

BOWLINES

Award Winning Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association since 1976. March/April 2022

In our Own Words.....

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River Safety - You are the Machine

**Special
BWA Clinic Issue**



BWA Spring Beginners Clinic 2022 is Coming May 14/15 2022!

Find out more about It and the history of past Clinics in this issue of Bowlines!

Teaching Whitewater Canoeing & Kayaking since 1979

Looking Ahead

Second Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

BWA Monthly Meeting

For more information on

Club Meetings & Activities

always check the online Calendar.

<https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/events>

BWA web site:

<https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>



The BWA wishes to thank Canoe Kentucky for it's support.
We urge you to patronize them for your outdoor needs.

Check out Bowlines Online Archive with many
great issues going back to the nineties!

Issue Archive:

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org/Newsletter>

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

http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv_Aug06.pdf



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

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Secretary	Robert Watts	859-554-8489
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Program	Floyd Miracle	
Cyber Communications	Michael Williams	859-893-0114
Conservation	Angus Milto	
Film Festival Coordinator	Emily Grimes	859-797-6988
Equipment Coordinator	Jansen Koeberlein	270-703-0352
At-Large Member	Damon Rosenbarker	
Membership Coordinator	Terri Covington Brunjes	

Join in on the Fun!

Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$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 forum for member's messages & a parking pass for the Elkhorn.

Meetings are held at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each month at location announced on our website: <http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>

**BWA members want to read your story!
Short or long. Sad or Funny.
Tell us your paddling related story!**

Files can be e-mailed to the Editor: DonSpang@aol.com



About the BWA's Bowlines

The Bowlines has been a unique record of the BWA and its members. Unique in that it has been more than a listing of club activities and general information about paddling and related issues. When you read Bowlines you read about each of us and what we thought and did over the years. Members have contributed articles not only about paddling, conservation, and the club, but also stories crafted with humor, imagination, and the spirit of enthusiasm of life and enjoyment of each other. These are only a small portion of the many articles worth rereading. There have been songs, poems, soap operas, jokes, cartoons, wedding announcements, birth announcements, and unique trip reports among all the issues. Not what you might think you would see in a whitewater club newsletter.

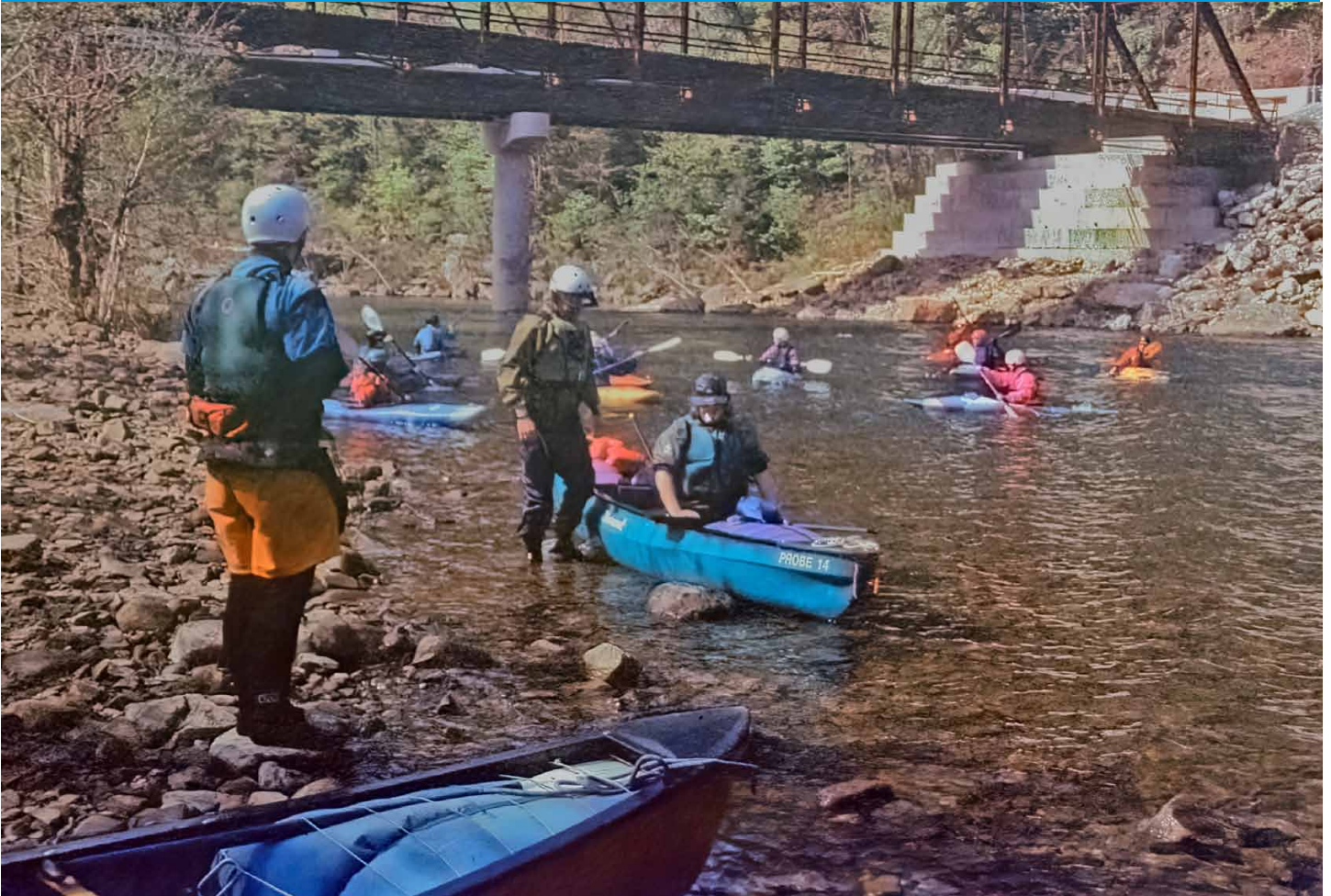
We owe a thank you to all the newsletter editors that spent countless hours preparing each issue. To all you club members a big BWA hand for your contributions. Please keep it up! Now dig in and enjoy old memories or chuckle at the amusing stories, poems and pictures...

Learn to Paddle A Canoe or Kayak!

BWA Spring Beginners Clinic May 14/15, 2022

Early Registration Cost is 80.00 for BWA Member

Sign up at: <https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/store-2/p/bwa-beginners-clinic-2021-k5s86>



The BWA beginner clinic is open to anyone who wants to learn how to kayak or canoe on moving water.

You will receive whitewater kayaking instruction from enthusiastic, experienced instructors on class II and III sections of the Russel Fork river, approximately 3 hours travel from Lexington, KY. Whether you're an absolute beginner or you already have a few trips under your belt, we build our classes around our students' needs and keep class sizes small so you get plenty of personal attention.

It is recommended that, at a minimum, you attend some of the BWA's rolling sessions before the clinic so that you have the basics of rolling, wet exiting, and adjusting your boat to fit before the clinic. You do not need a perfect your roll to participate, but you'll get more out of the clinic if you are at least familiar with the basics of rolling.

Clinic registration includes:

- Weekend camping
- River shuttles
- 3 meals: 2 breakfast & 1 Supper
(Bring lunches/Canteen for River)
- Gear loaning as necessary
- 2 days of river instruction
- Memories that last a lifetime!

Important Information:

All students must join the BWA to participate in the clinic. Membership is \$20 a year for individuals and \$25 for family membership.

Early bird registration (by April 4): \$80

Standard registration: \$100

Registration Deadline: Monday, May 2nd

Clinic Dates:

Saturday and Sunday May 14th and 15th 2022. Arrive Friday night to camp.
Instruction starts Saturday morning.

FAQ

What if I just want to hang out and not be a student or volunteer?

There is a separate registration for non-students and volunteers (Will be updated soon)

Non-Student (1 person): \$30*

*Covers 2 nights camping, and 3 meals. Children under 5 are free. Contact clinic organizer if you need to bundle more than three kids at Clinic@BluegrassWildwater.org and we'll work something out.

What if something comes up? What about refunds?

The clinic is a big undertaking and requires a lot of planning and money out of pocket, so it's important for us if you must cancel you do so as early as possible. Please email clinic organizer, Ben Mudd, at Clinic@BluegrassWildwater.org and let us know what your situation is. Full refunds will be issued to anyone cancelling by April 1st, 75% by April 15th, 50% by May 1st, 25% by May 7th. No refunds will be issued after May 7th.

Do I need a special kayak or other special gear?

Recreational kayaks are inappropriate for whitewater. Most of the local sporting goods stores (Dicks, Cabela's, Bass Pro-Shop, etc.) sell ONLY recreational kayaks. Whitewater kayaks can be purchased or rented locally. Canoe Kentucky in Frankfort (502-227-4492) offers a large selection of clothing, whitewater equipment, and new and used Jackson kayaks. They also usually have a special rental package for our clinic, but they are limited to their inventory. Call and ask for details. J&H Lanmark Store in Lexington (859-278-0730) is clearing out their inventory of Dagger whitewater kayaks and also carries whitewater clothing and accessories. If you have specific questions about new or used kayaks, these stores can offer excellent advice. Please let these retailers know that you will be attending the BWA clinic so that they can better assist you. BWA members get a 10% discount at these locations, so be sure to mention this if you are a member.

Is there a way to borrow gear for only the clinic?

Borrowed equipment (boats and gear) is provided by BWA members on a first come/first served basis. The sooner you return your application, the easier it will be to get borrowed gear. If you buy gear for the clinic, it is recommended to begin with a PFD, helmet and/or sprayskirt since these pieces of gear are critical and must fit properly to work properly. **YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY GEAR BORROWED.** Take good care of borrowed gear and know who to return it.

Looking Ahead: Things you will likely learn about at the clinic:

This is one page plan evolved over the years for the BWA Clinic. You might also find it is useful as a reminder of things and skills to continue working on long after the clinic. Use it to Improve you skills when you paddle by having a mini-clinic as you run streams.

Introduction to Canoeing/Kayaking

Objectives

Important terms/skills to recognize and understand:

- 1.Parts of the Boat: bow, stern, thwart, gunwale, painter, rocker, etc.
- 2.Parts of the Paddle: shaft, grip, throat, blade, tip, power face
- 3.Basic Safety Equipment: helmet, PFD, throw-rope, flotation
- 4.Hydrology: eddy/eddy line, standing wave, hole (hydraulic, keeper, etc.), pillow, strainer, dam
- 5.Paddle strokes: forward, reverse, draw, sweep, brace, turning/correcting/pululsion, body rotation
- 6.Boating techniques: upsteam/downstream lean, angle, speed, surfing,

Strokes:

Canoeing: Achieve proficiency in:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. forward stroke & back stroke | 5. pry |
| 2. high and low braces | 6. cross bow draw |
| 3. draw stroke: to stern, bow, amidships | 7. hanging draw (turning high brace) |
| 4. forward & reverse sweeps | 8. sculling, sculling draw |

Kayaking: Achieve familiarly with:

- 1.propulsion strokes: forward & back (control hand/power hand, eye-level punch)
- 2.turning & control strokes-. forward sweep, reverse sweep, draw to bow, stern and amidships
- 3.defensive strokes: high brace, sweeping high brace, low brace, sculling draw & brace, sweeping low brace
- 4.Duffek etc.

Introduction to water reading:

Whitewater "Vs" (upstream & downstream), tongue, eddies, holes, pillows, ledges, horizon lines,water hazards

(strainers, dams, etc.)

River Maneuvers:

Achieve some proficiency and practice:

paddling straight	turning the boat	upstream/downstream
ferries		

peel out	eddy turn	setting
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River Running tactics

paddling in control, river etiquette, running slower than current, running rock gardens, ledges, waves, hydraulics, bends in rivers, scouting, scouting from eddies (eddy hopping), surfing, lead/sweep

Safety (discussion or demonstration)

Transportation & tie down of boats & gear, boat carrying techniques, boat entry, self-rescue, swimming rapids, assisting techniques for rescue of person & boat, boat over canoe rescue, rope throw & rescue, AWA river signals & safety code, swamped or pinned boats, hypothermia, river rating, entrapment, proper clothing

Basic Weekend Schedule: It is important that you are read & anticipate this schedule. instructors will update you on changes. Your promptness will make it easier for all to get the most from the clinic. Be dressed & ready for the day by 9:00. You will not be back to camp till late afternoon.

Saturday: 7:00-8:30 Breakfast 8:30-9:00 Organizational/Safety Talk. Meet instructor/go to river.

River time 10:00-4:30 Relax/fun 4:30-5:30? Supper about 6:00-6:30 Campfire 8:30-?

Sunday: 7:30-9:00 Breakfast 9:00 Break Camp 9:30 meet instructors/go to river, off river (ask inst.) 3:00-4:00 Don't forget your lunch and water each day. Have a good time!

Responsibility

Rich Lewis

The club has grown tremendously over the past few years; but even more so, the skill level of club paddlers has increased. The result is that more and more new paddlers are participating in club trips, and some are even leading their own trip.

A basic introduction to individual responsibility and trip leader responsibility is necessary for those newcomers and those aspiring to lead. Some of the following suggestions are in the AWA Safety Code, but most are common sense for the common good



Rich Lewis, Middle Fork Salmon River, Idaho

Responsibility of river trip participants.

A. Equipment

- wear suitable clothing and carry extra in case of a swim.
- have boat and accessories in river-worthy condition such that they won't compromise the safety of yourself and the group, or unduly delay the group due to on-river repairs. Grab loops and floatation are a must.
- have a throw rope in every boat with one carabiner.
- have your own sponge or bailer.
- have your own water/gorp if needed.

B. Actions

- to chase swimmers and equipment. Three boats are needed for maximum safety and speed. One tows swimmer who is holding capsized boat and paddle. One stands by in case swimmer lets go of equipment.
- to keep paddlers behind them always in view.
- to yield the right of way when the rules of etiquette and safety dictate.
- to know the AWA safety code and signals.
- to hold on to own equipment if at all possible during swims.
- to effect a self-rescue if possible.
- to be on time for river trips and shuttles and help with boat loading/unloading.

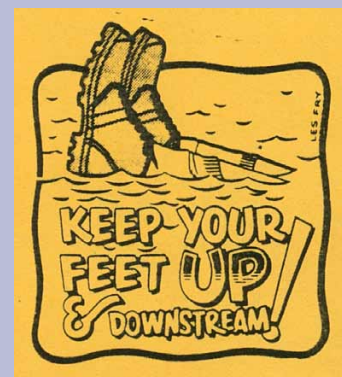
Responsibility of river trip leaders

A. Equipment

- make sure someone has these: -spare paddles for all types of craft in group, & a
- first-aid kit.

B. Actions

- makes sure throw rope is set at all necessary drops.
- makes sure only those capable of a safe river run are boating. Group boating and rescue strength should be considered.
- assigns a sweep and reassigns another sweep if dissatisfied with first sweep. (do with discretion)
- informs less experienced group members of river hazards and helps them decide on routes through rapids or if to portage.
- keeps group together.
- appoints qualified rescue leader in case of mishap (may appoint themselves).
- is responsible for safety of group as a whole. May consult with other experienced members of group for guidance.
- must know river well, including hazards, portage, put in and take out, and emergency walk-out routes, If it is a new river for the group, it is the leaders responsibility to find out this information beforehand from books and other paddlers.



River Safety & Rescue in the BWA

The club is fortunate to have a large number of new members that want to learn how to paddle whitewater. The Bluegrass Wildwater Association has introduced many hundreds of folks to the world of whitewater since it began in 1976. New enthusiasts have been the lifeblood of our club. They are why we have grown from a couple dozen members to well over two hundred in 2008.

I think we do a pretty good job of bringing them into the sport. However it is understandable why those of us that have paddled for years sometime forget all the things, big and little that we know that a newbie may not be aware of. That is why our clinics and classes are so important: they provide new paddlers a foundation of knowledge and skills that they may not always pick up in the more casual setting of running a river.

We have had a tradition of promoting safe boating: In 1979 we had our first clinic at the Big South Fork, this was long before there was a paved road to the river, let alone the fancy facilities and campground that is there now. Roll Sessions started the year after we were formed, the winter of 1977. They were held at the pool at UK Memorial Coliseum on Sunday mornings 8 am-noon. It was a determined and motivated group that showed up for these roll session and braved the early Sunday hours and the cold water in the pool.

Also in the early eighties we started having novice trips for those new to the sport. Summer is perhaps the most active time for new paddlers because of warmer waters, but local streams rarely have water to paddle in the summer. Trips to the Nantahala, Hiawassee, New and similar streams that have dam water releases flows were the answer.

In 1982, to promote river safety skills and knowledge, the BWA put on the Southeastern River Safety & Rescue Symposium. This two day Symposium was a first of its kind put on by a paddling club and brought together state rescue teams, NOC instructors, paddlers, and other experts who were experienced in critical river. The speakers included some of the top experts in river safety and rescue at the time including Charlie Walbridge (AW Safety), Bunny Johns (NOC), Russ Nichols (Cinematographer), Dave Mason (ACA), and Bob Sehlinger (SAGE). It helped expand and share knowledge on safe boating and river rescue. At the time there were few books, films or sources on safe whitewater paddling. Things we take for granted now like videos, DVDs, many books and the internet did not exist yet. The NOC then was in its formative years as a school of the outdoors. We were fortunate to have a similar organization start up in Lexington called SAGE. It became the fountainhead for Kentucky to learn outdoor skills like whitewater paddling.

SAGE had a store near the campus that sold outdoor equipment of all kinds including paddling gear. They also have an excellent instructional program that taught skills like rock climbing, sailing, backpacking, and of course canoeing and kayaking. Most of those that started the BWA either taught at SAGE or attended their "Aqua I and Aqua II" paddling classes.

Over the years the Bluegrass Wildwater Association have had many other clinics on first aid, CPR, and river rescue. Members have also taken more advanced training at well known skill schools like the Nantahala Outdoor Center and Madawaska.. In some cases the BWA has been able to subsidize the cost of attendance to some of the classes for members or even arrange for a free cpr class or minirescue class.

But even with all the emphasis on river safety there have been incidents when serious harm was only moments or mere inches away. Because of learned skills... and sometimes luck, the outcome in most of these situations resulted in no major harm. But in the most serious incident the BWA lost a beloved member and longtime paddler due to a lapse of judgement on a river trip. Consequences of a small mistake or ignoring basic rules of safe boating can be serious and even deadly if you or your paddling group is not totally alert to the situation and does not respond properly.

It is the responsibility of all participants on a river trip, from the trip leader to the least experienced member, to be alert to and question any condition or activity that could lead to potential harm. It is better to ask a question that you or someone else might consider unimportant or foolish then regret not doing so later. Paddling whitewater can be a reasonably safe activity if all of us are properly prepared and alert to dangers that can be found on the river. Good judgement can lead to good times!

Don Spangler Bowlines 2008

The Uncalculated Risk (1977).
Russ Nichols Historic Film about whitewater safety.
[https://www.youtube.com > watch?v=tePZWe31J1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tePZWe31J1s)

The Uncalculated Risk is the first film in an excellent whitewater safety series produced by the American Red Cross in the late 1970's. It's noteworthy for not sugarcoating the hazards, and it pulls no punches in laying out the fastest ways to get yourself killed in whitewater sports.

The opening sequence, filmed on the Nantahala River in North Carolina, is a very realistic depiction of a classic foot entrapment. Cinematographer Russ Nichols did a superb job filming it. One of the film's narrators is Payson Kennedy, co-founder of the Nantahala Outdoor Center, a nationally recognized school for paddlers.

Since the Start of the BWA, River Safety Information is an important feature in the Bowlines. The best overall guide has always been the Safety Code of American Whitewater, if you have not read it in a while, it is worth taking a few minutes to do so.

Here it is in time for all to carefully read before the Clinic.

Safety Code of American Whitewater

Five decades of service to the paddlers of America. Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. adopted 1959 revised 2005

Charlie Walbridge - Safety Chairman

Mark Singleton - Executive Director

Introduction

This code has been prepared using the best available information and has been reviewed by a broad cross-section of whitewater experts. The code, however, is only a collection of guidelines; attempts to minimize risks should be flexible, not constrained by a rigid set of rules. Varying conditions and group goals may combine with unpredictable circumstances to require alternate procedures. This code is not intended to serve as a standard of care for commercial outfitters or guides.

I. Personal Preparedness and Responsibility

1. Be a competent swimmer, with the ability to handle yourself underwater.
2. Wear a life jacket. a snugly-fitting vest-type life preserver offers back and shoulder protection as well as the flotation needed to swim safely in whitewater.
3. Wear a solid, correctly-fitted helmet when upsets are likely. This is essential in kayaks or covered canoes, and recommended for open canoeists using thigh straps and rafters running steep drops.
4. Do not boat out of control. Your skills should be sufficient to stop or reach shore before reaching danger. Do not enter a rapid unless you are reasonably sure that you can run it safely or swim it without injury.
5. Whitewater rivers contain many hazards which are not always easily recognized. The following are the most frequent killers. I. High Water. The river's speed and power increase tremendously as the flow increases, raising the difficulty of most rapids. Rescue becomes progressively harder as the water rises, adding to the danger. Floating debris and strainers make even an easy rapid quite hazardous. It is often misleading to judge the river level at the put in, Since a small rise in a wide, shallow place will be multiplied many times where the river narrows. Use reliable gauge information whenever possible, and be aware that sun on snowpack, hard rain, and upstream dam releases may greatly increase the flow.

II. Cold. Cold drains your strength and robs you of the ability to make sound decisions on matters affecting your survival. Cold-water immersion, because of the initial shock and the rapid heat loss which follows, is especially dangerous. Dress appropriately for bad weather or sudden immersion in the water. When the water temperature is less than 50 degrees F., a wetsuit or drysuit is essential for protection if you swim. Next best is wool or pile clothing under a waterproof shell. In this case, you should also carry waterproof matches and a change of clothing in a waterproof bag. If, after prolonged exposure, a person experiences uncontrollable shaking, loss of coordination, or difficulty speaking, he or she is hypothermic, and needs your assistance.

III. Strainers. Brush, fallen trees, bridge pilings, undercut rocks or anything else which allows river current to sweep through can pin boats and boaters against the obstacle. Water pressure on anything trapped this way can be overwhelming. rescue is often extremely difficult. Pinning may occur in fast current, with little or not whitewater to warn of the danger. IV. Dams, weirs, ledges, reversals, holes, and hydraulics. When water drops over a obstacle, it curls back

on itself, forming a strong upstream current which may be capable of holding a boat or swimmer. Some holes make for excellent sport. Others are proven killers. Paddlers who cannot recognize the difference should avoid all but the smallest holes. Hydraulics around man-made dams must be treated with utmost respect regardless of their height or the level of the river. Despite their seemingly benign appearance, they can create an almost escapeproof trap. The swimmer's only exit from the "drowning machine" is to dive below the surface when the downstream current is flowing beneath the reversal.

6. Broaching. when a boat is pushed sideways against a rock by strong current, it may collapse and wrap. this is especially dangerous to kayak and decked canoe paddlers; these boats will collapse and the combination of indestructible hulls and tight outfitting may create a deadly trap. even without entrapment, releasing pinned boats can be extremely time-consuming and dangerous. to avoid pinning, throw your weight downstream towards the rock. this allows the current to slide harmlessly underneath the hull.

7. Boating alone is discouraged. The minimum party is three people or two craft.

8. Have a frank knowledge of your boating ability, and don't attempt rivers or rapids which lie beyond that ability.

9. Be in Good physical and mental condition, consistent with the difficulties which may be expected. Make adjustments for loss of skills due to age, health, fitness. Any health limitations must be explained to your fellow paddlers prior to starting the trip.

10. Be practiced in self-rescue, including escape from an overturned craft. The eskimo roll is strongly recommended for decked boaters who run rapids Class IV or greater, or who paddle in cold environmental conditions.

11. Be trained in rescue skills, CPR, and first aid with special emphasis on the recognizing and treating hypothermia. It may save your friend's life.

12. Carry equipment needed for unexpected emergencies, including foot wear which will protect your feet when walking out, a throw rope, knife, whistle, and waterproof matches. If you wear eyeglasses, tie them on and carry a spare pair on long trips. Bring cloth repair tape on short runs, and a full repair kit on isolated rivers. Do not wear bulky jackets, ponchos, heavy boots, or anything else which could reduce your ability to survive a swim.

13. Despite the mutually supportive group structure described in this code, individual paddlers are ultimately responsible for their own safety, and must assume sole responsibility for the following decisions:

I. The decision to participate on any trip. This includes an evaluation of the expected difficulty of the rapids under the conditions existing at the time of the put-in.

II. The selection of appropriate equipment, including a boat design suited to their skills and the appropriate rescue and survival gear.

III. The decision to scout any rapid, and to run or portage according to their best judgment. Other members of the group may offer advice, but paddlers should resist pressure from anyone to paddle beyond their skills. It is also their responsibility to decide whether to pass up any walk-out or take-out opportunity.

IV. All trip participants should consistently evaluate their own and their group's safety, voicing their concerns when appropriate and following what they believe to be the best course of action. Paddlers are encouraged to speak with anyone whose actions on the water are dangerous, whether they are a part of your group or not.

II. Boat and Equipment Preparedness

1. Test new and different equipment under familiar conditions before relying on it for difficult runs. This is especially true when adopting a new boat design or outfitting system. Low-volume craft may present additional hazards to inexperienced or poorly conditioned paddlers.

2. Be sure your boat and gear are in good repair before starting a trip. The more isolated and difficult the run, the more rigorous this inspection should be.

3. Install flotation bags in non-inflatable craft, securely fixed in each end, designed to displace as much water as possible. Inflatable boats should have multiple air chambers and be test-inflated before launching.

4. Have strong, properly sized paddles or oars for controlling your craft. Carry sufficient spares for the length and difficulty of the trip.

5. Outfit your boat safely. The ability to exit your boat quickly is an essential component of safety in rapids. It is your responsibility to see that there is absolutely nothing to cause entrapment when coming free of an upset craft. This includes:

I. Spray covers which won't release reliably or which release prematurely.

II. Boat outfitting too tight to allow a fast exit, especially in low volume kayaks or decked canoes. This includes low-hung thwarts in canoes lacking adequate clearance for your feet and kayak footbraces which fail or allow your feet to become wedged under them.

III. Inadequately supported decks which collapse on a paddler's legs when a decked boat is pinned by water pressure. Inadequate clearance with the deck because of your size or build.

IV. Loose ropes which cause entanglement. Beware of any length of loose line attached to a whitewater boat. All items must be tied tightly and excess line eliminated; throw lines, and safety rope systems must be completely and effectively stored. Do not knot the end of a rope, as it can get caught in cracks between rocks.

6. Provide ropes which permit you to hold on to your craft so that it may be rescued. The following methods are recommended:

I. Kayaks and covered canoes should have grab loops of 1/4" + rope or equivalent webbing sized to admit a normal-sized hand. Stern painters are permissible if properly secured.

II. Open canoes should have securely anchored bow and stern painters consisting of 8 - 10 feet of 1/4" + line. These must be secured in such a way that they are readily accessible, but cannot come loose accidentally. Grab loops are acceptable, but are more difficult to reach after an upset.

III. Rafts and dories may have taut perimeter lines threaded through the loops provided. Footholds should be designed so that a paddler's feet cannot be forced through them, causing entrapment. Flip lines should be carefully and reliably stowed.

7. Know your craft's carrying capacity, and how added loads affect boat handling in whitewater. Most rafts have a minimum crew size which can be added to on day trips or in easy rapids. Carrying more than two paddlers in an open canoe when running rapids is not recommended.

8. Car-top racks must be strong and attach positively to the vehicle. Lash your boat to each crossbar, then tie the ends of the boats directly to the bumpers for added security. This arrangement should survive all but the most violent vehicle accident.

III. Group Preparedness and Responsibility

1. Organization. A river trip should be regarded as a common adventure by all participants, except on instructional or commercially guided trips as defined below. Participants share the responsibility for the conduct of the trip, and each participant is individually responsible for judging his or her own capabilities and for his or her own safety as the trip progresses. Participants are encouraged (but are not obligated) to offer advice and guidance for the independent consideration and judgment of others.

2. River Conditions. The group should have a reasonable knowledge of the difficulty of the run. Participants should evaluate this information and adjust their plans accordingly. If the run is exploratory or no one is familiar with the river, maps and guidebooks, if available, should be examined. The group should secure accurate flow information; the more

difficult the run, the more important this will be. Be aware of possible changes in river level and how this will affect the difficulty of the run. If the trip involves tidal stretches, secure appropriate information on tides.

3. Group equipment should be suited to the difficulty of the river. The group should always have a throw-line available, and one line per boat is recommended on difficult runs. The list may include: carabiners, prussic loops, first aid kit, flashlight, folding saw, fire starter, guidebooks, maps, food, extra clothing, and any other rescue or survival items suggested by conditions. Each item is not required on every run, and this list is not meant to be a substitute for good judgment.

4. Keep the group compact, but maintain sufficient spacing to avoid collisions. If the group is large, consider dividing into smaller groups or using the “buddy system” as an additional safeguard. Space yourselves closely enough to permit good communication, but not so close as to interfere with one another in rapids.

I. A point paddler sets the pace. When in front, do not get in over your head. Never run drops when you cannot see a clear route to the bottom or, for advanced paddlers, a sure route to the next eddy. When in doubt, stop and scout.

II. Keep track of all group members. Each boat keeps the one behind it in sight, stopping if necessary. Know how many people are in your group and take head-counts regularly. No one should paddle ahead or walk out without first informing the group. Paddlers requiring additional support should stay at the center of a group, and not allow themselves to lag behind in the more difficult rapids. If the group is large and contains a wide range of abilities, a “sweep boat” may be designated to bring up the rear.

III. Courtesy. On heavily used rivers, do not cut in front of a boater running a drop. Always look upstream before leaving eddies to run or play. Never enter a crowded drop or eddy when no room for you exists. Passing other groups in a rapid may be hazardous; it’s often safer to wait upstream until the group ahead has passed.

5. Float Plan. If the trip is into a wilderness area or for an extended period, plans should be filed with a responsible person who will contact the authorities if you are overdue. It may be wise to establish checkpoints along the way where civilization could be contacted if necessary. Knowing the location of possible help and planning escape routes can speed rescue.

6. Drugs. The use of alcohol or mind-altering drugs before or during river trips is not recommended. It dulls reflexes, reduces decision-making ability, and may interfere with important survival reflexes.

7. Instructional or commercially guided trips. In contrast to the common adventure trip format, in these trip formats, a boating instructor or commercial guide assumes some of the responsibilities normally exercised by the group as a whole, as appropriate under the circumstances. These formats recognize that instructional or commercially guided trips may involve participants who lack significant experience in whitewater. However, as a participant acquires experience in whitewater, he or she takes on increasing responsibility for his or her own safety, in accordance with what he or she knows or should know as a result of that increased experience. Also, as in all trip formats, every participant must realize and assume the risks associated with the serious hazards of whitewater rivers.

8. It is advisable for instructors and commercial guides or their employers to acquire trip or personal liability insurance:

I. An “instructional trip” is characterized by a clear teacher/pupil relationship, where the primary purpose of the trip is to teach boating skills, and which is conducted for a fee.

II. A “commercially guided trip” is characterized by a licensed, professional guide conducting trips for a fee.

IV. Guidelines for River Rescue

1. Recover from an upset with an eskimo roll whenever possible. Evacuate your boat immediately if there is imminent danger of being trapped against rocks, brush, or any other kind of strainer.

2. If you swim, hold on to your boat. It has much flotation and is easy for rescuers to spot. Get to the upstream end so that you cannot be crushed between a rock and your boat by the force of the current. Persons with good balance may be able to climb on top of a swamped kayak or flipped raft and paddle to shore.

3. Release your craft if this will improve your chances, especially if the water is cold or dangerous rapids lie ahead. Actively attempt self-rescue whenever possible by swimming for safety. Be prepared to assist others who may come to your aid.

I. When swimming in shallow or obstructed rapids, lie on your back with feet held high and pointed downstream. Do not attempt to stand in fast moving water; if your foot wedges on the bottom, fast water will push you under and keep you there. Get to slow or very shallow water before attempting to stand or walk. Look ahead! Avoid possible pinning situations including undercut rocks, strainers, downed trees, holes, and other dangers by swimming away from them.

II. If the rapids are deep and powerful, roll over onto your stomach and swim aggressively for shore. Watch for eddies and slackwater and use them to get out of the current. Strong swimmers can effect a powerful upstream ferry and get to shore fast. If the shores are obstructed with strainers or under cut rocks, however, it is safer to "ride the rapid out" until a safer escape can be found.

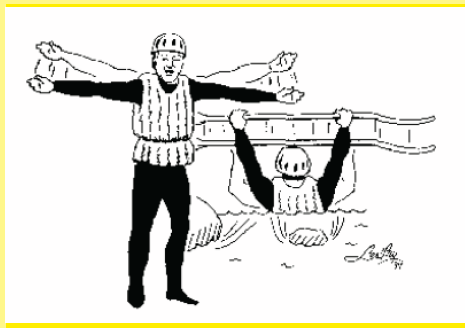
4. If others spill and swim, go after the boaters first. Rescue boats and equipment only if this can be done safely. While participants are encouraged (but not obligated) to assist one another to the best of their ability, they should do so only if they can, in their judgment, do so safely. The first duty of a rescuer is not to compound the problem by becoming another victim.

5. The use of rescue lines requires training; uninformed use may cause injury. Never tie yourself into either end of a line without a reliable quick release system. Have a knife handy to deal with unexpected entanglement. Learn to place set lines effectively, to throw accurately, to belay effectively, and to properly handle a rope thrown to you.

6. When reviving a drowning victim, be aware that cold water may greatly extend survival time underwater. Victims of hypothermia may have depressed vital signs so they look and feel dead. Don't give up; continue CPR for as long as possible without compromising safety.

Universal River Signals

These signals may be substituted with an alternate set of signals agreed upon by the group



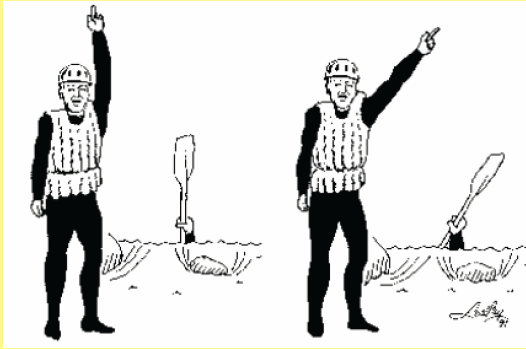
Stop:

Potential Hazard Ahead. Wait for "all clear" signal before proceeding, or scout ahead. Form a horizontal bar with your outstretched arms. Those seeing the signal should pass it back to others in the party. *Note: The current signal now is to hold arms or paddles in an X position.*



Help/Emergency:

Assist the signaler as quickly as possible. Give three long blasts on a rescue whistle while waving a paddle or throw rope over your head. If a whistle is not available, use the visual signal alone. A whistle is best carried on a lanyard attached to your life vest.



All Clear - Come ahead: (in the absence of other directions proceed down the center). Form a vertical bar with your paddle or one arm held high above your head. Paddle blade should be turned flat for maximum visibility. To signal direction or a preferred course through a rapid around obstruction, lower the previously vertical “all clear” by 45 degrees toward the side of the river with the preferred route. Never point toward the obstacle you wish to avoid.



I'm okay: I'm okay and not hurt. While holding the elbow outward toward the side, repeatedly pat the top of your head

VI. International Scale of River Difficulty

This is the American version of a rating system used to compare river difficulty throughout the world. This system is not exact; rivers do not always fit easily into one category, and regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is no substitute for a guidebook or accurate first-hand descriptions of a run.

Paddlers attempting difficult runs in an unfamiliar area should act cautiously until they get a feel for the way the scale is interpreted locally. River difficulty may change each year due to fluctuations in water level, downed trees, recent floods, geological disturbances, or bad weather. Stay alert for unexpected problems!

As river difficulty increases, the danger to swimming paddlers becomes more severe. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge increases. There is a difference between running an occasional class-IV rapid and dealing with an entire river of this category. Allow an extra margin of safety between skills and river ratings when the water is cold or if the river itself is remote and inaccessible.

Examples of commonly run rapids that fit each of the classifications are presented in the attached document, "International Scale of River Difficulty - Standard Rated Rapids." Rapids of a difficulty similar to a rapids on this list are rated the same. Rivers are also rated using this scale. A river rating should take into account many factors including the difficulty of individual rapids, remoteness, hazards, etc.

The six difficulty classes:

Class I Rapids

Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

Class II Rapids: Novice

Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed. Rapids that are at the upper end of this difficulty range are designated “Class II+”.

Class III: Intermediate

Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims. Rapids that are at the lower or upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class III-" or "Class III+" respectively.

Class IV: Advanced

Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, it may feature large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. A fast, reliable eddy turn may be needed to initiate maneuvers, scout rapids, or rest. Rapids may require "must" moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting may be necessary the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high, and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires practiced skills. A strong eskimo roll is highly recommended. Rapids that are at the lower or upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class IV-" or "Class IV+" respectively.

Class V: Expert

Extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a paddler to added risk. Drops may contain** large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness. What eddies exist may be small, turbulent, or difficult to reach. At the high end of the scale, several of these factors may be combined. Scouting is recommended but may be difficult. Swims are dangerous, and rescue is often difficult even for experts. A very reliable eskimo roll, proper equipment, extensive experience, and practiced rescue skills are essential. Because of the large range of difficulty that exists beyond Class IV, Class 5 is an open-ended, multiple-level scale designated by class 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, etc... each of these levels is an order of magnitude more difficult than the last. Example: increasing difficulty from Class 5.0 to Class 5.1 is a similar order of magnitude as increasing from Class IV to Class 5.0.

Class VI: Extreme and Exploratory Rapids

These runs have almost never been attempted and often exemplify the extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. The consequences of errors are very severe and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only, at favorable water levels, after close personal inspection and taking all precautions. After a Class VI rapids has been run many times, its rating may be changed to an appropriate Class 5.x rating.



<https://www.americanwhitewater.org>

Natural Progression Of A Boater

Tim Miller

One of the best aspects of being in the BWA is that there is always something new to learn and fun people to learn it with. Also, there is a cycle that goes with boating in the BWA that I personally find very appealing. A lot of club members including myself paddle year round. There is nothing like paddling in winter when there is ice on the river and snow on the ground.

But, this isn't an ideal scenario for a newbie. They need to start on something user friendly. Such as the Elkhorn on a warm spring day. This is how I started boating and I have been attempting to not swim ever since! I was lucky enough to have some excellent instructors at my first clinic who were patient with me. When you're a newbie it is in your best interest to ensure personal safety and fun, to follow someone with more skills. There is a very short list of people in the club who are perfect to follow down a river. The more you boat, you will realize who these people are. Find someone that will take the time to describe a river and lead you down it safely. Its always more fun to be in your boat.



Well, if you manage to enjoy the clinic in one piece and still want to boat there is something of a schedule that we keep in the BWA. After clinic there are always newbie trips. While this year has been a slower year than others, there is still plenty of time for more newbie trips. The majority of the newbie trips are to the Hiawassee, the Nantahala and the Upper New. These are user friendly rivers where a newbie boater is less likely to get in over their head. A few newbie trips go to the BSF. In general its not a good idea for a newbie unless the water is low. It's easy to get a newbie in over their head on the BSF. There are more streams that are better suited to the newbie boater. I know this to be true from experience. I had two newbies that took off after the first rapid on the BSF canyon. I wish they would

come back and paddle more, although they now had a little one. When you are taking someone on a newbie trip, know the skill levels of everyone in your group. Get lots of volunteers.

When you start out as a boater, its an accomplishment to go in a straight line. After a few hours this can usually be done fairly easily in a kayak. If you want to make it really challenging try it in an open boat or a C boat . Take away the training wheels and boating starts to get fun!



At the end of May I had the pleasure of leading a group down the Nantahala. If you have not been there, you are missing one of the great rivers in this part of the county. Yes,if you have been paddling for a while its not as exciting as the Lower Gualay or the Ocoee. But, its in a beautiful place and the river is fun. If you think its not exciting enough, then hand paddle the improved hole at quarry rapid or the falls. :) One of the best aspects of the Nantahala is that there are places for both the novice and the expert to work on their skills.

With most newbie trips there are a few swims. We had our fair share on Saturday. One of my friends from work assured me that he didn't mind cold water. We tried several times to get him to either take off or to switch boats. After his 9th swim we got another boater to switch out with a ducky. This helped as my friend was unable to flip the ducky. He did try though on numerous occasions. Actually you can also flip a tandem canoe on the Nantahala if you're not careful. Emily and I had our first swim as a tandem team! :) Please keep in mind that the only reason my friend from work was able to continue down the river was from the assistance that was given by competent boaters who took their personal river time to nurse him down the river. Thank all of you for your help. Without their time and effort he would have had to take off after the first rapid.

We had a large group for a newbie trip. Off the river back at camp there was a count taken and we had 16 people in Nantahala Wesser Campground. 828-488-

8708. Our group was the only one in the campground on Saturday night. I am not sure of Friday night, because I was still at work. But, they tell me there was a big group then also. Can there be a better weekend than paddling with good friends and then having smores in camp roasted a campfire and listening to El Lloyd? Oh, we even had a pyro to build our fire. :) Lloyd Funkhouser is an accomplished acoustic guitar player that can make up songs about almost any one. He writes and sings his own songs. If you boat with him, eventually there will be one about you. Hey, there was even some amateur wrestling Saturday night. A good time was had by everyone in camp.



B.Grimes

On Sunday as with most groups, we split the group in half. With a half of us heading to the Ocoee and half staying on the Nantahala. We had a few interesting swims on Sunday but not as many as Saturday. We paddled a shorter section of the Nantahala from Pattons rapid down to Surfers rapid. This makes for a great Sunday paddle. The group that went to the Ocoee had some swims and exciting moments. They even had one person run part of Grumpys hand paddling. Not by choice, but they made it safely down.



Don Spangler

If you still enjoy boating after the initial newbie trips as the summer wears on and things dry out you might want to try the next cycle. The Ocoee is a dam released river and you can count on scheduled releases. Do not even attempt this river without a roll, good boat control and the ability to ferry. If you don't have these basic skills, you might have to walk off the river. There is a

road next to the river. For your first trip down the Ocoee it a good idea to walk around the first rapid. There are even steps to get to the river below Grumpy's. Also follow someone who knows the river and the sneaks. There are several good sneaks on the Ocoee. Beware of the rafts, they are not looking out for you. There are so many of them that its easy for a private boater to get in trouble with them.

As we start to get into fall cycle things really get interesting. This is the time of year for the Russel fork and the Lower Gauley. These are two totally different rivers but paddled in the same season. The fall is a wonderful time to be a boater. There is often local water and we run the creeks in Frankfort and Madison county. But, most of the BWA will make at least one weekend to paddle the Russell fork. It is always more fun to go up into the mountains and paddle with fall foliage. This is a wonderful creekie type river. It is tight and technical and very playful, on the right section. Stay clear of the hair

Always remember: The worst day you will ever have on a river, is better than your best day at work!

Author unknown

section. If you have to ask why, you don't belong there! The upper Russell fork consist of the Pound River below Flannigan damn down to the put in for the hair section at garden hole. Its a wonderful run with right skills. Its not a run for newbies who haven't been out practicing. There could be pain if you haven't been out developing skills.

The end of the boating cycle usually comes about with Gauley season. It doesn't get any better that the Gauley. If you have mastered all of your basic skills ask someone you trust if your ready for the Lower Gauley. The Lower Gauley is a wonderful river with 2 main sections. The Upper Gauley is classed as class 4/5 and the lower Gauley is class 3/4. Its a remote river, and walking off isn't a good option. Unless they have to evac you out due to injury. If they have to evacuate you, its a costly helicopter ride. A few years ago a boater tried to hook up with a BWA group at the Lower Gauley take out. When he was asked about his skills, he was told he wasn't ready. He went with another group and drowned at Koontz's Flume, this is the first rapid on the Lower Gauley. He missed his roll and was in the wrong place on the river to miss a roll. Always evaluate you own personal boating skills before getting on any river. There have been deaths on the Gauley involving both skilled and unskilled boaters. With a good guide it is a wonderful run. Just be careful out there and have fun. Learning to boat is a continuous cycle, have fun and be careful.

Tim Miller

Bowlines May/June/June 2003

BASIC RESCUE EQUIPMENT

Adapted from an article by Bo Wise in the CGA "Eddy Line" with additions (Reprinted from Viking views)

One of the phrases often used in river rescue books, articles and classes is "basic rescue equipment." "Okay, okay, " you answer, "but what is 'basic rescue equipment'?"

While there may be minor differences in everyone's list, most river rescue instructors will include the following items.

THROW ROPE This is one of the most important pieces of rescue gear carried. All paddlers should carry a throw rope with them on the river and know how to use it. Ropes come in a variety of lengths, materials and styles. For decked boats and open canoes, the rope should be at least 70 feet long, at least 3/8 inch in diameter, made of polypropylene, and carried in a wide mouth throw bag. Most people find a rope longer than 70 feet difficult to use, and thicker ropes too bulky to carry in anything but rafts. Note: Few things are more frustrating than trying to stuff 70 feet of wet rope back into a bag that is too small. Be sure that the throw bag the rope comes in has extra room in the bag. If the rope completely fills the bag when you look at it in the store, odds are good that the rope will be a problem to stuff after you take it out and use it.

Some manufacturers sell a so-called "kayaker's rope" that is 50 feet of 1/4 inch polypropylene line. Many rescue professionals and instructors consider this to be worse than useless. 1/4 inch polypropylene has a breaking strength of 800 pounds while 3/8 inch rope has a breaking strength of 1500 to 2000 pounds. A submerged boat, especially raft, can exert a force of greater than 800 pounds, and a rope that breaks under tension can be extremely dangerous. Further, 50 feet is often not enough in swimmer rescues or boat unpinning.

CARABINERS 'Biners are D or pear shaped metal ovals with a spring loaded gate on one side. They are used in a wide variety of river situations ranging from a unpinning a raft, to extracating an



injured paddler, to just lifting/lowering boats. For river use, the aluminum alloy construction appears to work best. They are light, strong, and won't rust. On some carabiners, the gates can be locked shut so that they don't accidentally spring open. There are pros and cons for both. An informed personal preference should be your guide. At least two carabiners should be carried on the river, locking type recommended.

PRUSSIC LOOPS Prussics are used in mechanical extractions of rigs, such as Z-drags, Piggy-back systems, etc. They are

usually made by tying a loop using 6 to 8 feet of 6 or 7mm kernmantle line. They can be purchased from river outfitters. At least two prussic loops should be carried by each paddler.

NYLON WEBBING Tubular webbing is strong, versatile and easy to carry. It is often used to tie off anchors in unpinning and extraction situations. Each paddler should carry one 8 to 10 foot length of tubing.

RIVER KNIFE (Not used for sinking rafts.) The debate continues over whether the danger of accidental injury outweighs the value of being able to cut a tangled line in an emergency. Most swift water rescue instructors carry and recommend carrying a good knife. The key is to either carry a folding knife, or a fixed blade knife in a sheath that is both secure and easy to release when needed.

WHISTLE Whistles can be used for communication when the noise of the river makes shouting futile. However, some whistles are no louder than your voice. Shop and compare.

FIRST AID KIT No paddler should be without a first aid kit of some sort. Excellent kits are now available in outfitters stores. Or you can assemble one yourself of supplies from the drug store placed in some sort of water proof container. Even a few bandages and aspirins is better than nothing.

There are other items that could well be added but the above provide the minimum for safe paddling.

(Editors Note) Safety equipment needs should be determined by trip leader prior to trip and all persons on the trip need the basics....it does no good to have a throw rope in your boat if you are the one in need of help!)

Compressions-Only CPR and Water Don't Mix

I've been meaning to re-write this old post and update the stats for some time now, then a shocking conversation I had with a member at the meeting convinced me that it couldn't wait. So, the stats are old (I wrote the original in 2009) but the facts are the same. Some corrections have been made after Dr. Wes Prince chimed in (thanks Wes). Please take the time to read this, it's very short, and could save someone's life.

What you as a boater should know about the difference between traditional breaths-and-compressions CPR taught by the American Red Cross (ARC) and compressions-only CPR taught by the American Heart Association (AHA). It is vitally important for you, as a boater, to know and understand the difference.

Cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in the US, whereas accidental drowning doesn't even break the top 50. In 2007, the last year for which complete statistics are currently compiled there were:
--over 616,000 deaths from cardiac arrest and 3,443 accidental drownings

That's 179 cardiac arrest deaths for every 1 drowning. For the AHA, this is a no-brainer, since compressions-only CPR has several advantages over breaths and compressions in cases of cardiac arrest .

- 1) It's easy. A 911 operator can train you to do it on the spot over the phone
- 2) It takes away the squeamish factor. No mouth to mouth contact with a clinically dead stranger.
- 3) Cardiac arrest victims usually have a gallon of fully oxygenated blood in their system so just circulating it can maintain them for a few minutes.
- 4) The vast majority of cardiac arrest happens in a setting where Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is close at hand.

EMS is not close at hand, CPR of any type has an absolutely dismal chance of success against cardiac arrest. This is because CPR does not address the mechanism of injury (usually arrhythmia) and so if EMS can't get to the victim quickly, their chances are extremely slim.

Compressions-only CPR has one huge drawback: In the event of drowning or suffocation, compressions-only CPR just adds insult to injury. Performing compressions-only CPR on a drowning victim wastes precious time that could be used to save their life.

Drowning is an entirely different ballgame. In drowning, or suffocation, the mechanism of injury is LACK OF OXYGEN. That is why the heart has stopped and oxygen must be reintroduced into their system immediately if there is going to be any chance to save them. In this case, you as the rescuer can address the problem directly by introducing fresh air into the victim's lungs. You can reverse the mechanism of injury and literally save the person's life, even if EMS isn't coming. CPR when applied to a drowning victim swiftly, actually has a REASONABLY HIGH rate of success.

So, to sum up:

Cardiac arrest: In this case, the main purpose of CPR is to maintain the person in the hope that advanced life support will arrive swiftly and if it does not, there is little that you can do to help them. Keep doing CPR and hope help arrives.

Drowning (or suffocation): In this case, you as the rescuer can literally snatch a person from the jaws of death if you can re-introduce oxygen into their system quickly and circulate it. In these circumstances it is absolutely vital that the CPR you perform is traditional breaths-and-compressions CPR and that it starts as soon as possible.

For a better picture of the importance of breaths and compressions CPR, go to the American Whitewater accident database and browse through it. There are numerous cases of persons whose lives have been saved because one of their rescuers knew CPR and applied it quickly.

<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Accident/view/>

Don't be caught out on the river without the one best tools you can have to save someone's life!

The BWA Clinic, Something To Be Proud of!



Starting very early is instruction is how to get into your boat properly .

The BWA Clinic had its roots in the very early days of the club. In the Newsletter #3, dated February 1977, there is a short mention of a “Elkhorn Creek Training Party”: 12/17-18/76.

It's getting close to Christmas now and the General feeling was to try and stay close to home. Is Elkhorn Creek worth paddling at 6 inches? Sometime in the future I may give it a no, but for those of us who wanted out to brush up on a few things, it was heaven. Starting in early afternoon and getting off at dusk, there wasn't much to any of the rapids at 6 inches. But we combed every inch of what was left, playing around for almost an hour in a few spots. If I can remember there were around 7 or 8 boats each day.

While this was an informal gathering of BWA members with the intent of just working on paddling skills on a cold December weekend and having fun, it shows a belief by early members that you should learn and develop your skills in a class like situation. Many if not most of the first members had learned paddling skills with Sage of the Outdoors. Sage was an outfitter in Lexington that was similar to the early NOC. It not only sold a variety of outdoor equipment but had classes in many outdoor activities like canoeing, kayaking, climbing, sailing, biking, etc. Paddlers that had either taught or taken classes at Sage formed the core of early BWA membership. In fact one of our lifetime members, Bob Sehlinger, was in charge of instruction at Sage. We owe a lot to him and SAGE it was the impetus in Lexington that created a group that would go on to form the BWA. It gave us paddling instruction that was on par with the Nantahala Outdoor Center that had opened in 1972.

Unfortunately Sage ran into some financial problems and while it kept its doors open for several years more in Louisville it had to shut down here in Lexington by 1979. A Bowlines dated May/June 1979 had an article that said:

Since Sage dissolved....our club saw a need and responsibility to carry on instruction in river paddling technique and safety. Our first venture, as a club project into teaching was heralded as an enigma of success.

The clinic was not advertised but offered mainly to friends on a non-fee basis. The response was overwhelming with approximately 40 students and instructors participating. The organization committee close watch water level.... prior to the clinic. The Big South Fork of the Cumberland was chosen with some reluctance (a sudden TVA gauge increase up to 12,000 cfs) but it turned out to be surprisingly good for teaching.

By Saturday the level at Leatherwood Ford was 3500 cfs and there was a long pool upstream of the low ford bridge(which was replaced years later with the high bridge that you now use to cross the river). We still had to carry boats (mostly canoes up above the last rapid that has the big rock on river right). The first day of instruction was a success.

Dinner that evening at Tobes Restaurant in Oneida was very good but a tad short on supply. Things were about to take a downturn that night as rain gradually moved in and turned things into a "near fiasco". Next morning we were having seriously heavy rain. By the time we reached our location for day 2, the BSF canyon the rains had "...created a stream in the road almost deep enough to paddle".

We stopped at the top of the canyon and our past president Kent Kirchner and a couple of instructors went down to take a look at the river. Kent, who had recently canoed thru the Grand Canyon came back up and exclaimed " I haven't seen waves this big since the Grand Canyon!". Well, all the students wisely headed home as many of the instructors pulled their boats off the cars and headed down to the river. That ended that clinic. We learned a lot from both that Clinic and the next one which we held at Cumberland below the falls.

There used to be camping on either side of the road just above the takeout for the Cumberland below the falls run. There is also a large rockhouse to road right as you head toward the ramp, big enough to promise shelter for all in case of heavy rain. The Cumberland and Laurel confluence forms a big pool that could be used for first days basic instruction. The second day a trip below the falls as the river level was very low would make sense, or at we thought so. So we decided on the North Fork of the Cumberland as the site for our second clinic. The July 1980 Bowlines reports that:

Our second annual novice clinic was an even bigger success than last. We had 50 participants including instructors. The weather and water conditions were

on our side this year.

Unfortunately there was more to the story of the clinic then was mentioned. While overall the clinic was successful there was a couple of sticky holes, so to speak. Channel 27 and PM Magazine had been doing stories on the BWA over the previous year. It broadcast a story on our winter roll sessions and on a paddling trip to the Tellico. They decided to do a follow up story on our clinic about Sam Dick (of Channel 27) and his wife taking the clinic. Things went ok on Saturday. Sam Dick was not the most apt student but he and Val did ok on the first day.

Sunday, on the river trip, Sam and Val managed to make it down to Center Rock without too many problems. But here was where Sam's luck was about to run out. We stopped and scouted the rapid with all the students including Sam and his wife. We had some instructors run it for them to show the line and moves. We set up safety boats. The camera was set up and ready to catch them running a rapid. Sam and Val got in BWA member Stan Slater's new Mad River Explorer which he had loaned them and headed out into the middle of the river. Just as they reached a small ledge above Center Rock they flipped. Things still might have been ok, but Sam got the painter wrapped around his foot. So there he goes along with the Canoe dragging him into Center Rock Chute. The boat wraps on Center Rock with Sam still struggling to get loose of it. Finally he gets a little lucky and come free of the rope and we are able to get him to shore, ego and image a bit bruised but otherwise ok.

This is when Sam's luck left him one more time. We managed to pull the new Explorer off of Center Rock. Well it had a broken gunnel and the ABS bottom was caved in. Beuren Garten, who was our open canoe expert at the time, (he had been in this situation before with his canoe) told us to put the canoe on two rocks with each end resting on a rock. He said, now all I have to do is jump on the middle of the canoe and the caved in ABS will pop back out. Well he did and it did. But in doing so it ripped the ABS vertically down the side of the canoe. I will say that Stan Slated was very calm during this and did not utter any thing untoward either Sam or Beuren. When I asked why he was so calm he explained "I think Channel 27 owes me a new boat."

Well Sam ended up hiking back up to the falls, but he was an unhappy TV personality. Instead of looking good for the camera he had embarrassed himself. Not only that, he had to tell channel 27 they would be out

some money for a new canoe. Of course the BWA was unhappy since needless to say as the events of the weekend was never aired so we did not get on TV once more.

But there is yet more to the story about the BWA learning the problems of having a clinic. For the Saturday evening meal Beuren Garten had made arrangements with the restaurant at Cumberland Falls. He had asked them to set up an "all you can eat" supper for a bunch of hungry paddlers. After a full day of teaching and learning all 50 hungry participants headed to the restaurant with Beuren promising us good food and lots of it. We arrived and they had 3 long table set up for us. They immediately started bringing out bowls of food to the end of each table. We all thought "Beuren was right, let me at the food!". But the bowls of food only managed to get only about halfway down each table before being empty. Each time they would bring more "small" bowls of food, it would vanish before it could reach the end of the table. Well there was patience for a little while, but just a little while, until those at the far end of the tables realized something was very wrong. That the food was good may be true, those who were getting it seemed happy with the quality. But there was not to be "lots of it". Beuren hearing the rising sounds of complaints coming from the far end of the tables got up and talked to the owner.

More food was brought out. Finally, those at the ends got a chicken leg or some slaw or some mashed potatoes, but not some of everything. Beuren responded to the rising chorus of still hungry paddlers and went and talked the owner one more time. There was some agitated discussion and I heard Beuren say to the owner "you promised all we could eat". With that the owner reached under the counter, pulled out a gun and said something to the effect "Yes, but that is all you can eat!"

With that the restaurant emptied quickly of the still hungry paddlers into the parking lot. Not wanting to be a target, we all quickly headed to the cars, any car, and loaded up. I ended up with some new riders and more of them than I had brought, so I decided since there was to be no more food we should head on back to the camp. We all made it back to camp, at least I thought we had. We started looking around and realized Beuren was not there. It was then I realized that in true West Virginia fashion Beuren, not wanting to look wimpy, had taken his time leaving the restaurant and in doing so had missed the last car back to camp. I felt a little guilty since he had gone to the restaurant in my car, but I had believed it was kinda "every man for himself" and that Beuren would just jump into another car.

I drove back toward the falls and found Beuren walking along the road a couple of miles or so from the restaurant. Needless to say he was not happy. Not only had he been embarrassed by his failure to provide us with an all we wanted to eat meal, but his best friend had ran off and left him as he was trying to at least exit the restaurant with some dignity. I had to offer him my pull bottle to get him to cool down some. By the time we were back at the campground things had smoothed out some.



Beuren Garten on a rapid in the Big South Fork in our early years.

So you can see we learned perhaps even more things about putting on a clinic then we learned at the first one. I did not realize it at the time, but I was soon to be confronted with avoiding these situations. The following year I became the Vice President of the BWA, and you guessed it, we had decided by that time the Vice President would be in charge of putting on the Spring clinic.

The Club had also decided on a number of preferences for the next clinic.

1) **Location.** We did not want it too close to Lexington where people might be tempted to go home Saturday night. We wanted it to be a social weekend for all and bring everyone together. At the same time we did not want it to be very distant. While club members thought nothing of driving 4-5 hours or more on Friday after work for a trip, we did not think that would be appreciated by those who did not appreciate that you have to go where the water was, no matter how far. So that ruled out local streams or more distant ones like the Nantahala and Hiwassee. They were too cold anyway. At the same time we wanted to have it on a free flowing wilderness type river.

2) **Camping.** Most of us rarely stayed in fancy campgrounds and never in a nearby motel. In fact we had become experts at finding places that were free and primitive like nearby national forest land, that was part of the adventure. We wanted to try to keep things at the

clinic similar to a paddling weekend.

3) **Price.** We wanted to keep the price low. While we wanted to earn money for the club, the goal was to promote safe paddling and bring new members into the club. For this reason, we also did our best to loan students our gear and boats.

4) **Food.** It had to be both good and plenty. Just as important it had to be ready when needed. Hungry students standing around waiting for a breakfast or supper not only wasted time and interfered with the instruction, it made for a negative experience.

5) **Instruction.** While the price of the weekend was low we wanted our instruction to be as close to the kind of instruction that you would get at the Nantahala Outdoor Center or Madawaska. We encouraged instructors to get ACA instructor accreditation. We would also have classes for all our instructors to help them learn how to instruct and what to teach. There was a lot of basic information that the student needed to know before the weekend. To accomplish this we did several things. We had a meeting with all students one evening the week before the weekend. Here we talked not only about the weekend, but also discussed topics safety, boat characteristics and how your boat works in moving water, river hydrology, etc. We decided to also have an evening at a pool where the students could become familiar with their boat and do wet exits. Other information we would print up and give to the students. In future years we made a CD for each student with all that info on it plus video of basic river maneuvers & hydrology information that was produced by our famous Videographer member from Channel 27, John Davis.

6) **Fun.** We knew we wanted all to have fun and come away with good stories and new friends. Thus we always planned things for the evenings like the "Women in Rubber" or "Name That Rapid" and "Big Time Eat Offs". Other things like a big camp fire and stories by or about Mike Weeks just kind of happened.

Clinic #3 was the first clinic to really set a pattern for most of the ones that followed. After much discussion of the pros and cons of where to have one we decided on the Obed-Emory confluence for several reasons. It had a very large pool which allowed for each class to have its own space. The shuttle was quick and easy. We had paddled the river enough to know that at both higher and lower water levels

there were options that would work for a clinic. You could run other sections of the river system and still not have to drive far. Just as important, most of these options provided streams that were relatively hazard free. Important if you are expecting swimmers. It was definitely more of a wilderness experience, no rafts or buildings and houses lining the banks.

At that time Frozen Head State Park was still new and did not charge fees. In fact it did not have a campground with individual pads. Instead it had a group area that was next to flat creek where all could camp. The other advantage was that it was close to the river. So with that we made it the clinic camp. It was only years later when they had built pads, paved the roads, and other "amenities" and had to charge more and more that we moved the camp right to the river. We solved the food problems by adding five dollars to the cost of the clinic and providing 3 meals in the camp. Tubbo (aka Steve Morgan) and I fixed country ribs, Tubs Tatters and Cole-slaw and the like for the first evening meal. This would be surpassed at future clinics with food at Dad's Dinner Theater and Sam's Pig, but it was a beginning. We arranged with Mildred, owner of a favorite eating spot in Wartberg to fix lots of biscuits and gravy for breakfast that we sent someone to fetch for breakfast. The second morning we had scrambled eggs and the like that we cooked in camp. That is how the tradition that is the BWA clinic started. Most of our clinics have been at the Obed/Emory Confluence. We did move it one year to the Big South Fork. That was the year that a student broached Mike Week's "Worm" and the river swallowed it up. But that story is for another time.

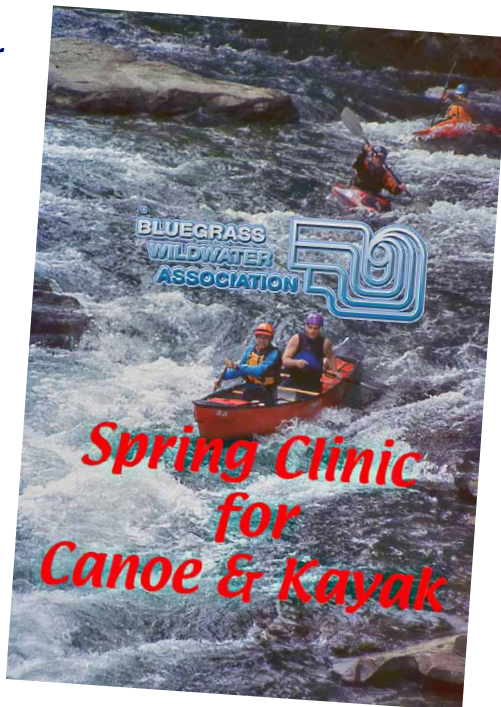
The Obed/Emory has the best attributes of what we wanted for the clinic. Plus it has over 142 miles of great paddling streams of all difficulties depending on water level that give you choices no matter how much or how little rain you have had. Access is fairly close and easy for over 18 different runs and all are within about a 20 miles radius. I have even used the canyon section of the Big South Fork on the second day for my students to give them a bit challenge if water levels are low as it becomes an Class II run with a couple of easy Class III rapids on it and also is on the way back to Lexington. These are all described in perhaps the best river guide ever printed: "The Obed/Emory River Guide by Monty Smith". His guide has wonderful stories of his runs of many of the streams that add to the book. It is worth getting if you can still find a copy.

Most years the river gods have been good to us. The river has never been too high or too low to have it.....

though there has been times when we would have been happy with a slightly different river level. Most of the time weather has been in the 70 range more or less. We did have several clinics that the second day was on the "cool" side including one where it was spitting snow late on Sunday, but that is part of a paddling experience. We have considered both an earlier date and a later date. There is always some conflict, Easter, Mothers Day, the Derby, Finals, Vacations, etc. Like most things in life there is no perfection, just compromise. Anyone who has been to one of the BWA's clinics has stories to tell: Who is that guy that came into camp with the loud voice? Why do they play the drums all night long? What was that thing that was on fire floating down the river last night? Who was that banging on the metal pan so early in the morning? The stories are endless.

Yet, despite some growing pains at times, the clinic has become a success. Most years we have more applicants than we have room for. That should tell us something. We have had more than one student tell us while they had been to other club clinics, but our clinic was the best. That is something all of us can be proud of.

Don Spangler



River Safety: You are the Machine

Paddling whitewater can be the most exhilarating adventure you can undertake. The excitement of running a whitewater stream can only be exceeded by the unsurpassed beauty and solitude of nature. If you are paddling in Class III whitewater or better,

boating is a sport and no longer an activity and you should prepare your body accordingly. Properly trained and prepared paddlers are much more likely to enjoy their sport.

In paddlesports you ARE the machine. Although most of the time this is a 'finesse' rather than a strength sport, there are occasions when strength and endurance can mean the difference between life and death.

Paddlesports can be very dangerous and physically demanding. Therefore, it is important to keep yourself on a physical fitness training program that includes stretching. This includes working out all parts of the body at least three times a week. Stretching should be an everyday activity. The rule of thumb is that you should get in shape to paddle, not paddle to get into shape. Very few of us paddle enough to get into good physical condition. There are potentially tremendous stresses that can be exerted on the joints and muscles of particularly the arms and shoulders during paddling.

Flipping upstream in a hole can wrench even the strongest shoulders out of joint. But your chances to avoid serious injury are best if the shoulders have the musculature to stabilize it during this event. Obviously, tucking quickly instead of initiating that old standard, the high brace, is also important.

So by now most of you are moaning and groaning about how you don't have time to work out or you just can't seem to maintain the desire to continue a fitness program. If done properly, a lot of benefit can be achieved in 30-45 minutes followed by 10 minutes of stretching. It is important to find something that is fun for you. Cross training, or doing an activity other than paddling, such as biking, skiing or swimming, are excellent means of conditioning. A lot can be done with nothing more than a pair of dumbbells to strengthen the arms and shoulders while watching TV.

Getting hurt is never fun but getting hurt on a river is really a bummer. A lot of places that we paddle are downright remote and rescue would be difficult or impossible to undertake. Transporting a paddler with a dislocated shoulder is something most of us wouldn't have a clue on how to do properly. Plus it HURTS! Prevention is the preferred alternative. Get in shape before you paddle. Do it for yourself and do it for your paddling buddies who would have to rescue you if you were to get seriously injured. See you on the river!

Jim Daniels *Bowlines March/April 97*