

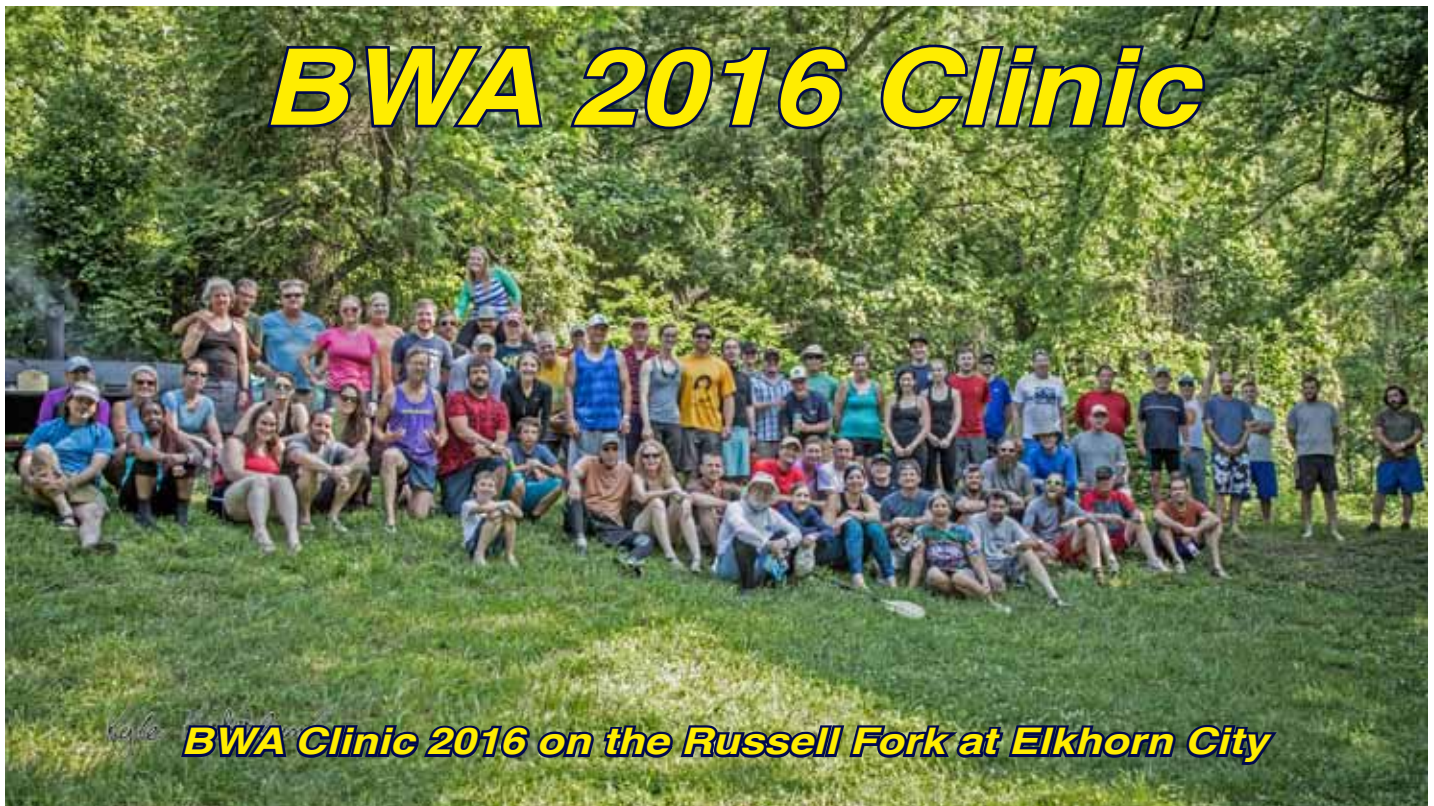
Each issue this year will Celebrate the BWA being 40!

In this issue:

- Wow, What a Great Clinic!
- New Lifetime BWA Members Honored
- Another BWA Wedding
- This Issue's BWA Legendary Member: Sam Moore
- Yangtze River Report
- Back Paddling thru the Pages of Bowlines: Buzzing Down Bee Creek
- Off the Cuff: Comments From the Forum Worth Remembering
- Eddylines of Interest

Bluegrass Wildwater Association

1976-2016



BWA 2016 Clinic

BWA Clinic 2016 on the Russell Fork at Elkhorn City

Looking Ahead

Coming BWA Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

BWA Monthly Meeting Meet & Eat

Location can vary
For more information on Club Meetings
& Activities always check the online Calendar.

<http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/?f=calendar>

Pool Roll Sessions

Summer Roll Sessions have started!

They are at the **Tates Creek
Aquatic center Thursdays from 8
to 10 PM.**

Come on out!

Also we need instructors.

Remember to clean your boats!

Check BWA webwite for dates & times

<http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>

The BWA wishes to thank Canoe
Kentucky for it's support.

We urge you to patronize them
for your outdoor needs.



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

Club Officers 2015-2016

President	Bob Larkin	502-550-4225
Vice-President	Brandy Mello	859-312-8640
Treasurer	Don Perkins	859-948-1920
Secretary	Michael Daughtery	502-554-8489
Safety	Walt Hummel	859-705-8215
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Conservation	Megan Larkin	859 743 8355
Film Festival Coordinator	John Mello	859-327-6092
Equipment Coordinator	Kyle Koeberlein	859-576-7194
At-Large Member	James Welch	859-954-2025
Membership Coordinator	Dot Edwards	859-351-0132
Past President	Clay Warren	859-326-0602

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 realated story! Please!!**

Files can be e-mailed to the Editor: 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.canoeky.com/>

Wow, What a great Clinic!



Wow, what a great clinic. Brandy... You did an amazing job on this one and thanks to your hard work and a true team effort but ALL the volunteers I honestly believe this one will go down as one of the best clinics we've had in a long, long time.

The weather may not have always been perfect, but I didn't see a single student that wasn't smiling, wasn't having a great time and most importantly, learning a lot. This clinic was exactly what it should have been, a great introduction to boating AND boating culture.

Bob Larkin

All Photos by Kyle Koberlein

<http://www.photolandmark.com>















New Lifetime BWA Members Honored



Zina Merkin at the 2000 Red River Clean-up



***John "Chief" Kulka at the
2nd NPF Women in Rubber Show***

Being President of an organization like the BWA has always had its unique blend of challenges and rewards but my greatest honor while serving in this role was the honor of being able to present the Lifetime Membership Award to two of our most deserving members, Zina Merkin and John "Chief" Kulka. As was the case last year, when Brent Austin was awarded this same, and long overdue award, Both Zina and Chief received their honors at the Spring Clinic, in front of both old friends and new faces.

As has been the custom, the awards themselves were tailored to the individuals receiving them. For Zina, who has been, more or less the conscience of the BWA for her 19 years as a member. Zina's passion for recycling and preservation were reflected in a plaque made from recycled lumber and hand carved by students of one of our local schools. The club also made a donation in Zina's name to one of the many worthwhile causes that Zina supports.

For John "Chief" Kulka, the trophy was centered around his famous nickname, which is a story I still laugh about but best told by Chief himself, the club had a special trophy made up from the statue of an Indian Chief taken from my own collection of stuff that I'd had for about as long as Chief's been a member, about 30 years.

For both of these members, this award was long overdue. Not only had they survived the test of time, been members that have actively help steer the direction of the club through their many years of service to the BWA but have been the kind of people that could always be counted on to help whenever help was needed. They, along with our other Lifetime Members are the foundation of the BWA and I count it as one of my greatest honors to have been in the right place and time to recognize these two, truly amazing people.

Bob Larkin
BWA President

Another BWA Wedding!

John & Brandy

on the Colorado in the Grand Canyon



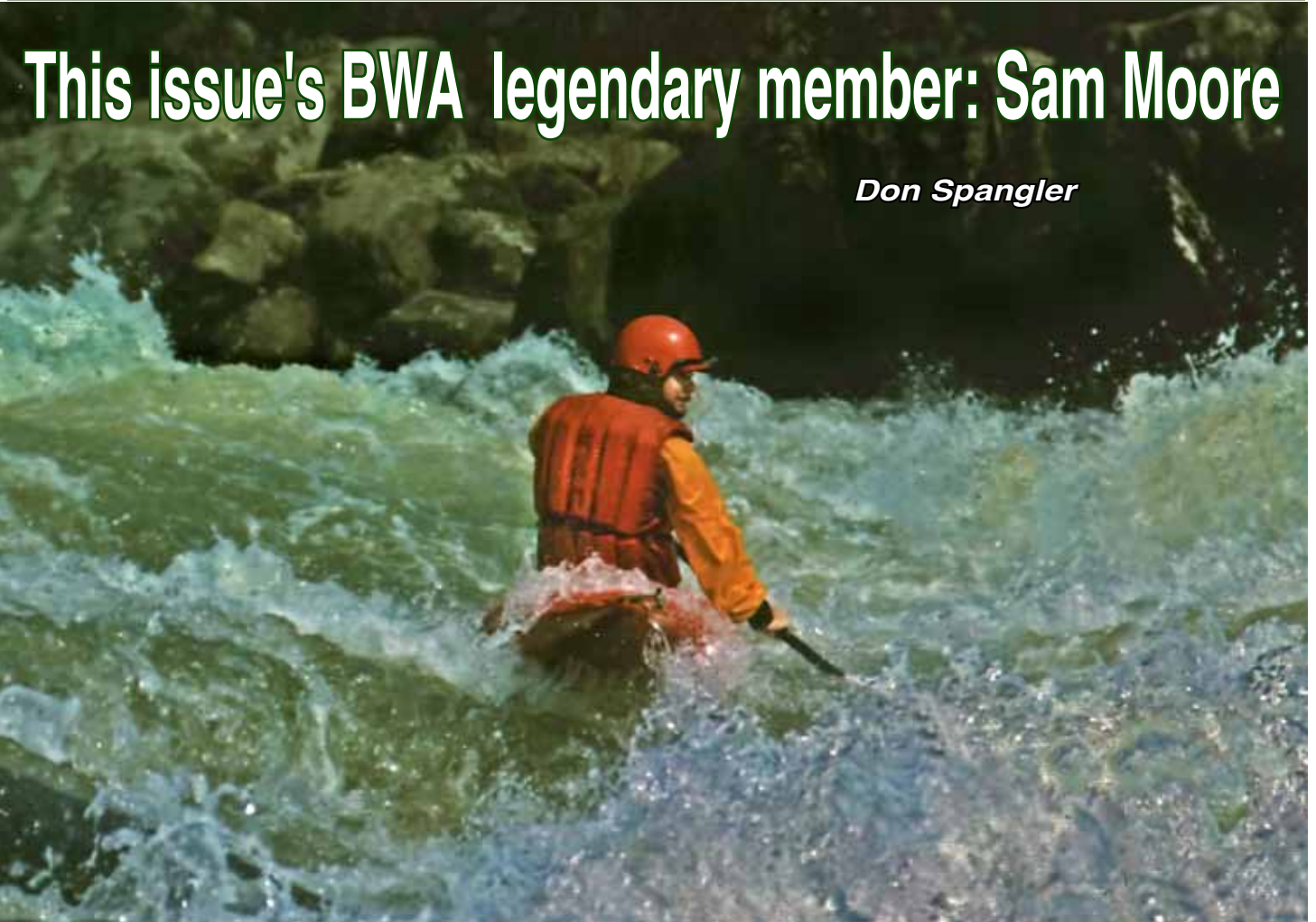
The date was 3-14-16 and the location was Blacktail Canyon, renown for its acoustics. John Lawson was on guitar, Brent Austin officiated. It was a beautiful heartfelt ceremony. Absolutely stunning setting. Toasts were made, several times. Wonderful day and a spiritual journey



The 40th anniversary issues of *Bowlines* will feature a BWA member that has played a significant role in the BWA and has become what might be described nowadays as iconic to many. There have been many such BWA friends over the years that might merit recognition for what they have done for the club, for paddling achievements, or just being someone you would like to paddle or enjoy sharing a campfire with. One such legendary member from years ago was Dave "Dad" Weiland that often regaled stories to us on paddling trips and is often written about in old issues of *Bowlines*. In a group like the BWA there has been and hopefully always will be such individuals, more than I could ever hope to tell you about. I urge you to send me in your story of some BWA member that over the years that has been a part of your boating life and should be recognized. Our fortieth anniversary year is a great time to tell us about them.

This issue's BWA legendary member: Sam Moore

Don Spangler



Sam Moore's contributions to the Bluegrass Wildwater Association are in the Sam Moore tradition: *Think Bold, Thank Big, and Then Do It!* That is the way Sam was, make a decision then do it.... any details could always be worked out. AS a BWA member Sam always jumped into anything the club had decided to do and would be a leader helping to make it happen. You never would hear Sam say "I am too busy with other things". Fitting 28 hours into a 24 hour day was something he was known for. When Sam first ran for office in 1979, *Bowlines* indicate he had been nominated for 3 offices. One nomination, for program officer, has both him and his wife listed together.

Sam & his wife Karen became BWA members together. They came to the BWA in first months of the BWA existence. They were part of a sizeable group that all worked at the UK Med Center. Ed Puterbaugh who worked with Sam, told Sam that he needed to join the BWA he and Karen did not need a second invite. Initially they paddled OC-2 together. Later they moved to a decked C-2, then Sam to a C-1 and Karen to a Kayak. Any time you saw Sam Moore going paddling, you would most likely see Karen there too.

Sam took to paddling with the intensity and zest that we would come to realize was his nature. He loved paddling, the camping, the friendships in the sport. It was an adventure with a new challenge to be encountered with each new river, or with each trip as water conditions changed. He also found that there were new rivers and adventures every where. He put together and led a trip to paddle the Missouri. Then there was the St. John in Maine, the Rio Grand in Texas, trips out west in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Ontario, and more. Before long, others in the club began organizing their own summer trips. Back then many in the BWA were canoers, so multiday or week long trips out of your canoe was popular. A two week vacation allowed you plenty of travel time, a long trip on a wilderness river, then several one days runs before heading back home.

In time Sam would take things one step further, he decided paddling would be a great way to see the world! There would be paddling trips to Chile, Canada, Mexico, Nepal, China, almost any place with good whitewater rivers was a candidate for a Sam Moore paddling trip.

But Sam was a lot more active then just organizing and going on paddling trips. In the seventies there was not a lot of whitewater paddling gear or boats in stores for sale. So Sam led the club into making our own gear and boats. His garage became a boat builders shop for a number of us that laid up our own fibreglass boats. We progressed to making our own neoprene spay skirts and other paddling necessities. Sam then set up a way to make silk-screens at home and soon the BWA silk-screened it's logo on T-shirts, sweat-shirts and other clothing.



Sam & Karen on a scouting trip to take a look at the Tiger Leap Gorge in China two years before he was to run it.

With the advent of computers and the internet Sam Moore left UK to start his own digital oriented business, Data Stream. His tech skills and involvement was important to bringing the BWA into the digital age: We started using computers to publish the Bowlines, and created a BWA web site, one of the first for a paddling club. When the Film Festival was being held at the Nurses Center at UK, with Sam Moores help, we broadcast some of the event on the new wonder, the internet.

It was incredible that a guy from a place where there is no white water, Lewis county would be a dynamic and driving force in so many ways to creating one of the most noted paddling clubs around. One last thing about Sam that those of us valued perhaps most, is that you could have no better friend than Sam Moore. I admit, I have a bias as I knew Sam Moore for decades, but read these short recollection from members who were of that era and you will see why I call him legendary.

Here are recollections from BWA members that knew Sam when he was a paddling force in the club.

From Terry Weeks (one of the early Bowlines Editors):

I couldn't ask for a better friend than Sam. Over the years, he has generated more excitement in my life than I could ever have hoped for. Whether it was at work teasing other cohorts or traveling around the world to exotic locales, he always put 100% into his efforts. I sometimes thought he might be non-human because of his boundless energy.

But before those river trips that required 4-wheel drive backwoods transportation began in earnest, I believe my first river expedition with Sam and Karen was out West to re-trace a part of the Lewis and

Clark expedition along the Missouri river in Montana. My canoe partner Martha and I did not appreciate the strength of the current and while sauntering down the river, became separated from the rest of the group as the strong current pulled us into a secondary part of the river. After struggling to overcome the strong current, Martha and I managed to make it to shore and began to search for the others. Unknown to us, Sam and group were farther downstream, on a cliff looking down at me frantically walking along the river searching for the others. Not seeing Martha, they thought the worst. Fortunately we eventually found each other and it was a very happy greeting as we realized that everyone was safe and alive.

Other river trips ensued in short order on a regular basis. The Dead in Maine that had just broken its winter ice as we arrived and a subsequent unusual warm spell that brought out the mosquitos and blackflies en masse. The mosquitos were so bad that I remember Sam getting down right sadistic on the critters by waiting for a mosquito to land on his arm, then with his fingers, stretching his skin to tighten it while the mosquito sucked away. Eventually as the mosquito became satiated with blood, the tightened skin prevented the mosquito from extracting its proboscis, and the mosquito just continued to fill with blood until it burst. Lesson learned: Sam plays for keep.

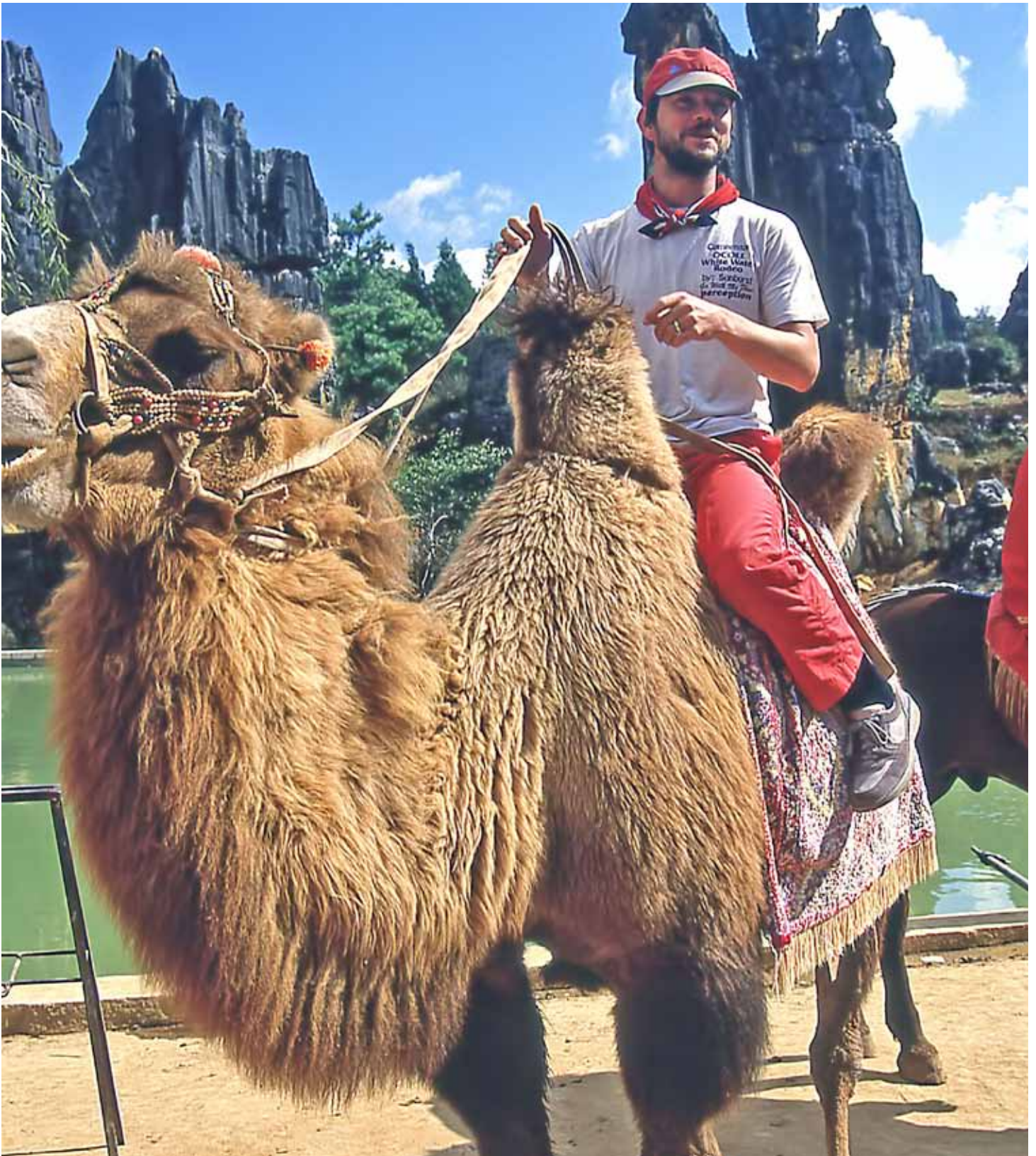
Whether it was sitting on the steps of our hotel in Kathmandu watching the unbelievable parade of humanity and monkeys down the street or walking through the middle of a Nepalese village at night as we portaged a big-ass rapid with full wet suit, spray skirt and paddles (where the locals thought that evil spirits swooped down from the mountains at night and thus they stayed secure in their little huts) or buying a local pig, tying it in a raft, listening to it scream through the rapids and then roasting it and tearing into it with our bare hands at the end of the 2 week trip because our supply raft had capsized on day 1 (losing most of our food), or being chased by a band of monkeys after hiking up a trail to watch the sun rise on Kanchenjunga (3rd highest peak in the Himalayas) or hiking western China in search of the Yangtze river as it descends through the Tiger Leap Canyon (and finding 20 foot tall "hemp" plants growing amongst the locals who had probably never seen Westerners before), or paddling the Bio Bio in Chile and interacting with the local Mapuche Indians who stood at the periphery of our camps waiting to be invited to sell us some of their woolen wares, it's been a most exciting life for me, thanks to Sam.



*Taking a break in Montana...Front row:
Terry Weeks, Sam & Karen Moore.*



Sam "descends through the Tiger Leap Canyon and find(s) 20 foot tall "hemp" plants growing



Sam checking out a craft for doing some sand surfing in China.

From Past President & major contributor to Bowlines Brent Austin:

I heard about Sam Moore on the very first descent of a portion of the Yangtze River in China and his trip to Nepal kayaking world class runs, that to this day are still considered class V and V+ as I understand those ratings. (No, I am not talking about the Upper Gauley for example). He was one of the first BWAers to paddle the Russell Fork gorge in the early 80s, that was described in the Kentucky Whitewater book of the day as “unrunnable”.

From Rich Lewis (also one of the early Bowlines Editors): **The Legend of Sam & his "Cookie Truck"**

I met Sam in 1979 when I joined the BWA. I was a new paddler. He was a leader. He led rapids, trips, and the club as Prez in those early years.

My first major whitewater trip was in 1981 to Utah. We planned to get a permit for a section of the Green River through Desolation Canyon by showing up at the BLM office in Price, UT.

The plan for departure was to show up at Sam's house at 1:00 with all our gear which would be loaded on the club trailer pulled by an ancient panel van that Sam had just bought to be his new river vehicle. I had never seen the van until I pulled up his driveway, and frankly, it didn't impress me. It kinda scared me. An underpowered gas hog, no windows in the back, significant rust, and just a wooden bench seat along the side of the vehicle to complement the two pedestal buckets seats up front. The shocks were shot, the steering loose and the brakes a suggestion. We would call it home for the next 2 weeks.

We finally got going down the highway, weaving back and forth as each new driver got to learn how to handle the 12" of play in the steering wheel. Brakes? Not very effective unless you anticipated the need to stop well in advance or used your body weight to stand on the brake pedal. I used both my feet a couple of times.

Sam's leadership and can-do attitude conquered every road block to us having a successful trip on Desolation Canyon, eventually taking us up into Colorado and doing the Numbers, Brown's Canyon and Royal Gorge sections of the Arkansas and other classic runs. The trailer got 3 flat tires (one at a time) probably because it was over-weighted. We only had two spares, so the third flat in the middle of Illinois in the wee hours of the morning resulted in a 6 hour delay while we hitched a ride into town and found an open store with a spare tire (we bought two).

The Cookie Truck (it used to be a commercial truck that hauled cookies) brought us to the rivers and Sam's leadership and sense of humor about adversity got us down those rivers with grins on our faces.

So many memories in 24 years of paddling. Thanks for every one of them!



The "Cookie Truck" at Lee's Ferry, Grand Canyon, with Sam on top Checking out that new gadget the hand video camera. Pushing the envelope as always.



The "Cookie Truck" and Sam in Idaho, Sam always found a way to keep the truck going, replacing engines and fixing the other numerous other brakdowns over the years.

From Former BWA President Brigid L. DeVries: **The Sam Moore Experience**

The first time I met Sam or at least heard about him was at a BWA Clinic in the 90's. I thought he was a hologram and had never met him due to the fact that at several BWA functions it seemed that he and his wife Karen were always on their way there, but never actually appeared due to their car breakdowns on I-75 in their Volks Wagon-Vanigan. That said I grew to love that Vanigan and occasionally shared the upstairs sleeping area with their daughter Rachel a time or two on BWA outings. No matter how remote the area, in the morning Sam always had a French Press and served the most delicious coffee rain or shine. One evening as we camped along the river bank at the Emory Obed "A grand night for singing" was held in that vehicle after cocktails and appetizers with a complete program of Broadway tunes and a few operatic pieces. Sam was a featured soloist due to his distinctive loud and clear voice. He was accompanied by Dale Kiefer and others who are probably still hoarse from that evening, and shall remain anonymous do to contractual arrangements with their record companies. It should be noted that a crowd gathered immediately and admission was free.

As a former BWA President it is my observation that when he was in that role, Sam's leadership style is one that I admired, and was driven by a heavy emphasis on enjoying life. Sam also relished the idea and fun of planning and participating in the next great adventure. This management style was inspirational and included sharing his penchant for the culinary arts and mixology with others, and he emphasized the importance of both in BWA outings. On a trip Sam could concoct some great drinks in the early days of the BWA which today would be called "craft" or "signature" cocktails. Sam could whip up a great drink from whatever exotic items that could be found in our coolers or in Don Spangler's van. These drinks didn't have names, they usually had a lime or two in them, and nobody turned them down. Sam felt that camaraderie was important and sharing conversation over a cocktail, some Scotch neat, a shot of Wild Turkey, or TQ Hot, beat the heck out of talking about work or politics. On river trips many issues were resolved, discussed, argued, and re-discussed again around a BWA campfire after a day on the river. Stories were told, Ring of Fire by Johnny Cash was sung, laughing and joke telling was mandatory, and the fire pit was there to be jumped across. In my mind that is real leadership. Even today with a Motrin or two I believe we can all still jump!

As horizons are broadened and sailing was added to the water sport repertoire for Sam and Karen Moore, the Sam Moore Experience continues! River trips evolved into short sailing trips and small sailboats at Cave Run Lake. Those trips led to larger sailboats at Kentucky Lake and sailing in the BVI, the Grenadines and St. Bart's which I have enjoyed tagging along on, and other international trips. And Sam is still planning and participating in the next great adventure, as he and Karen plan to sail around the world with Bob Woods on the LEXINGTON..... the fun continues. One of my favorite phrases I use often and learned from Sam which was originally coined by his daughter Rachel is "I hate it when the fun stops". With Sam Moore it never does and hopefully never will! Fair winds to Sam Moore an iconic former BWA President.



Sam and his daughter Rachel in 1999 on the Emory-Obed.



When you are with Sam, the fun never stops!

From the iconic Mike Weeks: ***Sam's Unusual Dance Partner***

Just another BWA party. This time at Down On the Farm's big black party barn. A very nice facility with plenty of room to cook a couple of large turkeys, set up all the side dishes, and enjoy a dinner and friends. We weren't very competitive during our afternoon game of volleyball and cocktails. We enjoyed plenty of stimulating conversation and delicious cocktails during dinner. We enjoyed even more cocktails during our after dinner Don Spangler Roast.

But then it happened, someone slipped a cassette tape into an oversized boom box wired to the barn's sound system and cranked up some good ole bluegrass music. Everyone seemed to be moving their feet, shaking their backsides, and flailing their arms about on the super size dance floor. The music became louder and the dancing became less choreographed as we were all rocking to the beat. That's when it happened. Sam noticed that not everyone was dancing, the 2nd turkey, the one that no one touched during dinner was sitting quietly off to the side without a dance partner, forgotten by everyone but Sam. Never missing a beat Sam scooped up his new dance partner by its wings and yelled "Turkey Dance".

At first it seemed innocent enough as everyone watched Sam dance it around its very own serving tray. But then, without warning, he pitched the turkey to Dave, or John, or Karen, hell I don't remember who was next but before long almost everyone had had a chance to catch Mr. Turkey as it was tossed to them, enjoy a brief dance and continue the fun by passing it on. I never really thought I would be dancing with a freshly cooked 22 lb. turkey. Holding it by its wings while making the nubs of its legs clog to the beat of Rocky Top, tossing and sliding it from person to person until everyone had a chance to punch the dance card. But when you say "Let's PARTY" to Sam Moore you never know just how insane the parties going to get. Just one more night enjoying the very warped mind of Sam Moore.

From Dave Mossbrook, who rafted, kayaked and canoed with Sam for decades: ***A Fond Memory***

I first met Sam in the late 1970s when I began kayaking with the BWA. I soon decided he was one of the paddlers to follow if you wanted to stay out of trouble. I remember him as being almost regal on the river even then. Paddling a C1 he just seemed to usually be at the right spot and with one or two strokes glide through the rapids while I was working my butt off to stay somewhat close to his line and avoid the major problem areas. Paddling rivers all over the US with Sam will always be a fond memory!

From Jerry O'Conner: ***The Energizer Bunny of BWA Boating***

My first acquaintance with Sam was at a BWA meeting at Ed P.'s house in the spring of 1979. I was there because I had become acutely aware of the adverse consequences of experimental whitewater boating and the club was listed in the guidebook¹. There were two items at that meeting that formed my future course in boating – one was the film clips of kayaks getting enders (which added another dimension to my world as an open boater), and the other was Sam's offer to sponsor a rope throwing practice session (and the opportunity to paddle a kayak). After taking him up on his offer, my commitment to learning more about whitewater boating was sealed...

After that, Sam was always "there" (as evidenced in some early Bowlines Newsletter references below). From building boats, to leading trips, and then the Club, his influence was ongoing, omnipresent, and indelible. Few of my trips to prized rivers here or in far-away countries has yet to rival the sense of adventure experienced travelling with Sam and Karen in the "Cookie Truck" on its maiden (international) voyage to the Ottawa River Valley in Canada. I remember being called the excitable boy in reference to some of our early boating adventures; whether or not that was accurate, there could be no doubt that Sam was the Energizer Bunny of BWA Boating in the 1980's!



Yangtze River Report

Sam Moore Bowlines April 88

I don't believe any people can give a send-off like the Chinese. Our boats drifted down the wide river from the put-in. In the tall grass we could see 50 red flags waving in the warm sunshine. Young voices singing in harmony accompanied the banners in a patriotic tune as children marched into the town of Shigu. Some 100 students from the local school formed a circle at the edge of the river, luring us to the bank. The youngsters sang several songs and then began to dance. My eight year quest to boat the Yangtze had finally come to pass.

One day at the University of Kentucky's map library I was researching another river, the Jatate, in Mexico. While waiting for the clerk to dig up one of the topos, I found a large 3-D relief map of China. The Tibetan plateau was impressive, standing millimeters above the rest of the map. Three rivers descended off the east face of the plateau. The Salween, Mekong, and Yangtze all run in an easterly direction across the plain, then descend rapidly from 15,000 to 6,000 feet. The Yangtze makes a further descent through a section called the Great Bend. This bend can be seen from any atlas map as two hairpin turns

in the river. This is where I decided to mark my whitewater future. As soon as the Jatate trip was over, my interest focused on China. I told my friends about my goal to be the first C-1 paddler down the Yangtze. I began my campaign by writing several letters to the Chinese Consulate, China Sports Federation, and the China Mountaineering Association. I did not receive a reply.

My next tactic was to find a partner who was already doing business in China. After some investigation I

started working with Odyssey Tours. In addition, I called Richard Bangs at SOBEK. He gave me enthusiastic support for the project, and from that time we never looked back. We worked diligently, and we watched while others tried to gain a permit for the Yangtze. We kept telling the Chinese we only wanted to run the great bend section and not the whole river. We wanted to paddle what we considered the best section of the river. Finally, on December 31, 1985, we were granted a tentative permit to run the river, providing enough funds could be raised.

In 1986 we recruited 10 kayakers with the qualifications worthy of the trip, and SOBEK agreed to provide an equal amount of qualified rafters. In May we received an official letter of agreement, and preparations began in earnest. The Chinese government had sanctioned a similar trip for Ken Warren and his group called the Sino-American Yangtze Expedition. In addition, two Chinese groups were going to attempt a first descent of the river ahead of Warren. In the following weeks we heard of no less than 12 deaths on the river from the three expeditions. In a sudden move, the Chinese government rescinded its agreement with us and denied us permission to proceed with the expedition.

The Yangtze river is China's longest and the third longest river in the world. It has been considered to be the premier river expedition of our time. The upper reaches are remote and are sparsely populated with minority peoples who have traditions unique even to the majority of the Chinese people. An expedition down the Yangtze would breach several barriers. Our goals were to map the area for future travelers, meet and acquaint ourselves with local inhabitants, study the geology of the area, and of course run the river and the many rapids thought to be in the deep canyons.

The reaches of the upper Yangtze ("Chinisa Chang," meaning "river of golden sand" in Chinese) were mapped at a scale of 1:200,000 in 1946 by the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency. These maps were declassified in 1981 and distributed to several major universities. The University of Kentucky was lucky enough to have a set of these maps. I studied the gradient and mileage lines and calculated that the river would have an average gradient of 12 feet per mile for the 250-mile length of the expedition we planned. Unfortunately, the drop appeared to be confined to two sections, where the river had steep canyons and the gradient was in the 50 feet per mile range. I suspected that the river would probably have a flow of about 50,000 cfs. This combination could make for a very difficult expedition if these maps were accurate.

When the Chinese government turned our expedition down in 1986, I petitioned for a permit to explore a section of the river by foot. We were given permission for a hike through the area of "Tiger Leaping Canyon" in the great bend area of the gorge. We arrived in late October. The temperature was about 85° Fahrenheit and the skies were clear. The area around the gorge had been closed to foreigners since the revolution, so we felt privileged to be some of the first Westerners in that area of Yunnan province.

During our time in China we learned several critical facts that would help our attempt at the river. The river was big; although we could get no exact flows, we estimated the volume at 50,000 to 60,000 cfs. Also, Tiger Leaping Canyon is not an easy place to reach. It is a good two-day drive from Kunming to the river. In places along the river portaging would be a nightmare. At one point in the canyon Jade Dragon Peak rises vertically 3,000 feet from the river edge in a sheer cliff, leaving no area to portage. Below lies a great rapid, the first in a series of monstrous rapids. Earlier in the summer this rapid had claimed the lives of three Chinese explorers.

Although the river appeared dangerous, the beauty of the area was so overwhelming, that I was not shaken. I felt that, given the right conditions, a competent team would be able to make the descent safely. Later we arrived in Beijing for negotiations on an attempt in 1987. During discussions with government officials, I continually brought up our high qualifications and our regard for safety. These issues were paramount in my mind, and our emphasis on safety seemed to reassure our hosts.

The following months brought good and bad news. The permit would be reissued, but at a higher price. This expedition had been privately funded, and because of the price increase some of the participants

could not go. Also, there was some skepticism that we would not be able to make that final dollar figure to reach that distant river shore. However, the last month SOBEK was able to raise the permit fee, and we were off.

October is a beautiful time in Yunnan. The summer monsoons have left the streams full, and the grains in the field are ripe for picking. The air is clear and warm in the subtropical climate that sweeps all but the highlands of that province. Reports stated that the monsoons this year had been light but were late, I did not know how to interpret this information. I decided it didn't really matter. We were here to run the river, whatever the flow.

The two-day bus ride from Kunming to the put-in point at Shigu was exhausting. The first day's drive was over the Burma road of WWII fame. It appeared to be little improved from then. Because of the slow pace of the bus, our group of 17 had plenty of time to get acquainted. Most of the expedition members were veterans of expeditions from all over the globe. It was a comforting feeling to be traveling with such an experienced crew. Since the previous year my kayaking group had dwindled from 9 to 2. I believe the increased cost, and the possibility that we might not make it even in '88, made some of the folks reluctant to try again.

The crew was made of 15 rafters, six of whom were SOBEK guides; two hard boaters; and three Chinese guides. Although this was a large exploratory group, everyone had a professional attitude about the expedition and its purposes. Cooperation and understanding are essential to the success of any river trip. This one would require more. As we say in the BWA about running rivers "Plans are made to be changed", and there were no exceptions for this China excursion. We knew that from the put-in to Tiger Leaping Gorge the river would be relatively flat. This would be our shake down cruise, so to speak. The first three days were uneventful except for the beautiful scenery and the great sand beaches, which made excellent campsites. Our camps were filled with locals who watched our every move with great interest, from the time our boats landed till darkness.

On the eve of the third day we rounded a sharp bend in the river to see the entrance of the great canyon, the earth rose sharply to over 18,800 feet. Directly ahead, the river carved but a narrow slice into the edge of the great mountain. The view from this point is the most impressive I've ever seen. Jade Dragon Peak stands watch over the river in almost a vertical fashion. The peak is but a couple kilometers from the river's edge at 6,000 feet. On the west side of the river, Haba Shan rises to over 15,000 feet but does so in a less dramatic way. The only way I know to express the grandeur of the moment is to guess at how many hundred photographs were taken of that scene. Surely Kodak would be proud. This is a sight worthy of satisfaction for almost any explorer. We made camp just above the entrance to the gorge. That evening the sun cast a most beautiful tint on the snow-covered mountain in an extraordinary addition to the almost surrealistic environment we had entered.

That evening we all talked about our scout of the river and what future we might have in the gorge. My scouting of this section last year had been encouraging. I told the other members that, depending on the water level, a successful descent of the canyon might be possible. Several of the expedition members ran quickly down a trail into the canyon to examine the first rapid. Their report was as follows. The first drop is about 30 feet into a large hole; the cliff rises vertically about 100 feet on the right bank and about 50 feet on the left bank. Below the first cascade the river goes through a picket fence of boulders, creating a maze of keeper holes and turbulent currents. After discussing no fewer than 5 alternative plans, we decided to send our gear around by truck and hike the gorge. There was an excellent trail along the left side of the mountain. This was barely a scouting trail, since many times the line would climb to 1000 feet over the numerous rapids.

The year before I had hiked to a spot where it appeared the rapids ended. This was a distance of about ten miles into the gorge. Much to my chagrin, the trail continued for another 8 miles before reaching the first

village, where our boats could be reached. The next morning came, and we awaited the hike with good expectation. I told the hikers it would be an all-day affair. but I thought the length would not be much more than 10 miles. At evening's end I was bivouacked in a space blanket underneath a rock overhang at the river's edge. Another trip member and I had completed the hike. only to find the ferry boatman had left for the day. The rest of the group were more fortunate; they had found accommodations in a local village, In the morning the boat driver appeared and reunited us with our gear. Within the hour we were all gathered around some food that our hosts had prepared.

By evening our four rafts were rigged and ready to continue the journey. We rode only a short distance to a remote beach at the beginning of a second, smaller canyon. On the next day we plunged into the unknown in earnest. None of the locals had seen the river any farther than 10 kilometers downstream. After about 5 miles we saw the first horizon line. Each boat took an early start to the wall to avoid any possible mistake. There was a small creek entering from the left, and a gravel beach. We took our scouting positions there. The river slid down a glassy chute in a beautiful V. To either side were large hydraulics. The line was clear. Ride the left side of the V, then break left over the 20-foot waves for the big ride.

Dave Edwards, who works on the Grand, said this rapid reminded him of Hermit at about 85,000 cfs. However big it was, it was plenty big enough to hide my Gyramax from the downstream view. For about the next ten miles there were large class III-IV rapids that didn't require scouting. Our first full day of whitewater ended at a sharp turn where the river pounded into a cliff.

The locals came down to visit and offered a warm welcome. The people of the upper Yangtze are mainly made up of minority groups. The people in this region were Nachi in origin. This culture is a matriarchal society where women hold the property and carry the family name. They have a distinctive dress, wearing black turbans adorned with turquoise. They also wear a bright blue back plate around their waists.

In China dress is the feature that most signifies the cultural differences between the minorities and the mainstream Han Chinese. For the most part the locals are self sufficient. There was no large surplus of goods in any of the villages we visited. The villagers did produce some eggs, 2 chickens, and a goat for our consumption.

The next day we ran several large rapids. As in the Grand Canyon, it was in the washout that the paddle grip tightened and the strokes came quick. There were some mean ones too. At the end of a rapid called "Hung Men Low" I paddled through a wave train into a huge swirly where my boat disappeared clear up to my waist. This rapid was of particular difficulty for the rafts. The waves were steep, and midway through the rapid there were three gaping holes. The tack taken by John Yost and Skip Horner of SOBEK was to crest the first wave and slide off the left into some slack current. The plan looked good on paper but didn't pan out so well. The first boat ejected the swamper as it went up the second wave. Skip pulled hard as the overboard passenger pulled himself aboard. John's boat wasn't nearly as lucky. The boat didn't make it over the left side of the wave but went up the wave and flipped over. This made for a long swim for the occupants till the boat could be hustled to shore.

The scenery had changed from the snowcapped mountains of the eastern Himalayan thrust to canyon country with a relief of 5,000 feet above the river. The sun's first rays filtering over the craggy rim made a special glow that was enhanced by the morning's first cup of fresh-brewed coffee.

Each day the scenery changed. For three days we toured through a section of river that was only class III-IV in difficulty but was truly spectacular in beauty. In this section of the river we purchased a pig for roasting. We stopped near a village, anticipating a crosscultural night. While we cooked the evening meal the locals brought a generous amount of Mao Tel for our consumption. This white liquor is as potent as paint stripper. The bottle only needed the triple skull and crossbones to make it official.

After dinner the local school children entertained us with a traditional dance. Later we all joined in and had a great time. This was a splendid evening when both groups learned to appreciate and understand something about each other

From the top of the great bond placer mines were beginning to appear along the river. Every few miles we would pass entire families hard at work trying to extract some of the river lode, The weather began to warm up as we left the influence of the higher mountains. We bought oranges, bananas and apples along the river.

The heat of the autumn sun was cooled only by the next big wave In the third section of river. The climate was nearly perfect. The most difficult section lay downstream from a village named Sedu. These folks don't get too far away from home. They told us that the last rapid was only a few Kilometers downstream and assured us that the rest of our expedition would be pleasant. Our guide told us about the Chinese group that descended this section of river in 1986. They came upon an unscoutable rapid and ran it straight up. At least one boat capsized, and two of the expedition members drowned. This expedition was undertaken In the summer, when the Yangtze was at peak flow. We hoped our timing was better.

The rapids were large and long in a quick staccato procession. From our scouting positions they sometimes looked small and smooth, like Double Trouble on the Ocoee. At river level they welled up high waves that crashed down on our small crafts and gave us great rides. This section is a classic; It provides long, roller coaster rapids and technical moves, all in 85,000 cfs of water. The river alternated between seething rapids and calm pools. At each rapid there was a good scout. We were fortunate to have lower water.

After this section the canyons gave way to green hills dotted with grass huts and ram earth shelters. There were waterfalls everywhere, long silver bands that fell to a boil hundreds of feet below. This river had it all. By the time we reached the take out, we were all satisfied that we had experienced some of the greatest rapids and scenery on the continent.



Backpaddling through the pages of Bowlines

Bluegrass
Wildwater
Association

1976-2016



Celbrating the Bluegrass Wildwater's 40 years.

This Flood is for You!

Brent Austin

Bowlines April 1994

Crab Orchard at flood condition.

The weekend of March 26-27, 1994 started off a bit innocuous: rain several days earlier provided several pleasant options. The Little River in the Smoky Mountain National Park was at 1500 cfs; the Tellico was at 500 cfs and the Emoary-Obed was at 3800 cfs. Typical of BWA paddlers, groups splintered off in different directions. The Grimes family headed for the Little; Don Coaplen, Marrea Matthews, and Rich and Lynn Lewis went to the Caney Fork; Mike Clark was heading for Overflow Creek near the Chatooga and wanted me to hook in for a first descent on the Cumberland Plateau on Sunday, provided it rained Saturday night.

Our group consisted of myself, Randi Beard, Travis Sewalls, Blake Brame and Matt Terry. Because the Little was at such a good level and three of our group had never been on it, we headed down to join Barry and Cynthia. We were not disappointed. As usual, everyone received cheers and accolades from the tourists gawking at us as we ran the big drop at the Sinks. Busting down, eddy hopping and running the rapids to the Elbow, everyone scouted this rapid and made a decision to run it or not. It was juicy for sure!

After a day of crystal mountain water to surf under sparkling clear blue skies, we enjoyed a good dinner of spaghetti and watched the heavens unfold in the waning hours of dusk. Even though the wind picked up, it did not look like it was going to rain. I called Clark. After watching some weather channel at his parents' house in Knoxville, he opined that whatever system was coming through would not likely do us much good. We'd be in touch in the morning.



Fun at the Meanies

After retiring to bed fairly early, I recall being vaguely aware that it was raining on the van. I turned over and went back to sleep, lulled by the constancy of what was going on outside. About 7:00 a.m. I heard Travis stirring about outside and wondered "What in the hell is he doing out there in the rain?" I got up, put on my Anorek and joined him. He showed me what use to be a placid tributary into the Little. With this raging torrent, I could not imagine what the river looked like. I called Clark from the pay phone and he was not sure what was going on, something about waiting for a call from some of the Chattanooga boaters. I told him what we saw and that we were going to check the river, I'd get back to him. The rain continued. As we left, the insanely high Little River continued to rise, until eventually it would wash out the road and close it up to the present day.

At breakfast we contemplated what we would do. At least three inches of rain had fallen and there was no sign of it letting up for the remainder of the day. Obviously the Citico would be too high (we later learned that a group had to hike off the river that day). Since it was Sunday morning, we thought about the return home at the end of the day and considered that the Emory-Obed area might offer something. Scared off at the thought of a high water run on Island Creek, with no one familiar with the run and reports of strainers from the ice storms mere weeks before, we decided on Crab Orchard Creek. Clark had already taken off to paddle and I wondered what his group would be on.

It is Class II, with a good number of Class III's and one Class IV" said Randi to Matt's query. We thought that with a lot more juice than any of us had seen it before, we would have a fun playful run. In fact, at 4 1/2 feet and rising, it was more than double the highest level I had seen it. I asked Barry Grimes what he thought about the level and he shrugged his shoulders and lecherously smiled a smug "I don't know but I'm sure you will do a fine job leading." I considered that young Travis ought to work on his leading and water reading skills. "No thanks," he replied, "I want to have fun." At that



A typical side creek waterfall coming into Crab Orchard



point I thought "Hmmm, this could be interesting", and my skull tightened ever so slightly. But it was not real stress yet. That would occur somewhere further in the run when the Emory-Obed peaked around 70,000 cfs. And the rain continued.

After running shuttle arriving back at the put-in, we met a group of paddlers from Illinois. They promptly informed us that they hiked off the river after experiencing carnage at the first rapid. "Hmmm..." We debated briefly what this meant then concluded that the best explanation was that they were from Illinois and it could not be as bad as they had obviously overdramatized. We put on and the rain continued.

Typical of Plateau paddling, the relatively pooled upper stretch had uncanny current pushing us along. Normally, a big log strainer that we portaged around was something we looked for. Today it was under water. The river soon took a bend to the left, the current picked up, a dull roar sounded and through the hear, mist appeared the first rapid that had sent the Illinois paddlers packing. Normally Class II-III, today it was Class IV with big waves, holes and continuous heavy water for easily 200 to 300 yards without an eddy. "Hmmm..." I am designated lead and Barry took sweep in our somber but quick decision to put some organization to our group. It is unusual for BWA'ers to do something like this, being the venomously independent bunch that they are, which perhaps belled the awakening seriousness of our situation. We forged ahead and the rain continued.

The further downstream we went, especially as we got to the gradient section, the more the water rose. Tributaries added to our woes and the rain continued. Strainers were of the foremost concern as it was evident that there was no stopping in some of the rapids and fast water sections. And we were concerned about being able to stop in time to scout the normally Class IV drop that we knew lay somewhere ahead. Who knew what that would be like today. No one was even sure if they could recognize when we got near it because all the river features were blurred. Nothing looked familiar to me. On one rapid, I quickly decided on a river left route and saw with horror a huge hole that my line mandated be punched, followed by two more equally awful holes. I managed to pull free through each and watched as everyone followed my line. Only one big surf by Blake, and he was able to wrest himself away. "Damn this is getting serious" I thought, "and where is the big drop?"

Finally, we come upon a horizon line we could see and yet get to an eddy on the river left. We got out to look and quickly discerned that we had already paddled harder stuff and went back to our boats. At that point, another group paddled up, led by noted boater, Chuck Estes. They also took a look and concurred with our assessment of the line. After successful lines by all, the mood lightened up a bit, perhaps buoyed by experience of sharing this predicament with even more people with adrenal gland deficits. The Estes group blew on down and we got back to work paddling this serious bit of whitewater.

We quickly got back to a rhythm in the big waters when our nightmares became realized. We had chosen the right side around an island and were jamming down heavy water when we saw a huge tree across the current. There wasn't even a hint of an eddy and to get sideways would be disastrous. Aiming for where the water was

pillowing up just right of center, I powered forward for the boof. It worked! I turned around to watch Randi, then Matt, Travis, Blake and Barry each make the same must make move. Whew! With hearts racing and adrenaline surging, the mood again became somber and tense. That was way too close a call and there is no way to know if we would encounter another situation, maybe even worse. We hoped there would be nothing else

There was. As we swiftly came careening down and around a faceless bend in the river, we saw that a pine tree had fallen across the river some three to four feet over the water with its numerous branches creating what one would ordinarily think is a near perfectly lethal strainer. The good news was that there was a nice four to five boat eddy on the river left. The bad news was that the four boaters in the Estes' group were sitting in it. If I caught the eddy, Randi and the others might not be so fortunate and the strainer was worse over there.



Even more high water on Crab Orchard!

Quickly, I decided to make a run at a point where I felt we could get through. I flipped going through, briefly hung up and rolled up on the other side in time to watch Randi come through holding on to a part of the limb that she had torn off washing through. She was unhappy at that point, but she had made a nice hole where the other lemmings followed through. Except Barry. Being sweep, he claimed that fifth spot in the eddy with the Estes group.

We washed down several hundred yards and waited on Barry. No one had seen him catch the eddy and as the minutes passed our apprehensions, along with the water, rose. And it continued to rain. Sitting in the eddy at that time was eerie. I could visibly see the water rise over a rock, we had just run two strainers, visibility downstream was poor, everyone was shaken and we did not know what happened to Barry. When he happily showed up with Estes' group, our concern over the situation with the rising water and the downstream conditions had not faded. All I could see were rapids in the graying mist downstream below, disappearing around a bend into who knows what, and Chuck Estes informed us that at this level, the really BIG holes were coming up past the bridge. We were ready for the fun to stop about at this point in the trip. Somewhere at this point too, I wondered for the first time "What is Clark's trip going like right about now?" I also recall thinking that I was glad I did not go with them, because if they jumped on something real hard with lots of big gradient, they were definitely having their hands full. (I later learned that of the five in the group, all hiked out after losing two boats, three paddles, and leaving two boats in the gorge, some broken ribs, and an arduous hike out by the paddlers, who were split off from each other on different sides of the river. This was the first known attempted descent of Little Possum Creek, a big gradient run in the southern Plateau).

There were no more strainers, but we did dance around some very big holes. Some of them were about the size and depth of a small three bedroom house. I had no idea that there was ever anything of that size on this little creek. Tired, hungry and glad to be in one piece, all agreed that we had a unique high water/flood stage experience that would be remembered for a long time. We were fortunate that we had a strong group of paddlers, each of whom had paddled Class V water, and were able to deal with everything that was thrown at us that day. I shudder to think what could have happened if anyone had made a bad decision or lost their wits that day. As we changed clothes, loaded boats and headed home, the rain continued.

Off the Cuff

New BWA Officers

President	Bob Larkin
Vice-President	Brandy Mello
Treasurer	Don Perkins
Secretary	Michael Daughtery
Safety	Walt Hummel
Program	Mike Wilson
Newsletter	Don Spangler
Conservation	Megan Larkin
NPFF Coordinator	John Mello
Equipment Coordinator	Kyle Koeberlein
At-Large Member	James Welch
Membership Coordinator	Dot Edwards
Past President	Clay Warren

Cheoah this weekend 4/16-17 trip report

April 17, 2016

Thinking the West Fork Tuck and maybe the Cheoah again could be the move. You can thank AW for these releases by the way.

Brent

April 13, 2016

Heading to your place Fri evening with West Fork Tuck on my mind! Love that run....short of the Horsepasture and maybe the Toxaway, it is THE best put in on the East coast! Hard to beat staring up at a 150' waterfall and feeling the mist in your face as you peel out!

Clay

WFT is about the same difficulty as the Cheoah IMO... But pretty remote in some spots and lots of wood (at least that was the case when I was last there).

Anyway, I'm planning on driving down Saturday afternoon and paddling the Cheoah Sunday if anyone would like to meet up (or better yet carpool!).

justin.mcdaniel

Comments from the Forum Worth Remembering

April 17, 2016

What a day it was on The West fork of the Tuckaseegee near Cashiers, NC

This run starts with a long steep downhill walk in. With boating gear on I thought I might be overcome by heat stroke. After about 10 minutes or so to cool down, we put on below the beautiful double falls. Ferry right and boof right, slide down the next drop eddy out and carry around the rest of the log jammed put in rapid.

After putting back in we followed Mark Singleton down with read and run to the BIG Sliding drop. We all went left which can be bumpy and skippy, especially if you are off line like I was. Because I remembered to tuck forward my back and neck felt and still feel no pain nor tenderness. My left rib area was not so lucky, still a little tender as I write this. Below the slide two mini gorges with semi- continuous action follow. One particular drop had a hole that worked a couple members of our group. Finally we hit the spot where the river just turned into read and run class III down to the put out.

I believe we walked around trees, not easy in the rhododendron thickets and rock that lined both sides of the river, somewhere between 4-6 times.

For me this was both a fun and challenging day, probably for the rest of our group too.

If you go, you need to be in good physical condition for the walk in and portages; you should go with someone who knows the run, be prepared to make some must make moves, and limit the size of your group to no more than ten boaters (think we had eight)

Thanks for a spectacular day to: Mark, Brent, Bruce, Clay, John, Wes, and Bill

Chief

Glad you guys got on that gem! I haven't been back since the first release weekend in 2013 for some reason.. maybe all the portaging we did that day. Hope to

get out there this summer.

Were the entrance rapids totally blocked off below the big boof? Those boulder drops were a little sketch I recall, but runnable and super fun back in the day.

justin.mcdaniel

Justin,
They were pretty much a no go on Saturday. There was a tiny opening in the trees that put you in a pile of rock. Did not see anyone attempt to run it.
Chief

Reforest Elkhorn City success!

4/17/16

We had a great day planting trees in celebration of Arbor Day yesterday in Elkhorn City thanks in part to a generous donation from the BWA. In case you missed the previous posting, the EC tree board purchased 100 native seedling to plant by the beach, and the BWA answered the call by purchasing 300 more! As luck would have it, I was in another Arbor Day event on Friday in Winchester, and they had 20 extra trees which they donated to the cause. I believe that's what Brent calls majick.

The Girl Scouts, local citizens, and local kayakers all joined in the work and we got them all in the ground by mid afternoon. I have to give special recognition to Johnny Newsome, who came down from Morehead to help plant.

Between floods and droughts and four wheelers and local politics, the realist in me recognizes that many of these trees won't make it to maturity, but planting trees is an act of hopeless optimism, something we all need a little more of in our lives. If you haven't planted a tree this year (or ever), I highly recommend it. Especially if you can convince some friends to come do it with you.

My hope is that this will become a long standing partnership between the BWA and Elkhorn City. Next year the water will be better, and I hope to see a good BWA crowd in town to join the fun.

-Peter

A day on the Pigeon River

April 14, 2016

The commercial rafting is beginning to pick up already on the Dirty Bird as I have had raft trips almost daily since the end on March and this month of April! Yesterday was one of those exceptional days on the water: I "merced" for Rapid Expedition and Dave had a family of four (Mom and three kids ages 10 to 14. When leaving the outfitter there was water release still at Hartford, but by the time we got to Waterville Bridge the water had been reduced to about 280+ cfs - usually a bummer somewhat for the raft guide and some customers. This usually assures a much more technical run with an almost bet of getting hung up on rocks in several low water spots in the river - and always results in much more work for the guide and the guest!!! However, the river gods even at low water were hard at work producing a very enjoyable and eventful trip down the river: I heard one of the kids say, "What is that?" when we were approaching a small class II rapid we call Big Bend, and it was a young Elk at the waters edge. We past within about 25-30 feet of the Elk who didn't quite know what to think of that big thing floating past him/her (?). Upon passing the young, but large creature the Elk bailed off into the water and crossed the river like a pro! (Something I have never seen or that happens often). Just past Lost Guide rapid an Ospray (spelling ?) flew up from the river with an about 6-inch, or so, fish in its talons and put on a show for us circling the raft with its catch! You just never know what sights or pleasures will result, especially when you least expect it, when on the waters of the beautiful Smokey Mountains!!! Sometimes it is not all about the big water or rapids, but sometimes it is about just being there and enjoying the rivers of the Southeast and elsewhere!!!!
S.Y.O.T.R

B.J. - Kayak Bum: The only ambition I have ever had in life, and it was well worth the wait!

Upper Red today

May 01, 2016

Great opportunity today with warm weather and flow. Meet at takeout at 10:30. Come rock the Red!

Ben M.

Such a good run. The Upper Red at the level it was

today (950 or so) is a 5 star river experience!

justin.mcdaniel

The Red was the place to be today, we had sunny skies for the full length of the run and no rain until we had packed up our gear and were driving back. We got started a little late after waiting for some late comers and jump starting Thick's car. So we launched with a crew of six including Justin, John, Jessy, Mikie thick 'n wet, and Rob. Water level was 350 cfs this morning when we left Lex, had risen to 800 by the time we put on at Stillwater creek and peaked out around 950 on the Hazel Green gauge with much more contribution from Stillwater creek too.

This was a personal redemption run for myself, having run the Red early last summer not long after beginning at clinic - swam multiple times and got beat up pretty good on that trip. Today was great, the narrows were rocking, probably a 4- at this water level with some pretty legit holes. I did get knocked over once but nailed the roll quickly and felt great out there. Jessy had a nice combat roll today too.

Then we ran into a couple of Lexington guys in inflatable sea eagle boats which looked pretty unsuitable for this type of run with huge keels or something sticking out the bottom. Well they took a beating in the narrows, one guy had lost his paddle and his eyeglasses and apparently a ring too (how do you lose a ring without losing the finger?) and was basically stranded and thumbing a ride on the side of the river. Justin was generous enough to tow his boat for him while he rode tandem with his buddy. This supplied myself with plenty of laughs as the overloaded sea eagle was completely unmaneuverable but we managed to get them to the takeout.

Then we realized just how unprepared we were when no one had thought to pack cold beer for the takeout. Luckily we had Mikie thick with us who managed to dig out some really warm cougar bait from his car and salvaged the situation. Awesome grub at Miguel's and then back to the city.

Ace

Great afternoon on a superb run, especially at the higher flow level!

Some very solid sections, (falls crux rapid, in particular) with fun big water feel and holes to avoid. The river crested just below 1000 while we were out, but with significant supplemental flow from creeks I would think the actual flow was higher than HG gauge at narrows. Class 4 ish.

Would be great to have a gauge of sorts above the narrows and below Hazel so we know what the level actually is at the narrows. Well worth it for this gem. Major resource for Lex paddlers! ...when it flows...

Flunked

My plan was to make a trip out to the New River for the 3rd week in a row to check it out at 7'... then I got the text from Ben about the Red. About 40 miles from Ashland, I decided to turn around because the Red seems to be at below recommended levels any time I have time to paddle. The river gods opened the door, so naturally I stepped through to the other side. The Red River was deceptively beautiful. As we paddled down the gorge and into the narrows, the water level bumped up significantly and the rapids became increasingly more difficult. Class 3's became class 4's. Holes were so sticky they were pulling branches off of 200 year old giant trees. One of which pulled the skirt off my kayak, forcing me to swim. As I found out later, it was the same hell bent hole that stripped a man's ring off his finger, swallowed his paddle, and decided it needed better vision. After taking that man's belongings along with a chunk of my ego, the Red River god was too busy looking at the ring on his finger through some doctor prescribed spectacles and his new found ego decided to let us have an easy paddle to the take out. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Thick Magic Mike.
Still wet.

ELF White Oak TR

May 22, 2016

We slid down some wet rocks on white oak creek in the palisades yesterday at the bottom of minimum flow. Considering it was 13hrs after the storm came through, I am still impressed by what it's able to hold - the watershed is mostly undeveloped. I think it runs more than calloway.

This is definitely a central ky classic. I first hiked it after a 3 inch rain last winter, and the first 2:30 of this

video is a single 3/4 mile rapid at full flow. Wood is definitely a concern at higher flows, but it has a deer trail that allows for scouting up to the 8 footer, and as of yesterday the whole run is clean for heads up creeking.

The takeout question has not been answered. We paddled up to Tom Dorman NP - think Jim Beam NP might offer the solution but it needs a motivated scout.

Peter

More info on Jim Beam NP. I've been working with one of the volunteers and the preserve monitor of the Sally Brown/Crutchler preserve with The Nature Conservancy since December. The Jessamine County Trails Association (JCTA) which I'm a part of and he is very interested in opening up new areas with trails on the Jim Beam NP property. We scoped out the whole property back in December. Good news is there are remnants of an old logging road that goes from Moss Branch (the first little creek that is the property boundary on the west side) up to the area of the existing trail on the east side of the loop. We proposed creating a new trail there, as well as another that goes to a lookout point on the east side, and another that goes along a stone fence up on top of the palisade. Bad news is he took that to the board in January, but we got shot down for this year because they felt like they had too many projects already. We're going to try again next year. As part of the proposal, I volunteered that we could get several members of the BWA, JCTA, and my flatwater group to help build the trail.

The old logging road that is there is pretty rough and blocked by trees in some locations. But the only alternatives that we found involved climbing cliffs. The "trail" is a little over 1000 ft long and climbs several hundred feet of elevation to get to the existing trail, and another .5 miles to get to the parking lot.

As part of this effort, I was able to get the preserve boundary (on the Jess Co side, there's more the Garrard Co side, but it's inaccessible) and the existing and proposed trails on a map: [drive.google.com]

Jr.

That's great, Don. I'm glad you have developed a good relationship with the Nature Preserves folks.

One thing that we have to remember is that the Nature Preserves exist to protect endangered habitats. Our desire to have boating access needs to be predicated on understanding that we can't just go anywhere we want on these properties, but need to watch out for whatever it is that might be rare. Folks should be especially careful in these little steep creeks to step on as few plants as possible, avoid creating additional erosion, etc.

-Zina

Thanks ya'll. It is a special place for sure.

Zina, I'm all for respecting the resource - I think that concern should be balanced with the consideration that a body gets tired of khorn dogging it. Certainly having high quality local options for responsible use is lower impact than driving 3,4,6 or more hours to do the same thing in an equally sensitive ecosystem elsewhere?

In this particular case, both Jim Beam and Tom Dorman exist to protect the ecosystem and to provide responsible public access. With the put in a public right of way and the takeout on a trail, this is about as legit and low impact as it comes, which is one of the reasons I felt comfortable sharing.

Cephas_Stutts

Wow, What a great Clinic

June 06, 2016

Hi All,

Wow, what a great clinic. Brandy... You did an amazing job on this one and thanks to your hard work and a true team effort but ALL the volunteers I honestly believe this one will go down as one of the best clinics we've had in a long, long time. The weather may not have always been perfect, but I didn't see a single student that wasn't smiling, wasn't having a great time and most importantly, learning a lot. This clinic was exactly what it should have been, a great introduction to boating AND boating culture. smiling smiley

Bob

I could not agree more Bob. Brandy, this Clinic was amazing, the vibe was perfect and it is good to be

lucky, because we had fall release levels both days: Saturday with a bit over 800 and Sunday with a bit over 1000. I mean, it does not get better than this. Even the rain was perfect and cooperative. The attention to detail at all levels was superb. Food was great, everything in the kitchen was ready for the gang to just get started. Music was of course super bomber. Students were great and very cool. The volunteerism by both members and students was fabulous. Brandy was everywhere, at all times and that is impressive. Girl, you got the majick and you made it happen. I had a blast and this is my favorite BWA event of the year, especially when everything comes together with good water at the Russell Fork. My favorite of all rivers in the world. So glad we get to turn folks on to it at our clinic each year. A true gem of Kentucky... Glad you are running for VP again. You da bomb diggity Momma!

Brent

Kudos to Brandy and staff for making this clinic fun and more fun. Special thanx to to MF Wilson for showing me how to style meatgrinder. BTW: its more fun in your boat.

Howard

Howard,
That is great that you styled Meatgrinder. Mike Wilson is a solid paddler and community member for sure. Love that brother. Man, in my opinion, Meatgrinder is a legitimate rapid with substantial features to negotiate. A great milestone rapid. Now, get back to the RF and style it again and again and you will finding yourself styling other rivers of similar difficulty, like the Ocoee...
Keep on boating and stepping up - that is the key to success out there...

I would like to hear some trip reports about favorite students, etc. over the weekend. Seems like no one got hurt this weekend on the river and that is always good, since it does happen out there from time to time when pushing one's envelope...

Brent

After 33 years attending BWA Spring Clinics I can easily say that this was the BEST CLINIC EVER!
Thank you Brandy and all my BWA brother and sister volunteers for putting together a fantastically fun and

awesomely organized event. C6 and I were fortunate to be able to teach a stellar class of 3 young, new boaters, Gage and Logan were super students, mastering the moves and progressing from zero to hero in just 1 day while Calvin proved himself to be the best 9yr old whitewater beginner we have ever had the priviledge to teach. Congratulations and we eagerly look forward to seeing you all on a river again soon!
barryg

Very well done clinic, Brandy. And all the volunteers. I didn't partake in the cultural activities, but some students and an instructor seemed to be experiencing the after effects on the watersmileys with beer! I saw nothing but smiles mostly, however.

The only students I saw that had difficult times were in the wrong boats in my opinion. Brand new boaters don't seem to handle crossover or play-like boats well (although an experienced flatwater guy did fine in his crossover). Don't know how we can help steer them into better beginner boats.

Jr.

Don, so glad you you brought that up. As a full participant in the evening "cultural activities" I can report that they were simply marvelous and majick. There were guitars, drums, bonfires, fireworks, dancing, copious local adult beverages plus the ear elixir exquisiteness of the magnificently and appropriately monitored band, MOONSHINE DISTRICT. Ratliff Hole has never echoed with music more beautiful, raw, high energy, danceable or Appalachian than when these folks played the RF pavilion and later at the drumfire. Band members, Katie, Maggie, Jared, Eric & Mike swooped into the clinic right on cue, played brilliantly and felt like BWA family from their first note. For those who missed it there's an old BWA saying that comes to mind; "sleep is overrated" :-)

barryg

I got this from a program my daughter will be attending, I modified a few key words and it fits right in with the clinic!

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the term used to describe the process of adjustment for a person entering a new

culture and facing a sudden change of environment, language, academic and social settings, food, and climate. Each student can experience a different level of culture shock based on variations in programs and local conditions. Nevertheless, most BWA students experience this phenomenon, and it can cause students to feel energetic and excited one rapid, yet tired and overwhelmed around the camp fire. While cultural and boating immersion is a wonderful experience overall, adjustment can be difficult, and it is important to acknowledge that your mood and attitude towards your boating adventures and social interactions will likely vary over the course of your continued boating career.

Good luck and much success to all the students this weekend, SYOTR. (See you on the river).

Jeff K

I'm a little misty eyed today reading all of these posts. I'm sure you all know how nervous I was going into this, but you guys showed me once again what we are all about. Your willingness to help me with whatever I needed: heavy lifting, help with meals, trash details, giant smiles and some great big hugs just at the right moment. smiling smiley I really loved how as the weekend progressed members took charge and made changes as they saw fit, rather than waiting to be asked or told. Taking charge of issues that arise is key in my mind.

I really enjoyed having the pleasure of checking in all the new students and getting to meet them right away. Then, getting to watch them open up and become part of the crew. Pure love right there!! Students, y'all are the bomb!! And, thanks for jumping in on breakfast Sunday morning when I was feeling the effects of a little too much culture. winking smiley I felt bad about it at first but now realize that it couldn't have been a happier accident. I was told by a few students how much they enjoyed being a part of making a meal. And, isn't that what it's all about? Jumping in and helping where you can?! I love it!! Students, you nailed it and I can't wait to paddle with you!! I'm already taking some notes for next year. Some things from this year I will certainly repeat: local food, kick ass music and lots of good vibes, some things I hope to improve: more organized shuttle, bigger volunteer teams for meals and trash. If you have anything you'd like to see again or like to be better, please shoot me a message.

Much love and light to all my river family. I absolutely

adore you all!

Maybe if we start praying now to the shuttle goddess, and build the clinic around her next year, we'll have more luck. Seriously, thanks to Jurgen, whomever lent the truck, Kobes, and who else? Was that David driving at the end? Thanks for stepping up to fill the goddess vacuum at the last minute.

Jr.

I, too, would like to jump on this bandwagon and thank Brandy for her stellar organizational skills and all the encouraging emails even before attending the Clinic. It was clear that I would be well cared-for upon my arrival. I hit the lottery when I was assigned to Hanley, Megan, and Jessy's class. They were superb and attentive instructors. Most folks are aware of Hanley's gift for being a great instructor and I was finally able to appreciate it first-hand. Megan's stories of been-there/done-that/I-was-nervous-too were entertaining and reassuring. Jessie's constant smile and cheers of encouragement were a pleasure. I, unfortunately, missed out on the "cultural events." Certainly by circumstance, not by design. That was my loss. Better planning on my part next time. Thanks to all the volunteers and attendees who made me feel welcome. I learned a lot and I didn't die. I consider this a major success. Congrats, BWA!

Wendy

WOW what a great spring clinic!!! B-randy has set the NEW standard for organizing and pulling off such a great time ON and OFF the river!!!! Good time all around with such skilled boaters as instructors and safety, good food, good music, etc. etc.!!! I do not know if it can get any better than this recent clinic, but I sure hope it at least meets the quality and FUN that this clinic was able to achieve!!!! I do agree a few of the "newer" boaters/students had either been given not the best recommendations for the types of boats to "begin" their boating experience with or just made not the best choice, but I guess that is part of the learning curve, so please in the future DO NOT recommend recreational or even play boats to start the learning experience with - a huge long boat is also very hard to learn with!!!

B. J.

I have to agree that the clinic this year was great -- what a great group of students (and hopefully new BWA members)! I saw positive attitudes every direction I looked, whether someone jumping in to help with a meal, or to support a fellow student, or coming up from a swim and getting back in the boat smiling.

Thanks to all the veterans who jumped in to fill in vacant volunteer spots. Brandy tried to fill half a dozen spots herself, all while orchestrating the larger event. My hat is off to this superwoman! I don't know what she negotiated with the weather gods, but how great that the rain held off until night, so the students could experience the "Sun Always Shines in Elkhorn City" magic.

I also want to thank the club for honoring me with a life membership. I was surprised and I am humbled. I've stayed active in club activities even though I don't boat all that much because I love the many unique, creative, passionate, eccentric, contradictory people who make up the BWA, and because I believe deeply in getting people out in the wildwater. I am immensely proud to be part of a group which gives so much to river causes.

I'm looking forward to getting on the water more this summer, so, SYOTR.

Zina

THANK YOU BRANDY AND COMPANY !! fantastic clinic, great fellowship, fun, food and last but not least fantastic kayaking instruction, always a great experience !! Thanks for all you do.

Tina S

Great comments and agree with all of them. Kudos to *everyone* that helped to make this clinic one for the books! Heard there were naysayers about doing a clinic in June but I can think of no good reason to do it earlier. Warmer weather means happier students, eager to push themselves and risk a swim because they know they won't risk hypothermia doing so. In my previous experience with instruction I've seen students go from eager to timid time and again after a cold swim on a cold day - for them the clinic was essentially over - sometimes on Sat morning! Entire classes deciding to go home on Sun because it was "rainy

and cold". What's the point? It's not Paris Island! I think it was Betsy I saw still instructing near dark? Wow to her and her student! Can't say enough about B-randy and her kick ass performance and attitude! Even fighting off a dog assault in the process! winking smiley

Big ditto on the comment on a beginner appropriate craft - that fits well! Putting a beginner in just any boat to get them in the clinic is similar to doing the same for roll teaching. Great chance of a one and done student! Would be great if we could secure more appropriate beginner boats in the future maybe by approaching multiple dealers? A playboat of any genre, party in the back boat, or crossover barge are not appropriate beginner boats IMO - unless someone is actually big enough to fit snugly in a crossover! Should all be stable, well fitted, forgiving river runners / creekers - period! This is super important for kids and those who have river anxiety to begin with.

Was super happy we could contribute to the clinic and get Brit in the gorge to style her first release flow run there!

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Wes

Another great BWA Clinic, many thanks to all the many people who contributed their time and efforts to make it all happen. It takes a village. thanks Brandi for being the mayor this year.

I am also truly honored and humbled to be recognized by BWA, thanks Bob and BWA.

Chief

Eddy Lines of Interest

May 2016 BWA Steering Committee Meeting Mins

Ethereal Brewery
May 3, 2016, 7:30pm

Steering Committee Attendees: Howard, Sue, Bob, Megan, Walt, KC, Brandy, John, Mike

Bob called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm

Officer Reports

Don, Newsletter – Not in attendance.

Meghan, Conservation Officer – Trying to confirm who will attend clean up at Red River which is on the 14th of May. Starts at 8:00am on Highway 17 – really starts on time and see BWA website for more details. Pizza will be provided.

KC, Gear-Meister - trailer tires in good condition and ready to go. Next general meeting is last one for KC and keys will be turned over to Brandi.

Sue, Secretary – Steering committee meeting minutes from April were posted today. Sue indicated that she would be happy to hand her office off to anyone interested at elections in June, but if no one wants the office, she will continue.

Howard, Membership Coordinator – 279 members with three new in past few weeks.

Walt, Safety Officer – 22 roll sessions thus far and most well attended but few weeks ago had small turn out. Summer sessions start June 9th. We lose winter pool on May 20. Estimate sessions will be covered...may have up to \$400 shortage but remains to be seen.

Mike - Clarified elections are in June and next meeting will be at AW acres.

Jeff, Treasurer – Not in attendance.

Joe – Not in attendance.

Bob, President – Congratulations to John and Brandi!! Peter did Arbor day event and it went well with lots of trees planted and we were thanked for

our donation. Next meeting at AW acres and need to decide if food will be funded. Howard made motion to fund \$200 for food at meeting which Brandi seconded and was unanimously carried. Noted there are many organizations who help us and we really need to talk up BWA when we are there so they know we appreciate and spend our boat dollars with them. Brandy put posters and cards there for Spring Clinic also.

Brandy, Vice-President – Thus far only one child's application for JA funding. Lots of other activity but not many who need gear. All is running smoothly, food, Band is being sponsored by J&H which is very cool. Brandon Jet is assisting which is very exciting, as well as, others who are helping. Nice list of instructors who are attending.

John Mello, NPFF– Last minute save the Ocoee reach out indication which was that funds were not needed, so alternative need Cane Creek was identified to donate funds to. \$500 also for Jessy Albright fund and rest to American White Water. May will be a wrap-up meeting for 2016 and kick-off 2017.

New Business

No new Business. Motion made to adjourn at 8:01pm and unanimously carried.

durachtas1

BWA General Club Meeting Minutes May 10, 2016

Meeting opened by Bob at 7:45p. Several members boated down to meeting. Elections will be held at June meeting. Storm rolling in so meeting was very brief and adjourned approximately 8:15p. Meeting opened by Bob at 7:45p. Several members boated down to meeting.

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durachtas1