lorne rapid and walked up over the hill to see Garburator, the first feature in that rapid, and watched people surfing. Even at the low level that the Ottawa is running right now, the sight of that rapid just about freaked out Debbie and me but Jennifer has been there twice before and the longer we watched and talked about it, the less scary it became.

At the put-in, the Ottawa looks like a huge, beautiful lake with numerous islands and a current. It is a very high volume river and when it necks down at a rapid the flow is tremendous. The level when we were there was negative 2 feet and some of the features were not there while others were larger at the smaller level. The rapids are very large with multiple features named individually; for example, McCoy rapid, the very first rapid after the put-in, has Sattler's hole on river left, then Phil's hole a little farther downstream on the right, followed by the Corner wave, Horseshoe, and Baby Face.

Lorne rapid has Garburator, Waikiki, Bus Eater (not in at this level but when it is it has to be accessed by swinging out on a rope like a pendulum), and Pushbutton, a great surf wave. The Ottawa is a play-boater's paradise; deep, fast, big holes, no strainers, almost no rocks, and virtually no place to get pinned.

On the other hand, the eddy lines are twenty foot wide swirling swaths of boils and whirlpools which open up right under you (stern squirt pirouettes became one my signature moves trying to eddy out) and some of the eddies are giant recirculating pools that are very difficult to get out of and we walked the football eddy on the first day that we encountered it. That's right, walked an eddy!!

On Monday we had breakfast and met our classmates. Jennifer, Debbie, and I were joined by a woman from Washington D.C., Tegan, who was the weakest paddler of the group, and a sixteen-year-old kid, Kyle, from near Toronto who had paddled for the first time the week before in a beginner class, had finally been able to roll on Friday, practiced his roll over the weekend, and by Tuesday was back surfing waves. Amazing!! Our instructor was Ryan Whetung, a member of the 2003 Canadian Freestyle team, current team coach,



Fred Going into Sattler's Hole at McCoy on the Ottawa

and the head of the Ottawa Kayak School. We had taken Debbie's Hero and her 4 Fun because she had never paddled the 4 Fun on moving water and wasn't sure she wanted to on the Ottawa. Ryan convinced her that it is a playboat river and she was in the 4 Fun for the entire week. We put in at lunch stop, chatted with Eric Jackson, who was taking a swim, worked on strokes and rolls, then headed down to the Pushbutton wave to surf where several of the former Canadian team members were working out. They were supposed to have the Canadian Freestyle Team tryouts on the Ottawa but moved to a different river farther west because of the low water level. We all had more trouble with the eddy line, a boiling, swirling, twenty foot wide monster than we had with the wave and frequently multiple rolls were required just to get across it, and we all surfed Pushbuttonsometimes very briefly, of course. We carried over the small rock outcrop that makes the wave, ate lunch, then paddled back down to Pushbutton again for the afternoon.

Tuesday we went to the put-in for the middle and main channels. The main is the farthest south, then the middle, and there is another channel but it has no white water. EJ was living in his mobile home at the put-in and we chatted again and he adjusted Jennifer's outfitting in the All Star she was paddling, then we warmed up, practiced strokes and rolls, and headed down to the McCoy rapid which is before the main and middle

divide. We got out and scouted the rapid which scared the sh*t out of everyone except Jennifer and Kyle, who was ready to plunge into anything we came to. Debbie followed Ryan out and didn't peel out far enough into the current which brought her in too far left, dropped her into the hole instead of on the tongue, and she came out upright to her surprise. I watched that happen and knew I needed to be farther right but I didn't account for the huge volume of water moving toward the left side, followed Debbie's line, and went airborne as I shot out of the hole. I flipped, rolled, then fought my way into the eddy. That eddy is called the football eddy and is directly above the HUGE recirculating eddy that I described before. Jennifer had a good line, ran it cleanly, and we walked the recirculating eddy to come around and surf at Baby Face where kayakers were alternating with 12 person rafts to surf. Did I mention that it is a very large wave, even at the low water level? I had a lot of trouble getting onto the wave because of the raucous water in the feeder eddy and my lack of skill so it became more of a practice session for peeling out into huge water, rolling, and eddddyyyyyyiii-innnnnnggggggg out. That's the way it went for most of us but Jennifer got on the wave and actually back surfed it on purpose. We paddled on down, walked Garvin's Chute which has Dragon's Tongue in it because even though it was huge at this level it was too low to run and is one of the few dangerous spots on the river. The lunch spot for the middle channel is



Fred in Sattler's Hole at McCoy Rapid on the Ottawa

there and after lunch we surfed some smaller waves on down then took out. There are large expanses of flat water between all these rapids but it didn't seem like a chore because of the beauty and we practiced strokes and tried to do some play moves as we paddled. The water was warm, usually about 72 to 74 degrees F.

Ryan was to get married on Saturday so we had a different instructor Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, Brenna Kelly. She is a twenty-two year old in her fifth season at the OKS and both she and Ryan are outstanding teachers. Part of what made paddling this big water possible for everyone was the knowledge that if they flipped, the instructor would be right there with them. There were several "hand of G*d" rescues, and we learned how to get a swimmer back into a boat out on the water. If someone flipped, Brenna was on them in an instant. We warmed up, etc. then headed to McCoy's rapid, always the first of the day. Jennifer, Debbie, and I flipped and rolled. As usual, I went blank when I went over the edge and don't remember anything.

Some of us fought our way out of the recirculating eddy and paddled through the little rocky chute to the eddy for Baby Face. Sitting in that eddy is like being in a

boat on the ocean up against a dock because the water is so dynamic. You ferry across a small, but fast, current into the feeder eddy to get into Baby Face. Brenna called it a micro-eddy. A MICRO-eddy!!!! Four kayaks and a 12 person raft were in the eddy lining up to surf. That gives you an idea of the scale we are dealing with. We all surfed with varying degrees of success, usually very briefly, of course. We surfed our way on down the river and on one of the flat water sections Debbie and Jennifer both learned a back deck roll.

Thursday we put in, warmed up, and headed for McCoy's rapid again. We ran the Sattler's side and Jennifer flipped and swam, Debbie flipped and rolled, and I ran it clean. I was determined to get on a good line, stay aware as I went over the edge, and to lean forward to punch through, and it worked. I was very pleased. We all surfed Baby Face, side surfed at lower S-Turn, and went on down to practice rope rescues through a gentle rapid. Later that night at the lodge we chatted with Stephen Wright who was there with his brother Clay teaching the Keeners, teens who are outstanding paddlers and are there for three weeks.

Friday we decided to paddle the main channel so we put on, warmed up, and headed for McCoy's again.



Jenifer wave surfing at "Baby Face"

This time we scouted from the right bank and Jennifer, Kyle, and I were going to run the right side through Phil's hole. It's a little farther down on the right and requires some maneuvering to get on the right line, then looking for the tongue to make it through. The tongue is a dynamic crashing wave that appears, then disappears, then comes back so you really have to pay attention. We were supposed to come through one at a time then eddy out on the left. Kyle followed Brenna through, flipped, rolled up, and ended up eddied out on the right just above Horseshoe, I mean, HORSESHOE. I had done a really good scouting job, knew where I was going to go, and punched it. After I got through I flipped in the outflow, rolled, eddied out on the left, and watch Jennifer come down, drop into the hole, and, and, and ...come swimming out. It seems that she couldn't see the tongue, went too far left right into the hole, and side surfed it for a while. In an effort to get out she tried to turn and got pummeled for a while then swam when she couldn't roll. Debbie ferried across, ran Sattler's hole, flipped, and rolled. We eddied out to try to surf Baby Face but there was so much traffic we moved on down into the main channel.

After paddling a large stretch of flat water the first rapid on the Main is Garburator, the rapid we first saw, which is a huge crashing wave hole that the sufer's were hav-

ing trouble staying in, with a tongue middle to right, and froth to the right of that. After scouting it, Jennifer and I ran it cleanly and Debbie flipped and rolled in the huge outflow and we got out on the right at the lunch spot. Clay and Stephen Wright were there with the Keeners discussing ways to boof into the hole or stay in it entering from the eddy. When we walked back up to watch Kyle try to surf it they were up techniques they had just talked about. Then we surfed Pushbutton and headed down the main channel using the sneak line at Butcher's Knife and making it through Norman's with big diagonal reactionary waves from each side of a canyon. Debbie caught some major air as she shot off of a wave and managed to stay upright. Then, in Coliseum, Debbie flipped and rolled twice in the roiling eddy line and swam after she got stuck on a rock, one of the few that we were near. And that was the end of our paddling.

Saturday we dropped Jennifer off at the airport in Ottawa and made the drive back in two days. It was a wonderful experience and our skill and confidence levels took a quantum leap. The instructors were amazing, personable, and completely there for us to challenge ourselves. This would be a wonderful experience for anyone at any skill level and we think we'll go again.

Off the Cuff

Comments From the Forum Worth Remembering

Upper and Lower Gauley, first weekend (Fri, Sat, Sun)

Posted by: Kayak1ky (IP Logged)

Date: September 07, 2010 11:53PM

Hmmmm, a few things to think about when considering getting on the Gauley, regardless of what section you are thinking about:

Are you of the skill level that the individual sections demand? Are you able to read and run or do you need to get out of the boat and walk it first. Are you able to look at the water and see where you need to go and then remember it when you get back in the boat? Are you able to pretty much know what is below even though you can't see it by reading the water's behaviors above it? Are you able to formulate a plan of attack immediately because you just discovered the one you had isn't working?

What will you do if you find that you are over your head and decide you have to walk out? How far to the road? Where is a path? Come to think of it, where is the damn road and which way do I head once I get on it? Who are my paddling buds and do I trust them and do they trust me? Is there somebody in the group that may put the entire trip in jeopardy? Who is the weakest paddler vs who is the strongest? Am I going to be holding up the trip and screwing it up for everybody? Am I able to listen to and hear the input of others? Can you accept that anything that happens to you is the result of your individual decision making process and not because of the encouragements or discouragements of others? In other words, 'it ain't their fault.'

Just a few questions folks. This is not meant to discourage anybody from going but it is meant to get you to think about not only yourself but for everybody that is with you. If you are ready and have confidence in your competence, then by all means go and have fun. If you are lacking, then let me suggest a warm-up on the New for an introduction to the big water feel before you jump on the Gauley. If you aren't ready for the Gauley, the Gauley will cut you from the herd and won't waste time doing it. Use your brains out there. If you are having multiple swims, you are not ready for the Gauley and trust me, you are pissing the group off.

Prime example is Dot. She's very competent and she knows her skills are at the level required. I agree with Brent, she's ready. Apprehensive but that is appropriate. Plus the group has the confidence level with her also. She's paddled a lot and worked hard to earn the group's respect and invitation to join in.

Back in May I was with a group on the Muddy at flood stage. It became evident that a couple of members of the group were not of the skill level required for the creek at that level. Mistakes and misjudgments were made and we were lucky that we got away as cleanly as we did. One thing I will always regret though is that the relationship between some of the members of the group changed and the change is most likely permanent. I regret that, deeply.

Ok, so much from the old wounded guy. Regardless of where you go and what section(s) you wind up on, have a great time out there. Me, while you are doing the Marathon and First Timers Down the UG, I'll be celebrating my 35th wedding anniversary with my beautiful bride of 35 years (she's a lousy shot). Yeah, I have shoes older than most of you.

Dallas

Posted by: hanleyk1 (IP Logged)

Date: September 08, 2010 02:17PM

Marty, I'd also say that you're relative comfort in bigger water is a big factor here. People who feel comfortable in bigger water generally think it's easier than shallow, steeper, more precise maneuvering in creekier rivers. However, people who aren't used to it get tossed around a good bit and have trouble managing themselves in it. I don't know your experience, so I can't decide for you.

I had a friend who was a west coast surfer, big pacific surf, started kayaking and immediately hopped out on the New at 5 feet (about 10,000 CFS) and was perfectly at home, but when we got him on a narrow steep creeky run he was trash. Usually the opposite is true. Most people starting out are comfortable on smaller, more manageable water and need to acclimate to the irregular, chaotic nature of bigger water.

In any case, it sounds like you're evaluating things pretty well. Let me know what you decide and I'll do my best to accommodate you without putting you in a bad situation.

Hanley

Posted by: Powhoundus (IP Logged)

Date: September 08, 2010 07:00PM

I'm going to disagree with Hanley on swimming the Ocoee vs. the Gauley. They are entirely different types of riverbeds. With the exception of jumping off of Pillow

Rock, thankfully I've never taken a stroke in the Gauley. knock knock It is big, it is powerful, and you will get sucked down a fair amount while you are in rapids or crossing eddy lines. In addition, the Gauley is littered with giant boulders that have fallen into the riverbed from above and / or have been eroded by water underneath or on the sides .. which means that there are gaps under most of them or between them and the next boulder or between them and the shore. In many of these gaps there is wood, smaller rocks or it narrows to a sieve that you can't pass through - often with deadly consequences. According to most of the accident reports re: deaths on the Gauley, more often than not they seem to involve these deadly features.

For all you noobs .. if you find yourself in the water on the Gauley, do not, I repeat DO NOT swim to shore until you have a clear path or see a definite eddy you can make with a safe path out. Another exception is if someone tells you a safe spot to swim to. IMO it is often safer to stay in the main flow and swim through the pourovers than swim between a boulder and the shore. Hanley, I know you are much more experienced on the Gauley than I am, so if you disagree I would like to be educated.

The Ocoee, OTOH has very few deadly features, and most of those are on the Upper. On the Ocoee, if you swim, you can almost always swim right to shore and be OK - provided you use safe self rescue swim techniques. Yep, you may be beat up a bit, but you'll be above water and breathing! Furthermore, most of the places you are likely to swim on the Ocoee are deep enough to give you a very nice swim. With the exception of Grumpy's (Class II-III line to the left) all of the bigger rapids are deep and an easy swim IMO. I have swam the entire Middle Ocoee below Flipper because my inflatable gator burst while I was blasting the ledge at Flipper. I decided to stick with my fellow guides who were tubing and swim the rest of the run. My only padding was a 1/4" Farmer John. I was fine. Had lots of offers to be rescued and was almost entangled by about 5 unwelcome flying ropes from a canoe club at Tablesaw, but all in all it was a fun swim.

The Ocoee will be running through Oct. The water is nice and warm ... best place around right now IMO to learn a combat roll.

Wes

First Timer UG trip and Marathon weekend

Posted by: brentaustin (IP Logged)

Date: September 13, 2010 12:36PM

BIG H2O fun this weekend on the Gauley, as well as a phat camp set up at Swiss. I think KY dominated the field for sure all weekend long. Great weather, great water and great friends.

The Marathon was a hoot, as usual. It is so cool to do the river from top to bottom and while making for a reasonably long day, it is well worth the effort to get that special "feel" for the whole run. I guess we had a flotilla of about 30 folks according to Sarah Mello. She kept asking me how many were there and all I could figure out was "all of them". We had one First Timer, Dave Devore, who styled it as we suspected. We had a veteran boater that realized their conditioning was not where it should be and did not style it like he had hoped, although he had good lines through some of the harder big rapids. We had large raft, small rafts, shredder and loads of K-1s. Not sure we had any C-boaters with us? We had SWR scenes, and we had loads of fun. You know, the usual stuff on the UG when there is that many people.

We put on at 11ish at the Dam, and made it down to Kuntz' Flume by 3:15ish. I think we bombed down the Lower in a couple of hours. Some great wave trains down there that I just love. I think we were off the river after 5 or so and YT immediately fired up the grill. Hanley, Jeff K, Fred and They Call Me Bruce, grabbed the BWA hub camp site, set up a nice fire site appropriately away from the Pop Ups City that we set up right beside them. And the BWAers, Vikings and Ky folks just flowed in. Man, it was fun. We had a kickin drum circle that Clay started off with some phat rythms that pulled us all in to join. Mark Branch fired up some nice acoustic and vocals. The next morning the whole place was cleaned up and folks kicked in the reasonable \$3 a car load to camp there. Buggy in the day, but nice once it got dark.

Sunday we did the Annual First Timers trip. Dot and Mark Dossett's first time down the UG. As we all thought, Dot styled it and, yes, she had to hit some rolls, but she was well within her skill set and element. She just needs a few more runs on it and she will be leading it by next year. Mark of course, also did well, and though cautious because of his recent back surgery, was right where he needed to be, albeit also with a few rolls here and there. We took out at Woods Ferry, and while pretty nice, I still think I am taking out next week during the Festival at Panther Mountain.

This is so much fun to do this each year ya'll. Love seeing folks get turned onto something new, like the UG or the Marathon. Just a great way to start off the season with some new boating buds on one of my favorite sections of river anywhere, (maybe second to the RF). Also, just for future reference, as everyone could tell by the utter lack of organization, lack of planning or even discussion of the most basic things like "shuttle arrangement", "group composition" or "hierarchy" on the river, it was ever clear that I was not a "trip leader", but simply a "trip cheerleader". That role will never change.

DISCLAIMER OF ALL LIABILITY FOR FUTURE ACTS

This trip shall not be used as precedent that I have ever, or will I ever "lead" a trip, even if it appears thus on any permit issued by any governmental agency such as the Grand Canyon National Park Service. Those are mere words of formality and not reflective of the group's intent that I paddle with on any river throughout the world. As my buddy Larry Cable reminded me, we are simply a "Group of Common Adventurers" and I adhere to the ancient BWA practice in words (not deeds) of "every man/woman for himself" even though I might be seen to save someone's ass from time to time. Notwithstanding all that, if any of you see me flailing in the water, please feel free to likewise disregard that credo and save me.

SYOTR,

Brent

Posted by: DorothyLee (IP Logged)
Date: September 15, 2010 08:10PM

First Timer's Trip Report on the Upper Gauley

Don , feel free to use this on Bowlines.

Huge thanks to Brent for leading/cheerleading me on the Upper Gauley. His Godzilla looks like the big brother to my Stubby so it was a perfect fit to follow him. Sarah Mello provided great supplemental information like, "the dry rock that you'll be looking for is actually a rock with water flowing over it but for some odd reason everyone calls it the dry rock" and "trust me, hit the big wave holes, they're friendlier than the eddyline on this rapid". There was a mass of experienced boaters ready to chase which was comforting to see. I consider it a successful run since I didn't swim though I flipped a number of times. Everyone said to be prepared to make a number of roll attempts and they were right. It was really really hard to roll up.

On Saturday I did my warm-up run on the Lower Gauley. The only other time I'd been on it was last year at Gauleyfest. River experience dramatically changed my perspective. I was so gripped before and was very surprised how this year it was just a relaxed fun run. Thanks for the props, Ellen! I remember you being my instructor years ago at the BWA clinic in the advanced women's group. There is a definite Butterfly Effect from that exceptional weekend and all the great runs I had with so many boaters helping me and encouraging me along the way. I remember at the clinic you told me that you paddled the Upper Gauley and at the time I thought it was an untouchable thing for me to ever do. Slowly but surely I paddled more and more and what do you know, I end up there, too.

The clear star filled sky of West Virginia, Swiss camp packed with boaters from the BWA, Vikings and Elkhorn city crew, huge drum session thumping through the night and the prospect of what was to come made for a heightened sense of excitement.

Paddling the Upper Gauley was/IS a huge milestone for me. So with my warrior/Pebbles from the Flintstones gear (fake hair with bone attached to my helmet) I was ready to rock and roll on Sunday (sort of, in a I'm super scared kind of way). Some rapids were a little easier than I expected and others were just plain freakin hard like Lost Paddle. We went a little too far left at Pillow so I flipped and rolled up just in time to see that I was dropping down into the Toilet Bowl. I did a little bit of under-water paddling so I could roll up. Pillow is a RUSH!!! There were a lot of upside down boats and a swim. I'll let the swimmer tell his story if he feels like it.

At the First Drop of Lost Paddle I got turned around backwards and knew that I didn't have enough time to turn back around. My attempt to hit the huge wave backwards was a FAIL. I rolled up just in time to not go into Second Drop. I opted for the sneak/creek line for Second Drop since I knew if I messed up on the mainline I'd get my noggin beat hard on a rock. It's supposed to be one of the few shallow/rock beatdown areas to watch out for. I hit many of the wave holes on Third Drop and Tumblehome backwards, this time successfully. I flipped at the drop at the bottom of Tumblehome then was swirled around with 3 other boaters in the crazy eddy. I burned all my muscles out to get out of there.

I was the show at Iron Ring. I was not expecting the glassy water to be so powerful and my boat angle went off at the very beginning. With expletives flying out of my mouth I paddled with every ounce of energy I had so I wouldn't go into Woodstock hole but, I was not able to miss the gigantic wave hole at the bottom. I went in as perpendicularly as possible, flew straight up into the air with a slight pause standing on my stern. Before I hit the water upside down, I could hear all the gleeful boaters' OHHHHHS. Even I can appreciate the quality of my spectacular flip. I rolled up and saw a wild goat standing at the side of the river watching the river carnage.

Sweet's Falls was a blast and one of my favorites. I was told that it's a crapshoot on whether or not you flipped. I took the big drop and was lucky. I jetted across the foam pile like a sled on ice. At the bottom, I was greeted with loud cheers from the PCP (Pittman Creek Paddlers) Somerset gang who were perched on the Box. It's great to run into friends so far away from home, gotta love the boating community.

We ended the day running Woods Ferry. Tired and hungry, I just missed the ferry and ended up dropping right into Jane's Juicer. Boat and all got sucked down and spit out. The river's way of reminding me who's boss. I

turned around and saw 3 boaters converge and all drop into the hole at the same time.... . No harm, no foul, just pure joy and relief.

The Upper Gauley was a very hard run for me. I didn't feel that I was in over my head but, I did use all of my experience, skills, focus and physical ability I could muster to get through it. If I didn't have such a fear of swimming, I would have ended up swimming. I won't be any less afraid on my future 2nd run. Even with being so gripped, I had so much FUN. Paddling is such an other-worldly thing to me. Only boaters can understand why it is we do the things we do even with such fear and trepidation involved. I felt that I had so much support from everyone. People who had led/helped/instructed me in the past had a vested interest that I would do well and I really appreciate that.

It's a long trip report, kudos to you if you got through all of it.

D*t =)
SYOTR

Throw ropes

Message:

I guess that makes me one of the pros, so here's my opinion.

You can never have too long a rope. That said, one that you have with you is one hell of a lot better than that big one that you left in the truck. The bag that I found to be ideal for a kayaker is 65' of 5/16 spectra. Unfortunately, no one makes it anymore. 1/4" Spectra is almost useless for haul systems and it's hard to hold onto with cold hands, but I still carry an NRS belt bag with a 55' 1/4" throwbag. I still carry a regular throwbag in the boat.

For most private boat trips, a 75' 3/8" spectra line is all you should ever need to extract a boat, even a raft. The prussiks will slip long before you ever load the line enough to break it. It is a big and bulk bag, but worth the space on trips on serious whitewater.

If you can't afford Spectra, poly ropes work, they just stretch a lot doing it.
Larry Cable

Laryngospasm

Posted by: Powhoundus (IP Logged)
Date: September 30, 2010 10:34PM

I think this topic deserves it's own thread so I'm moving it.

I've read the NRS articles as well as done some of my

own internet research on this phenomenon. I've had 3 episodes of laryngospasm that I can recall. Interestingly, though I did much more boating back in the day, including lots of aggressive playboating on the Ocoee with lots of flips in holes, long boat enders at Flipper, Slice, etc, I can never recall this happening to me before my return to boating after 16 yrs off in '07. There may be something to the predisposing condition theory as in my recent years I seem more prone to food washing down "the wrong way" sometimes and recently have had a problem with throat congestion I've attributed to allergies but maybe it's painless gastric reflux.

I always wear nose clip when there is even a small chance of flipping. Whether it's from years of allergic rhinitis, or the way I'm wired, I experience extreme discomfort from the nasal douche. I can handle a little up there, even salt water while body surfing, but the flow I get while upside down in a boat is unbearable to me and actually makes it hard to focus to roll. I don't see how some of you go without them.

My first episode was on my first RFG run at release in '07. I flipped against Braille Rock and swam out from under it. I was at least 20 ft below the bumpy ledge below before I could get a breath ... thinking maybe 5+ seconds? I attributed it to possibly sucking in water in my power flip, but had never read anything about laryngospasm until Charlies article came out that same month. It was scary, but since it had never happened before I didn't think much about it.

My second episode was just one month later. There was a dam problem and the Upper Ocoee was running at lower than standard release. I didn't know much about the sieve at Alien Boof except what I read / saw in pictures on the AW page (since I've explored it twice now in Aug with the water off I know it very well now). I was afraid of being sucked down into the sieve at the lower flow in my playboat (I know now that can never happen BTW as long as enough water is flowing over the ledge to boat over it) so decided to run the right line. I screwed up the rock wall boof and got turned into the ledge hole where I flipped and could not roll up as I kept getting spun around against the wall / water flowing over. It's a lot like the hole behind Woodstock, that I saw at ~ 1200, but on a smaller scale. So then I was swimming in this hole with my boat and could not get out. I couldn't breathe either because when I flipped / tried to roll up along the way I think I sucked in some water and had laryngospasm. The guy on the rock blew his rope through even though I was only about 20 ft away! Finally I got to where I could kick against the rock with my feet enough to push beyond the boil line. Again, this was probably 5+ seconds, 10 at the most but it seemed like forever that I couldn't suck in air.

The third episode was at Pillow that I described in the previous thread, and that was the worse as I was sitting upright after the roll and could not breathe for at least 15

seconds. It also seemed like the harder I tried to suck in air, the worse it got. Finally I could sneak in little breaths and was very relieved to know I wouldn't pass out .. I have to admit though the rest of the big rapids in the run worried me more than usual after this experience, although I had informed Brent what had happened so hoped he would be keeping an eye on me.

I am of course genuinely concerned that this will happen again, perhaps even lasting longer. I think I need to improve the way I roll / swim to minimize this risk. From what I've read, you will be more successful at relieving the spasm and getting a breath if you don't try to suck in air at max rate. I'm thinking perhaps focusing on breathing in slow and deep through pursed lips .. like you are breathing through a straw. Some air is better than none, so just getting in a little would help. So if I can keep from panicking I'll try that. Another holistic dude suggested there is a release point in the sternal notch. Well, I suppose it's worth a try so if you've got nothing better to do while trying to breathe, poke away. Thirdly, and I think this is the most important point, do not breathe in water! Or at least minimize the risk. This is tough while swimming in a hole as the water is so aerated that it's hard to get a breath and not suck in some water. Also, when you roll, try to remember not to try to breathe until you are stable and upright. This will have an additional benefit - it will improve your roll. If you're not trying to grab an early breath you will have no reason to stick up your head, and more likely to keep it down for a successful roll. Easier said to done, but I'm going to definitely implement it in my roll practice regimen. Another drill I think that will help to stop that reflex is do as many rolls as you can while holding your breath.

I think we should all try to watch one another more closely for this condition as it could obviously be life threatening. Get in a habit if you see someone just get thrashed / roll up to make sure they are with it and paddling. Make sure swimmers are swimming. If they look like something is wrong yell at them or give them the head pat. If you don't like the reply, better play it safe than sorry!

Wes

Posted by: hanleyk1 (IP Logged)
Date: September 30, 2010 11:06PM

Wes, that first paragraph, plus the bit about the harder you try to breathe the worse it gets, could have been written by me. Any time I roll without noseplugs in the river this happens. I'm actually scheming to make a better noseplug (one that won't get blown off in a violent surf). I agree that if you can regain control of your instinctive gasping reflex during that period, you can solve the problem, but that's easier said than done.

I'm not sure what has prompted this development, but I

too find that I swallow "down the wrong pipe) a lot more often than I used to, so much that Denile and Natasha give me a hard time about it. I work at controlling it, but it still happens if I'm just not paying attention...

...which brings me to my last point. I think that over time I spent a lot of time suppressing the natural reflexes that protect me in those circumstances. I spent lots of time upside down when I was young and my reflexes were extremely sharp, I think that I substituted active, attentive management of those muscles for my natural unconscious reflexes. After going back to college and getting a real job and kind of getting out of boating for a bit (not really out, but not spending much time upside down anywhere for several years) I think that my attention and reflexes waned, but the unconscious natural reflex remained suppressed.

What do you think?

Hanley

Posted by: brentaustin (IP Logged)
Date: September 30, 2010 11:38PM

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

Same here Hanley re: the swallowing ... tends to happen when I'm trying to engage in conversation while I eat. Plus I often eat too fast, years of wolfing down meals in brief moments of free time in medical training and at work I guess caused that problem. Re: the change in control of the larynx vs uncontrolled reflex. I'm not sure if I follow what you are suggesting, but I'm wondering if age has anything to do with an increase in risk of laryngospasm, or if it's just other processes that come with age - similar to some of the risk factors mentioned by the docs online ... years of irritation from reflux, multiple near aspirations of meals, or years of allergies and postnasal drainage that I often have.

I didn't comment on this before, but several sources seemed to suggest that the temperature of the water has a direct correlation with risk of laryngospasm. I will note that when I had my two earlier episodes the water wasn't that cold as I recall ... but the Gauley is pretty chilly, though not winter water cold. I roll practice on rivers in Winter, but try not to paddle hard runs in Winter (so don't flip much unless play boating). Maybe that's why I've never had this in Winter.

Guess I should have been a little more clear with you Brent that I wanted you to keep an eye on me ... thought telling you I had laryngospasm would be enough. But I agree with your notion of keeping a general eye on your buds. I think when we are paddling Class IV and up we should try to keep the trips as tight as possible and keep a close eye on each other at all times for safety reasons. If we get used to paddling with folks and they rarely have problems, I think there is a risk of becoming too complacent. If we aren't in fairly tight formation, it could delay any rescue attempt which could increase the risk of a bad outcome.

Wes

Posted by: Doug_Davis (IP Logged)
Date: October 03, 2010 04:34PM

Hey Wes,

We talked a lot about laryngospasms during WFR and WEMT training, as it's a potentially serious problem in a wilderness paddling environment.

The biggest contributing factor we were taught, it seems is night time acid reflux or coughs due to allergies pushing acid into the larynx inflaming the esophagus. And you are reporting problems with both of those issues. Most of the time these precursor conditions manifest themselves as night time laryngospasms, but we were told there is a likelihood of increasing the chance of the patient having one from cold water.

We were told that treating the two precursor conditions (acid reflux or allergies) can help alleviate the laryn-

gospasms both at night and their chances of occurring on water. Hope the info helps!

~Doug

Posted by: hanleyk1 (IP Logged)
Date: October 04, 2010 04:11PM

I can state with confidence that the water temperature doesn't appear to make a difference. Warm water, cold water, if I take a roll without noseplugs in any kind of turbulence I'm going to come up having trouble getting air nine times out of ten. I doubt that acid reflux or allergies play a role. I have a very settled stomach and rarely react to anything in the air. It may have something to do with just getting older.

Basically, my theory is this. Early in my boating career I learned to control the need to cough and gag if I aspirated a small amount of water, suppressing these reflexive responses while upside down and concentrating on rolling. Early on when I was a serious carper, this was probably a lot more likely to occur. Basically, these days, if my nose gets flushed, I feel as if there is some automatic reflexive response that isn't happening properly, as if my mammalian diving reflex doesn't kick in when water first hits my throat. Then, once a little water is aspirated, it's like I have a delayed response and that reflex kicks in extra hard.

I can't actually resolve this with the mechanism, this is just what I feel. I feel like there is something missing, and it feels like a reflex that I have suppressed, as if that reflex is misfiring, operating incorrectly. Beyond this, I can't say. I just wish I knew a good way to address it outside of better noseplugs.

Hanley

Posted by: MisterMello (IP Logged)
Date: October 04, 2010 04:44PM

I've had this problem, super sucks. I had someone turn me on to Ripple brand noseplugs and they have been great. I've never lost them in a hole, and that includes my mighty backender at El Horrendo yesterday and my flip at the bottom of third drop. They are solid and stick to my nose like a champion, even with sunscreen.

Posted by: Doug_Davis (IP Logged)
Date: October 04, 2010 05:18PM

Hanley,

From the Mayo Clinic:
[<http://www.mayoclinic.com>]

The laryngospasms Dr. Rosenow is discussing here are mainly night ones brought on by acid reflux, which happens during sleep. However there is research which indi-

cates that allergies and acid reflux can keep the larynx and vocal cords in a heightened state of inflammation, leading to more occurrences in or around water.

At least that is the info we were given. Either way it can be a scary episode.

Posted by: hanleyk1 (IP Logged)
Date: October 04, 2010 07:11PM

Doug, I feel pretty certain that's not what's happening to me. As I said before, I have virtually no allergies and I really don't think that I have acid reflux. What's more, I don't feel like my larynx is in any kind of state of inflammation. What's more, this is way too regular. Any time I roll without noseplugs in any kind of turbulent water it happens. I doubt that this kind of inflammation would be occurring without my knowledge and without other symptoms over a period of years.

I suspect this may be related to swallowing problems that various people encounter as they get older, there are many possibilities. I was talking to Fred about this and he tells me that the mechanism does not involve the larynx actually spasming closed. He says the muscles controlling the larynx contract to open it and relax to close it, but that negative pressure (i.e. trying to inhale) while the muscles are not contracting effectively seal the opening. This explains the "The harder I try to breathe in the worse it seems." aspect of things and effectively describes exactly how it feels. So, to stop it I have to control my reflex to suck in air powerfully and compel the muscles controlling my larynx to open when they don't want to, which also describes exactly how this feels.

Wes, does this description fit with what you remember of anatomy from med school?

Hanley

Posted by: Powhoundus (IP Logged)
Date: October 08, 2010 04:21AM

Thinking about this problem some more, I've come to 2 additional realizations. One is that over the past 10 yrs or so, it's become increasingly difficult for me to swallow large pills, and can't swallow anything but a tiny pill now without a gulp of water. Also, in each of the instances I had laryngospasm, before the flip occurred I was pretty anxious. On the RF it was my first run and by the time I got to Climax I was pretty tired and wired, I flipped against Braille and washed under it. Not much of an undercut by RF standards, but it was scary not knowing that and being under the rock. On the Upper Ocoee, I was having a not fun body surf in the ledge hole at Alien after multiple roll attempts while surfing it upside down. In the most recent event on the Gauley, I was already nervous cause I was running a major rapid on the UG, had just passed a death scene, and though I know the

danger factor at Pillow is small, on this particular run I was seriously flirting with the Room of Doom, and no one was on the rock above, so before the flip I was pretty wired.

Although I do have a long history of allergic rhinitis. I'm almost on max therapy with nasal steroids and Zyrtec. Allergy shots failed to provide benefit when I was younger (don't help about 25% of patients) and I haven't added montelukast (Singulair) yet but since I already hate taking as much as I do, I'm not adding that until I feel a symptomatic need. I feel that my allergies are adequately controlled on the regimen I'm on.

I've thought more about GERD as a potential contributor in my case, and the more I think about it, the less I think I have GERD. Despite the laryngeal symptoms I have, I rarely have heartburn and don't have the morning symptoms associated with GERD. I occasionally have heartburn that I can almost always attribute to spicy food. I've never had any laryngeal / respiratory problems at night / supine, which is when GERD would be at it's worst.

Also, interestingly, unlike Hanley, when I forget my plugs and get a nasal douche - like a few wks ago doing eddyline squirts on the MG - I can't ever recall getting laryngospasm in that situation. Therefore although the results are the same, our inciting mechanisms are quite different. I find this very interesting.

My current theory is my heightened anxiety from being in a scary situation followed by a splash of water sends me into laryngospasm. It could have something with Sympathetic innervation of the larynx. Wondering if anyone else has had this happen when they are in a sketchy situation.

Honestly, I don't recall much about the neuromuscular details of the larynx. I haven't thought about it since National Board Finals and if you don't use it, you lose it. The pharynx / larynx complex is interrelated and quite complex actually. So I found a site online to review the anatomy / physiology.

[<http://www.emory.edu>]

Although I can't find it skimming this review, as I recall, the vocal folds are closed when the muscles are that control them contracting, and open when they are relaxed but I may have that backward. I do know that the laryngeal constrictors that protect the larynx from food / water function separately from the vocal folds, and close with active muscle contraction, constricting the larynx superior to the folds. These are described in part 3 of the subtitle "Muscles That Close off the Vestibule of the Larynx" of the link above. I believe these are the muscles responsible for laryngospasm, though again, I could be wrong.

Wes

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