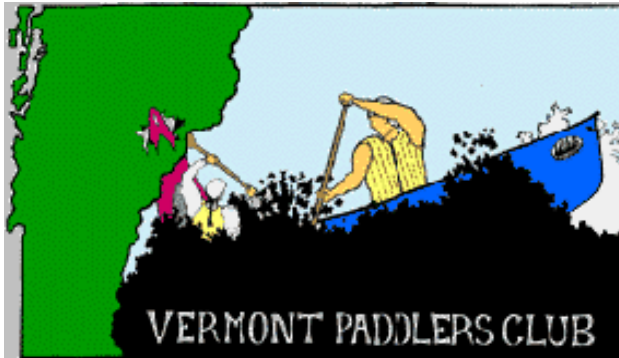


Bow and Stern

March 1, 2006



The Official Newsletter of the Vermont Paddler's Club
In partnership with the American Canoe Association



Volume XXXII, No. 1.

<<< Go With the Flow >>>

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Kim Thomas
Communications Director – VPC
70 S. Winooski Ave. #260
Burlington, VT 05401

From the President:

Hello Vermont Paddlers!

The first couple of months of being the new club President have been both busy, and rewarding. The enthusiasm and participation seen in the winter roll sessions has been great to see. We have a very active base of club members eager to get out and have some paddling fun, even on cold winter evenings!

I would like to say Thank You to former President Ray Ingram for all his hard work over the last two years. The club was and continues to be very strong as a result of dedicated people like Ray, Tony Shaw, Rich Larsen, Dan Beideck, Norm Staunton, and newcomers Will Bucossi and Kim Thomas. Thank you all for making the VPC the place for paddlers to get together.

Spring is here and it is time to get back out on our favorite rivers. Check out our club trip list, and join us on some rivers this spring. Special thanks to Dan Beideck for his excellent work on putting together a well rounded trip list with something for all skill levels. Also consider helping out with our annual novice clinic, and follow up clinic down at the Deerfield. We are always looking for instructors, safety boaters, shuttle and lunch helpers, etc... Contact Norm Staunton if you would like to help out.

See you on the River!

James Raboin





Directors:

- Activities Dir: Dan Beideck (802) 655-3980
- Communication Dir: Kim Thomas (802) 922-1349
- Safety and Education Dir: Norm Staunton (802) 583-1019

Appointed/Volunteers:

Officers:

- President: James Raboin (802) 527-8328
- Vice President: Tony Shaw (802) 879-1655
- Treasurer: Open
- Secretary: Will Bucossi (802) 264-9063

- Paddling School: James Raboin (802) 527-8328
- Conservation Chair: Jack Daggitt (802) 253-2524
- Webmaster: Tony Shaw (802) 879-1655
- Publicity Chair: Open

Resources:

- Website: <http://www.vtpaddlers.net>
- National Weather Service: (802) 862-2475
- USGS Streamflow Table for Vermont:
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/vt/nwis/current/?type=flow>

Safety and Education Director:

Norm has been a whitewater paddler for more than 17 years. Starting as a wilderness open boater, Norm paddled open boats around the northeast until becoming a professional raft guide in 1995 and learning to C1 soon after. Since then, paddling has absorbed much of Norm's personal and professional time, while working as a guide, trainer, instructor, safety boater, and video boater in all types of craft every year since. Eventually Norm switched to kayaking and has been running rivers, play boating, and creeking every chance he got since. In addition to his paddling resume, Norm did his master's work in Adventure Education at the University of New Hampshire, is a former Wilderness EMT and is currently certified in Outdoor Emergency Care and Swift Water Rescue.

VPC Annual Novice Clinic Set for June 3 & 4: Come learn to paddle with the Vermont Paddlers Club on June 3 & 4. This annual event is your opportunity to learn to paddle solo open canoes, tandem open canoes, decked solo canoes, and kayaks in up to Class II whitewater.

Saturday will be spent learning basic strokes and safety techniques on the Waterbury Reservoir, including wet exits, followed by a practice session at a local Class II rapid. Sunday will consist of coaching on multiple runs of a local Class II river. Specific runs will be dictated by water levels, but all will be easy drives from the Waterbury Reservoir. Most participants graduate the event with skills to competently paddle Class II whitewater.

No experience or gear is necessary to participate, though all paddlers will be required to wear helmets and PFD's. VPC members generously donate their equipment to participants to outfit everyone with boats, paddles, PFD's, Helmets, Spray Skirts, and appropriate clothing. Paddlers who own their own gear are encouraged to bring it, and those seriously pursuing the sport are encouraged to obtain at least a helmet and PFD.

Lunch will be provided each day. Participants traveling from further away are encouraged to find local accommodations. Overnight stays with VPC member families can be pre-arranged, if interested. We particularly endorse camping at the Little River State Forest, right on the shores of the Waterbury Reservoir.

Cost of the clinic is \$75 and includes: Equipment, Instruction, Lunch both days, 1 year VPC membership, and 1 year ACA membership. Participation is limited to 15 kayakers and 5 canoes. Preference will be given to paddlers from Vermont, but all are encouraged to register.

For more information or to register for the event, contact VPC Safety and Education Director Norm Staunton at telenorm@hotmail.com or 272-4565. Participants are encouraged to enroll in the "Class II" Clinic on June 17 and 18 to further develop their skills.

1st Annual "Class II" Clinic to be held June 17 & 18: Two weekends after the VPC's Novice Clinic, we will be offering the first ever VPC "Class II" Clinic. So named because it is both held in Class II whitewater, and is the second class in our series of beginner clinics, the "Class II" Clinic will be held on June 17 & 18th on the Deerfield River in Massachusetts. K1, C1, OC1 and OC2 Paddlers who have completed our Novice Clinic or who have basic river skills including wet exits, basic strokes, and eddy turns are welcome to attend.

We will be paddling on the Zoar Gap or Lower Deerfield sections of the river, depending on skill and desire of participants. We will provide boats, paddles, spray skirts, helmets, and PFD's to all who need them, though we encourage all participants to borrow or buy their own equipment. Both days will be dedicated to practicing the on and off river skills required to safely run Class II whitewater. Participants will be required to sign release forms and to provide their own accommodations and food for the weekend. We suggest camping at the Mohawk Trail State Forest or at Zoar Outdoors.

Cost for the weekend event is \$25 to cover club and instructor expenses and VPC/ACA membership is required to attend this event. Contact VPC Safety and Education Director Norm Staunton at telenorm@hotmail.com or 272-4565 to register or for more information. Participation is limited to 15 boats, and preference will be given to Vermont residents.

Instructors and Gear Needed: The VPC is seeking instructors, safety boaters, volunteers, shuttle drivers, and loaner gear for our Novice Clinic (June 3 & 4) and our "Class II" Clinic (June 17 & 18). If you are interested in volunteering or have boats, paddles, spray skirts, helmets, PFD's or paddling apparel you are willing to loan to the club's freshman membership, please contact VPC Safety and Education Director Norm Staunton at telenorm@hotmail.com or 272-4565. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Swiftwater Rescue Workshop 2006: The VPC is again planning to hold a Swift Water Rescue course during the 2006 paddling season. Dates have not yet been set, but keep your eyes out in mailings, email, and the VPC News for more information. Class III paddling skills will be required for this event open to all VPC members. Beyond a roll, Swift Water Rescue skills are by far the most important skills for whitewater paddlers to have. Don't miss this opportunity to develop or refresh the skills needed to keep you and your buds safe on the river.

Meet your new Activities Director:

I starting my formal kayaking career on my honeymoon nearly 8 years ago. It was in a tandem sea kayak, i.e. "a divorce boat". I took my first rolling lesson nearly 2 years later and proceeded to get "sea sick" halfway from the pool to the locker room! I took a novice whitewater kayaking clinic later that year. Actually, I made it more of a whitewater swimming clinic! Since then, I've gotten a little better. My, still original, wife and I moved to VT nearly 2 years ago.

Upcoming Activities and Club Happenings: As the new activities director for the club I wanted to communicate some of the things going on in the club activity wise and also indicate some of my priorities. I hope to strengthen ties with existing members. Also, I hope to help improve the club's efforts at bringing in new members. The activities a club has is an critical component in each of these areas, in my opinion.

Last year there was an organized effort to make beginner friendly activities available to those who had just "graduated" from the club's novice clinic. This is a great way to welcome new members into our club. Several members went out of their way to help outfit and continue training some of our novice graduates. One of my favorite trips of the year was a trip to the Fifebrook section of the Deerfield a couple of weeks after novice training. Several experienced paddlers joined a few novice graduates to help them with their first "real trip". I'm looking forward to going again this year and hope everyone reading this will consider joining. There should be a run, or two, on the Dryway squeezed in their somewhere as well!

As I write this, the club's winter pool sessions are off to a great start! We've got a total of 5 scheduled for Bristol and possibly up to 8 in Burlington. We've introduced some quasi-formal rolling lessons this year and a large number of members have volunteered to help with one on one instruction. We also have a couple of informal in pool clinics planned. A big thank you to all the instructors!

A big part of making the club more enticing to existing club members are the club's trips, in my opinion. I think we have a variety of interesting trips to offer this Spring and encourage everyone to check them out and participate whenever possible. We are having a regular Wednesday night paddle for as long as the water holds. The home river is the lower Mad, but we're mixing that up with some other local favorites to keep things interesting. Check out the Wednesday night and weekend schedules in this issue and on the club's website for updates. Two weekend trips this Spring in particular I'd like to mention are the West Release weekend and Memorial Day weekend. I have a ski lodge reserved for the weekend of the West release, April 29-30, a few miles from the take out and can take the first 23 people to sign up. We hope to be running trips on the lower and upper West as well as a few local creeks if the water's up. Also, Cheryl Robinson is planning a Memorial Day weekend trip to Maine with rivers and details to be determined.

In addition to the more scheduled and formal club trips, we also have the impromptu trips that come on the message board. This is a great resource especially after a nice rain! I'd like to encourage everyone to consider letting others know about any last minute trips via the message board. It's a real bummer to be sitting at home with the rivers running because you couldn't find a paddle partner! I would suggest you consider checking the more formal event/trip list before doing so, however. The club doesn't have any official guidelines on

posting trips on the message board, but I'll share my own thoughts on this. Our trip leaders make an effort to offer their services to lead a trip. We should all encourage them to continue to do so, as it is very much in the club's best interest. If there's already a trip planned that is a duplicate or similar (class) to what you are thinking, consider joining that trip. If that doesn't appeal to you, maybe arrange something offline as a courtesy to the effort that person has offered to make for the club???

Spring's almost here. As activities director, that means I need to start thinking about what to do this summer! Let me know if you've got any great trip ideas etc. as we'll need to start putting that list together fairly soon. Meanwhile, hope to see 'ya on the river!

Gear Roundup: The club is looking to acquire some basic paddling equipment. We are currently looking to try and maintain a small inventory of the following four items (only):

1. helmets
2. sprayskirts
3. paddles
4. PFD's

Please consider donating any extra equipment you have to the club. The equipment you donate does not need to be the latest and greatest stuff but should be in good working order. We are not interested in obtaining boats or clothing items at this time.

So what are we going to do with this equipment you ask? Well, the equipment will be available for training during pool sessions and during the novice clinic. Other times it will be available for rental for a nominal fee to club members or recent novice students. The intention is not to provide day or week rentals, but for a month or longer. We are trying to provide some gear for that transitional time between initial training and committing to buying all that gear. Please contact Dan Beideck for donations or if you are interested in renting for yourself or a friend/family member you are sponsoring.

The equipment drive so far is going well. However, we could use a little help with paddles. In order to help entice members to give up their old paddles, the club is introducing the **paddle upgrade program**. Have you been wanting to upgrade your paddle? Now's the time. VPC will give you \$20 towards the purchase of a brand new paddle (or whatever else your heart desires) if you donate your old, but still functional, paddle! This offer is limited to the first 5 people to commit. What's more, a number of outfitters have offered to sweeten the deal if you donate a paddle to VPC and buy your new paddle through them. The offers are as follows (in alphabetical order):

1. Canoe Imports: <http://www.canoeimports.com/> 25% off any Werner paddle. An order will be placed in early April if there's sufficient interest.
2. Still River Outfitters: <http://www.stillriveroutfitters.com/> 10% off + 2% of any purchase will be donated to VPC.
3. Umiak: <http://www.umiak.com/> 10% off Werner, AT or aqua bound paddles.

Also, the club is planning on a silent auction for a brand new, fresh in the box, helmet from the Whitewater Research and Safety Institute at the next general meeting. Check out the following link to learn more about this innovative new helmet, <http://www.whitewaterhelmet.com/> Proceeds will be used for future gear purchases or upgrades.

Trips Schedule for Spring/Summer 2006:

| Date: | River | Leader | Max Class | ACA Sanctioned | Comments |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|--|
| 3/19/2006 | Little river | Cheryl Robinson | 2 | y | |
| 3/25/2006 | Little otter creek or Huntington | Eric Bishop | 2 | y | |
| 4/1/2006 | NB Lamoille | James Raboin | 4 | y | It's payback time!! |
| 4/2/2006 | Waterbury | Eric Bishop | 2 | y | |
| 4/5/2006 | Upper Mad | Tony Shaw | 2-3 | y | Lower Mad if levels too low |
| 4/8/2006 | Lamoille | Rich Larsen | 2 | y | |
| 4/9/2006 | Ball Mtn Brook | Cheryl Robinson | 4 | n | |
| 4/12/2006 | Lower Mad | Jim Poulin | 3 | n | |
| 4/15/2006 | White | Rich Larsen | 2 | y | |
| 4/15/2006 | Sugarbush Triathlon | Norm Staunton | | n | |
| 4/16/2006 | 2nd branch White | Eric Bishop | 2 | y | |
| 4/19/2006 | Lamoille | Rich Larsen | 2 | Y | |
| 4/22/2006 | Moose or Upper Lamoille | Rich Larsen | 3 | y | |
| 4/23/2006 | Gihon | James Raboin | 4 | y | |
| 4/23/2006 | Black | Eve Soutiere | 2 | n | |
| 4/26/2006 | Lower Mad | Jim Poulin | 3 | n | |
| 4/29/2006 | West River | Dan Beideck | 2 - 4 | n | Upper, lower and nearby creeks |
| 4/30/2006 | West River | Dan Beideck | 2 - 4 | n | Upper, lower and nearby creeks |
| 4/30/2006 | Ammonoosuc | Rich Larsen | 4 | y | |
| 5/3/2006 | Lamoille | Rich Larsen | 2 | y | |
| 5/6/2006 | Hudson Gorge | Rod Wentworth | 4 | n | |
| 5/7/2006 | Lower Hudson or Schroon | Rich Larsen | 3 | y | |
| 5/10/2006 | Lower Mad | Jim Poulin | 3 | n | |
| 5/13/2006 | White | Craig Carline | 2 | y | |
| 5/14/2006 | Poultney | Tony Shaw | 4 | y | |
| 5/17/2006 | Otter Creek | Cheryl Robinson | 3 | y | |
| 5/20/2006 | Willoughby | Eric Bishop | 2 | y | |
| 5/20/2006 | Valleyfield | Cheryl Robinson | 2 - 3 | n | |
| 5/21/2006 | Rouge | Cheryl Robinson | 4 | n | |
| 5/24/2006 | Lower Mad | Jim Poulin | 3 | n | |
| 5/27/2006 | Kennebec | Cheryl Robinson | 4 | y | |
| 5/28/2006 | Dead (ME) | Cheryl Robinson | 3 (4) | y | |
| 5/29/2006 | Maine TBD | Cheryl Robinson | ? | y | |
| 5/31/2006 | Otter Creek | Cheryl Robinson | 3 | y | |
| TBD | New Haven Ledges | Jim Poulin | 4 | n | Contact leader, will call when levels are good. |
| TBD | Joe's Brook | Tony Shaw | 4 | y | Contact leader. Will call when levels are good. |



WW = whitewater // FW = flatwater // Vt area code: 802



TRIP DIFFICULTY RATINGS ARE ONLY A GUIDE.
READ THE SAFETY CODE OF AMERICAN WHITEWATER.
STAY ASHORE WHEN CONDITIONS ON A GIVEN DAY
EXCEED YOUR COMFORT LEVEL!!!



Schedule Notes:

Asterisked trips (*) are unofficial trips and as such are neither sanctioned nor insured by the VPC.

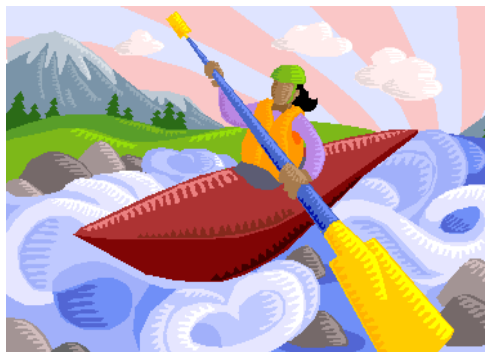
nov = max Class II, int = max Class III, adv = max Class IV, exp = Class IV+ See Intl River Rating Scale.

- Contact the trip organizer for information about each trip.
- Listed trips may be changed or canceled as water, weather, or interest dictates.
- Plans for impromptu trips can be relayed thru the trip organizer or online.
- Please give 1-2 weeks notice for overnight trips to have a say in pre-planning.
- Car-pooling on long (and short) trips is encouraged!

Disclaimer:

Danger exists for participants in canoeing, kayaking, tubing, and other activities organized or advertised by the Vermont Paddlers Club. Such participation may result in illness or injury due to accidents, the forces of nature, or other causes not foreseeable. Such illness and injury may include disease, strains, sprains, fractures, dislocations, paralysis, and/or death. Possible injuries may cause serious and permanent disability.

By your participation in any Vermont Paddlers Club activity you knowingly assume the risks arising out of that activity. In so doing you release, hold harmless and indemnify the Vermont Paddlers Club and its agents, officers and employees from any and all claims and suits for bodily injury, property damage, wrongful death, loss of services or otherwise which may arise out of your participation in canoeing, kayaking, tubing and other activities, whether or not such claims or suits arise from negligent acts or omissions by the organizers and conductors of this activity, their employees or volunteers, another participant, any other person or from any other cause.



TREASURERS REPORT - CALENDAR YEAR 2005

| Income and Expenses | Year 2003 | Year 2004 | Year 2005 |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Initial Balance | \$1,586.80 | \$1,586.80 | \$1,428.95 |
| Dues | \$835.00 | \$1,214.00 | \$1,056.00 |
| Events Sponsorship | -\$100.00 | -\$450.00 | -\$100.00 |
| Website | -\$300.00 | -\$300.00 | -\$327.95 |
| Interest/Bank Fees | -\$32.56 | -\$52.85 | -\$47.75 |
| Meetings/Mailings | -\$622.16 | -\$960.78 | -\$815.76 |
| Rolling Sessions | \$353.50 | \$94.00 | -\$150.00 |
| Safety Gear | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | -\$103.52 |
| Rescue Clinic | \$0.00 | \$5.00 | \$180.00 |
| Novice Clinic | \$0.00 | \$288.00 | \$534.21 |
| T-Shirts | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$30.00 |
| Banner | -\$159.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Net ACA Cost | -\$5.00 | \$35.00 | -\$110.00 |
| Little River Weir | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | -\$250.00 |
| Final Balance | \$1,556.58 | \$1,428.95 | \$1,324.18 |

| Date | General Fund | Safety and Education | Weir | Total |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 12/31/2002 | \$688.68 | \$898.12 | n/a | \$1,586.80 |
| 12/31/2003 | \$748.15 | \$808.43 | n/a | \$1,556.58 |
| 12/31/2004 | \$703.52 | \$665.43 | n/a | \$1,428.95 |
| 12/31/2005 | \$418.70 | \$1,155.39 | (\$250.00) | \$1,324.18 |

Winter 2004-2005 roll sessions lost \$390 total - shared between calendar 2004 and 2005.

As of December 2005, vote of Executive Committee, the General, Safety & Education, and Weir Funds have been combined, with no further distinction planned.

\$1,650 for Geomorphic Assessment was covered by a \$1,000 grant from ACA, \$400 from member donations, and \$250 (unplanned) from the VPC general fund. The outgoing treasurer recommends no further VPC involvement in funding of the Little River Weir removal.

- Richard Larsen

Notices

VPC Board Searches for Treasurer

Recently, VPC Treasurer Elect Isaac Annis resigned his post for personal reasons. As a result, the VPC is seeking volunteers to fill the vacancy. Basic accounting and computer skills are required, including bookkeeping, Excel, and basic web navigation. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in this two year appointment, please contact VPC President James Raboins at raboins@localnet.com or 527-8328. The Executive Committee wishes to fill the position in time for our April meeting.

The VPC Executive Committee wishes to thank Isaac for the time he was able to give to the club and express our hopes that we see him "On the River."

Classifieds:

2004 NRS Grizzly Wetsuit in great condition. Size is GL, color is black with red straps. Fabric has few signs of wear and has been washed after each use with Aquaseal Wetsuit Shampoo. Zippers maintained with a light silicon spray. This suit has a relief zipper that zips bottom-up, in addition to the top-down zipper.

Also for sale: 2004 NRS Revolution Drytop in excellent condition. Size is XXL, color is yellow/white. Fabric has no signs of wear and has been treated with NikWax both Winters to maintain the DWR. Latex seals have been maintained with 303 and are in great condition.

Willing to meet you (>1 hour add \$10), ship after payment (shipping charges extra), or you can drop by my house in Central Vermont.

Email: craig.carline@adelphia.net

For sale - Perception Jib w/ skirt, \$300

A stable flat-hulled design for kids in the pool or in easy rapids, and a full-on surf-spin-rodeo playboat for thrill-seeking playboaters under 140 lbs. See for details:

<http://perceptionkayaks.com/new/products/boat.asp?type=discontinued&ID=16>

Tony Shaw, 879-1655, boatful@adelphia.net

VPC Survey:

The club wants your input! A survey has been put together to solicit input from the general membership and paddling community. Here's your chance to let the board know what you think the club can do to improve. The survey will be available on the club's website. Please download the pdf file from the web, fill it out, and e-mail it to the address listed.

Notice:

VPC needs to update it's member database. We need to get birthdates for any VPC members who are under 18. Please email Tony Shaw with all the details at: boatful@adelphia.net

VPC Shirts still available!!:

We have a couple dozen Vermont Padders Club polo shirts left to sell...and then they're gone! Proceeds benefit the Little River Weir Removal Fund. Available in Hunter Green or Gray. Please contact Ray Ingram at rkicanoe@msn.com or (802) 578-8367.



Dam Release Schedule:

A full schedule of releases for many northeast rivers can be found online at http://www.npmb.com/cms2/e107_plugins/wrap/wrap.php?10

Save VPC!:

Money that is. Vermont Paddler's Club is asking for volunteers to accept upcoming editions of the Bow and Stern in PDF format in your e-mail box rather than in your physical one. We are trying to save a bit on postage and trying to save a few trees as well. Each March and June approximately 150 Bow and Stern newsletters are sent out to members, costing a few hundred dollars that could be spent on things like rental gear for our newest members, conservation efforts and funding clinics such as the Novice Clinic, Rescue Clinics or even the pool sessions.

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the Bow and Stern (and get to see it in full living color rather than black and white photocopy!!) please email Tony Shaw at boatful@adelphia.net, or Kim Thomas at paddlekat@gmail.com.

Thank-You from the bottom of our new and improved environmentally friendly newsletter!



Your Website Turns Ten!

When a so-called "server upgrade" incapacitated the VPC website for a harrowing week earlier this month it reminded me why I was smart to have kept my "day job". No, seriously, this unwelcome event did give me occasion to reflect on where the VPC website (now celebrating it's 10th anniversary) has been...where it is going...and how it is going to get there...

First, I am thankful for all the encouragement and ideas I have gotten over the years from "power users" of the website like Ray Ingram, Rich Larsen, Cheryl Robinson, Chris Weed, Jay Lewis, Dan Beideck, and others. The website needs people like this to provide the inspiration to help it evolve and grow.

As webmaster, I provide the packaging, that is, a consistent look and feel as well as a navigation scheme that is meant to be intuitive and user-friendly. There is always maintenance work to do, and always a "wish list" of website enhancements to appeal to my creative side. If there is anyone else in the club with some HTML/CSS/PHP/MySQL experience who is willing to make a commitment to this project as my accomplice, I would welcome the help.

But people don't return again and again to the website for its PACKAGING. Instead, they are interested in its CONTENT. And EVERY user of the website can (and should) contribute to its content. Post your Paddle Pix...write up your Trip Reports...post events to VPCNews...add to the Rivers Almanac...keep your 'Around VT in 30 Rivers' list current...write a Limerick...etc. Let the world know you are out there, and dialed in...

The challenges and opportunities for the website in the months and years ahead include:

- 1) Enticing more members to use the website (liberally).
- 2) Designing a members-only section complete with password-protected member profiles, to help members match up their interests with other members.
- 3) Out-sourcing the Paddle Pix upload utility to handle future uploads (we are bursting at the seams of our 100 MB of webspace).
- 4) Setting up a virtual storefront where VPC-emblazoned swag can be bought and sold.
- 5) Protecting the upload and submission pages against pernicious spammers (Viagra, anyone?).
- 6) Anticipating future "server upgrades"; site-wide PHP/MySQL coding that's modular and nimble.
- 7) A "flashy" face-lift (any graphic design folks listening??)

There is really nothing that the VPC website cannot aspire to do...or be. My hope over the next 10 years is to find someone who shares my passion for "doing it right", and to pass the torch, so to speak. But whoever the webmaster happens to be, the staying power of the VPC website will forever hinge on members like yourself, willing to dream, create, compose, and (most importantly) POST. Thanks for a great (first) decade!

– Tony Shaw

Conservation Report

Conservation efforts by the VPC remain active. As Conservation Chairman, I have been attending meetings of the Vermont Dam Task Force on a regular basis. This keeps VPC "in the loop" on the latest dam removal projects in Vermont and New England plus gains information on the dam removal process. Free flowing rivers are good for paddlers so efforts to remove unproductive and unsafe dams are of vital importance.

Maintaining river access is another concern to the canoeing and kayaking community. It is important that existing access areas be protected and additional ones be added where they are needed. Efforts to protect and guarantee continued access are being investigated in an ongoing basis.

Central Vermont Public Service has announced a proposal to improve the portage take-outs and put-ins around several dams on the Lamoille River. One of the sites mentioned is Peterson Dam for which there is a long-term proposal for eventual removal. The portage site improvements are being closely followed and will hopefully make paddling on the Lamoille easier and more enjoyable.

If VPC members have any concerns involving water quality, river access, or dam removal, please feel free to contact me at (802) 253-2524.

- Jack Daggitt

2006 New England Slalom Series Race Information

- Salmon Slalom - Class I on the Salmon River on 3/19, in Colchester, CT
- Punch Brook Slalom - Class III on the Farmington River on 4/9, in Burlington, CT
- Mascoma Slalom - Class II-III on the Excelsior Rapids, Lebanon, NH
- Blackwater Slalom - Class II+ on 4/22-23, in Webster, NH
- Kenduskeag Slalom - Class II+ on 5/7, in Bangor, ME
- Fiddlehead Slalom - Class II+ on the Winooski River on 5/14, in E. Montpelier, VT
- Covered Bridge Slalom - Class II+ on the Housatonic R. on 5/21, in W. Cornwall, CT
- ASC 10 Mile River, Slalom, Clinic, Race - Class I on 5/27-5/28 in Webatuck, NY
- PSNH Amoskeag Slalom - Class II+ on the Merrimack R. on 6/11, in Manchester, NH
- Riverfest Slalom - Class II+ on the Merrimack River on 9/10, in Manchester, NH
- Cascade Falls Slalom - Class II on 9/24 at Keuka Outlet, Penn Yan, NY
- Esopus Slalom - Class III on the Esopus Creek on 9/30-10/1, in Phoenicia, NY
- Farmington Slalom - Class II on the Farmington River on 10/14-15, in E. Otis, MA

Complete NESS Info: <http://users.bestweb.net/~keech/a-ness.htm>

Overall Schedule: <http://users.bestweb.net/~keech/a-sl&cl.htm>

Entry Forms - <http://users.bestweb.net/~keech/a-forms.htm>

NESS Mailing List - <http://users.bestweb.net/~keech/a-ness-e.htm> (E-mail or Postal Mailing List)

Recent Trip Reports

Guerrilla Lower New Haven: Saturday Jun 18, 2005

Character: nov-int WW

Water Level: medium low

Organizer: Dave

Participants: (K1): Ryan, Matt, Dave, and Bob

Gauge Info: USGS Flow: 1400 cfs

Finally we got some rain, and with Central VT getting the bulk of it, Bob and I were looking to expand our horizons and run something down that way. The lower New Haven seemed to be at a low Medium level, and that sounded perfect for a coupla first timers. I traded messages with Ryan and it turns out he turned up at the white church right on time. Bob and I hooked up with he and Matt, set the shuttle rig, so we hit it.

There were river wide strainers just at the corner below the Rt 117 bridge, so we carried just below them out of the back corner of the lot and put on. After snapping a few rolls in the eddy, because it's been a while, we rolled on down stream. It was a fun, bolder filled river that reminded me of the NBL. A little less tech., with some great surf on the fly. Matt was surfing his blunt like it was made for it, and led the rest of the group down thru for most of the run. The rest of us ran it in smaller boats and had no issues.

There was some more wood of note, a tree just below the surface that disguised itself as small ledge or horizon. After Matt bounced over it, the rest of the crew regonized it for what it was and were able to get around the root end on river left, but if the water was lower it might block the entire channel. It is located about half way thru the run, in the left channel of the river where it splits around what I think was the first Island. The right channel was just a trickle, so again, at lower levels this may not seem to be a fork at all.

At the most difficult rapid, a SHORT class III- at this level, bob and matt ran the meat, and ryan and I sneaked a river right line. From there it was II+ continuous to the take out under the next bridge.

Good trip to get my feet wet again, a river worth doing once, and at slightly higher levels worth doing again.

- Dave



Wild Br. of Lamoille: Saturday Jun 18, 2005

Character: intermediate WW

Water Level: medium low

Organizer: E. Bishop

Participants: (OC1): E. Bishop; (Inflatable): Molly, solo yellow lab

Gauge Info: Painted Gauge Height: none ft.

I've wanted to paddle the Wild Br. for many years and Saturday I drove up assuming it would have enough water to paddle, and it did. Because the level had to be falling I just drove up the Craftsbury Rd. about 7 miles and put in on a side road bridge. Decided to gamble on

the hitch hike shuttle after the run instead of before. For the first mile it was a narrow flat trout stream but once it passed under the Craftsbury (or N. Wolcott) Rd. it dropped virtually continually for the next 4 or 5 miles. Low water and several nasty river wide strainers made this too difficult for beginners, in my opinion. I was testing Molly's new PFD, and her ability to sit quietly in a solo open boat. She boated the slow parts and swam/ran most of the whitewater. The hitch hike shuttle was a total disaster. I walked almost 7 miles back to the car, while at least 100 cars drove by - a very large percent of the vehicles being pick-ups driven by a solitary male. If this isn't the sign of a culture in decline, I don't know what is. I also lost a very expensive paddle and have no clue where or now.

- Eric Bishop



Independence Paddle Party: Friday-Monday Jul 1-4, 2005

Character: intermediate WW

Water Level: medium

Organizer: Cheryl Robinson

Participants: (K1): Cheryl & Simon,

Dan & Anne,

Damon & Ashley,

Steph & Eric

John G, Jim P, Matt, Mike, Lisa, Ann M and Jack.

The weekend began Friday with various parties hitting Holebrothers Watertown NY at different points in the day. Simon and I arrived around 5.30pm and spent a few hours enjoying the pool party atmosphere created by the local raft guides, surfing pool toys and drinking beer.

We arrived at RiverRun a little around 1am closely followed by other people in the party. I wasn't happy we had only packed basic summer gear and the Temp outside was 54c Bloody cold! I prayed that this weather wasn't here for the whole weekend as I only had a shortie drytop.

We awoke Saturday morning to blazing sunshine and many eager paddlers only too willing to face the wrath of Phil's hole.

Day 1: A quick breakdown as a few people missed threading the needle line, hit Phil's and took either a small or large beating. As a result there were some swimmers and me, I hit the line, then lost total focus and swam into the next large hole called Horseshoe which left me with a nasty and thankfully the only injury of the weekend.

After playing for the rest of the morning at the Main Channel, we got back to camp rather late and discovered that Eric and Steph had arrived, given up all hope of us returning, and gotten on the river by themselves. The guys headed out to catch up with them and luckily found them at the first rapid They had a few surfs at the beautiful Baby face wave and headed off down the main channel for another exciting but uneventful paddle.

Day 2: The crowd headed out minus me, as I had a nice lazy day at the beach with Ashley, the only other non-paddler of the group that day. Two trips were made, one down the middle, a fairly easy but fun trip, and one down the Main. The Main group stopped at a rapid called Brain Douche...a swirling eddy line full of whirlpools□the game who can get the biggest down time was formed, not in boats though swimming. Yes you heard right they were purposely swimming.

Later, we all headed out again, including me. Some of us stayed at Baby Face for park and play, while the rest headed down for yet another paddle down the Main.

Day 3: Three days of paddling had started to show on people. Some headed off home early others decided for a park and play at Baby face. Some of us decided to run the river again, some decided to take another beating in Phil's for the third day running. (Not me, I was too scared to run it and took the sneak zoom chute).

The last paddle of the weekend was nice and relaxing, few incidents, lots of surfing and huge amounts of down time at Brain Douche. The paddle ended with playtime at Farmer Black's...a trashy hole on one side and a wave on the other. Most of us played on the wave...while the hard core few took beatings in the hole.

On return to the campground the group dissipated and headed home...except for a small group who sat around enjoying a BBQ, the sun and taking it easy!! PERFECT.

- Cheryl Robinson



Pemigewasset: Saturday Jul 9, 2005

Character: nov-int WW

Water Level: medium

Organizer: Craig Carline

Participants: (K1): Craig Carline, Eve Soutiere, John Thornton, Geoff Klouman

Eve and I were to meet John at 10:00 AM but I was of course late to pick up Eve, and consequently late to meet John. John, being the good guy he is, said he had a huge cup of coffee and was quite content. We arrived at the take-out and there was no one there. I was quite shocked because when I ran the Pemi last year there were a lot of people there. We loaded up everything on my car and headed to the put-in. There we came across three other paddlers, one being Jimmy Maneksha who showed us down the Black River earlier this year. We introduced ourselves and then jumped on the river.

The metal gauge read about 1250 cfs. As we proceeded down we found this level to offer a lot of small surfing waves and we caught every single one we could find. There were many eddies as well to give you repeat service. We scouted the first big drop and decided to run it on the right. We could see a couple rooster tails and a couple holes that would need to be dodged on the left. That's one very wide and sticky looking hole at the top!

Shortly after this drop is another drop with a nice wave train. I saw people surfing here last year but the level didn't seem right to provide a good surf. We took turns peeling out into

the wave train and riding it down and back to the eddy. We then proceeded downstream where there were more light Class II rapids and small waves/holes to surf. Eventually we wound up at the final rapid which is known as the local playspot. The river makes a sweeping turn to the right and goes over a couple ledges in the process, ending finally in a long big wave train. This was a very entertaining roller-coaster ride.

Geoff met us at the take-out as planned and John couldn't make another run so we again had three on our second run. The metal gauge this time read about 1600 cfs. The river definitely changed face with this extra water. All of our little surfing waves and eddies were gone. The first big drop looked friendlier with more water in it and the big hole at the top was becoming a wave. We decided not to scout and later regretted not running the left side of the drop. It was probably one of the few chances to try with a swim being not so bad.

The rest of the rapids went by very fast since there were few eddies or waves. The last drop's wave train was even bigger than before. Very fun! Geoff is one of those guys that can talk you into doing anything and an all around great guy to be on the river with. Geoff decided Eve needed to try his boat (Big Wheel) and they carried up to run the last rapid again, with Geoff taking her boat. I am waiting in the pool below for them to come through when I see a swimmer and then see Eve's boat in a mega-squirt through the whole rapid. Then Eve came down easily bouncing down the waves in the Big Wheel. It was a really funny sight! It's good to see Class IV boaters swim Class II rapids!

It was a great day on a great river with great friends. It wasn't a challenge for any of us but was a lot of fun nonetheless. With the river to ourselves and all the time in the world, we just goofed off and had fun. It was one of the days you just don't want to end. Add in a few osprey and heron fly-bys to the mix and you have a great trip. Afterwards we hit the President's Grille for food. I think we'd all suggest it if you're in the area. The waitress said she knew we were paddlers by the look of us. Whatever could she mean?

The Pemi is a Class II river with some Class III lines if you want them. They are easily avoided if you don't. If you've paddled Class II at least 5-6 times I'd say the Pemi would be a good run for you. The rocks are somewhat sharp and the river is shallow in many areas so swimming isn't recommended. The next release is in August, I believe the 20th and 21st.

- Craig Carline



Boquet to Split-Rock Falls: Sunday Jul 10, 2005

Character: advanced WW

Water Level: low boatable

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Participants: (K1): Ryan Young; (OC1): Eric Bishop, Tony Shaw

Gauge Info: Painted Gauge Height: n/a ft.; USGS Gauge Height: 4.7 ft.; USGS Flow: 1500 cfs; USGS Station: Willsboro (mouth)

The AuSable feasibility study planned for today was a wash-out, or at least that would be my interpretation given the gauge reading at 7 am over 3400 CFS. This left Eric, Ryan, and myself looking for something saner to paddle.

The Adirondacks were an obvious choice, given how heavily it rained here all day Saturday, but we needed to be looking in a higher, smaller drainage. Enter the Boquet. Going only on Jamieson's text, which calls the North Fork Boquet "unrunnable" and the next 2.4 miles to Split Rock Falls "class III-VI", it seemed like a good bet for two aging open boaters and a kayaker we'd never paddled with before. LOL.

I don't want to bore you with the details. Suffice it to say the river flows with incredible clarity from one boulder seive to the next. Saturday's torrential rains here did nothing to affect the water clarity, remarkably. Given a gradient of 100 feet/mile and the amount of boulder congestion wherever it got steep, the only saving grace was that we didn't get to the put-in until almost noon, and the level was starting to fall into bonydom - maybe 150 cfs. By the time we reached the take-out it had fallen even more, and bonydom was the unanimous opinion. In between, we nailed a bunch of very narrow/steep drops ranging in height from 4-6 feet, and we picked our way laboriously through several wide/shallow segments.

I wouldn't recommend the upper Boquet to ANYONE lacking expert whitewater skills if the stretch along Rt. 73 near its junction with Rt. 9 is bank full, nor would ordinary paddlers think it much fun at 150 cfs. But WE did.

- Tony Shaw



Deerfield River Fest/Fife Brook Group: Friday-Sunday Jul 29-31, 2005

Character: nov-int WW

Water Level: medium high

Organizer: Cheryl/Eve

Participants: (K1): Kim, Eve, Kristie, Norm and friends; (OC1): Deb

We all got an early start Friday morning. Too early, in fact, so we had coffee while we waited for water. Friday proved to be a great day; the water level was about 700CFS, but there were few people there. We had the river to ourselves for most of the day. Kim had an especially productive morning and decided she would run Zoar Gap with us. Unfortunately, she followed me...right over a rock. She had her first successful Gap swim - a right of passage for any novice boater! Norm also banged himself up pretty good, but we all got through with smiles intact.

Saturday, we had the "Chica Paddle" before the official ladies paddle. More water, more people. Kim had a pretty nasty swim in pinball, driving home both the necessity for swiftwater rescue knowledge and the need for a good helmet. She shook it off though, got back in her boat and finished the run! (Much to our admiration!) To our delight, she took photos of all of us running Zoar Gap. Kristie had a great Gap run that day. Her first clean run! Sunday was the official Ladies' Paddle. The day started off cold, rainy and ominous. Kim, Deb and I met Emily and Carissa (friends of Cheryl's) and Matt for the day. It was a great day, even if our girl party was crashed by a boy! The last day was a day of firsts - Deb showed off her offside ferry, Kim showed her conservative side (and was "One Swim Kim" for the day), and I nailed a roll in the Gap and didn't swim! All in all - a good time indeed!

- Eve Soutiere

Malbaie/Penobscot: Thursday-Tuesday Aug 11-16, 2005

Character: advanced WW

Water Level: medium

Organizer: Alden Bird

Participants: (K1): Preston Hartman, Rick Cooley; (C1): Alden Bird

Gauge Info: USGS Flow: 3300 (Penobscot) cfs

"If it hadn't been for that, this would have been all too routine," I kept thinking. Our trip began with the long drive to Maine, followed by a quick run down the Kennebec, which was notable for Preston's surfing every single wave but one, and for our mutual failed attempts to attain a decent surf from Big Momma.

Next day we made our way to the Penobscot and ran into some creeking friends from CT. We then ran the Rip Gorge/Cribworks section twice in its entirety, including about four runs each of the Cribworks itself. Indeed the river was at a nice, full level of 3,300 cfs which made for big water much like our home river, the Potomac.

The next day we got completely lost trying to find the shuttle road and had to enlist the help of local. Eventually we found our way down the terrifying take out road, left a car, and made the difficult 45 minute hike into the river. After running several good rapids, we came to the 30-foot waterfall. "Alden, you have just redeemed yourself!" was spoken at least several times, and also, "I no longer hate you as much, dude." We all fired it up and took multiple runs and got some good video. From there we ran the rest of this splendid river.

We made camp and the next day ran the river again, though only the top 3.5 miles. It was a beautiful day in this faraway place deep in the Laurentians. The warm breeze blew down the canyon and dried us each time we rose from our boats and got out on the red slabs to scout or take photos. At the end of the day I was happy to find myself in the back seat of Rick's car.

From there we parted with Cooley and returned to Maine, where we made more runs down the Penobscot, fell asleep in public several times at the restaurant due to advanced fatigue, had a moose saunter through our camp, and even managed to eat fresh moose burgers (actually that was while in Quebec, and is also another story . . .) After that, we retreated to Connecticut, and then finally back to the reality of Bethesda, MD and Arlington, VA for Alden and Preston, respectively. I hope the pictures can tell the tale better than I.

- Alden Bird

Mill Brook, Jericho: Saturday Oct 8, 2005

Character: int-adv WW

Water Level: medium

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Participants: (K1): Dan Beideck, Will Bucossi, Chris Weed; (OC1): Eric Bishop, Tony Shaw

I get my hopes up for a Mill Brook trip with every soaking summer rain that's forecast,

but most of these fail to bring sufficient rain to raise Mill Brook to a fun level, or they bring it up overnight and by the next morning it is too low to enjoy. Small creeks in small drainages are like that.

Although it can still be bony in the class II boulder gardens in the lower reaches, and there will always be a handful of impenetrable logjams that must be lifted around, Mill Brook is otherwise a micro-creeker's dream - tiny, lovely, away from the road, and with a slew of scoutable/runnable ledges over its 5 mile course. For the first time we chose a put-in alongside Nashville Rd. about a mile above the usual Field Lane put-in. The slog through an alder thicket to river's edge was a challenge, but our first descent of the high ledge drop just downstream made it worthwhile. This day also marked the first time we all attempted to run the hydro-project ledge, and only one of us got turned the wrong way (if you know what I mean). When it is not riffing along as class I or rock-dodging class II, Mill Brook is decidedly pool-drop in character. One "got worked" and needed to swim out of the hole at the base of the falls just above the Tarbox Rd. bridge, which is usually not that sticky.

I have been paddling Mill Brook since the late '80's. The first time was in a tandem canoe no less, and we carried everything. Today, for the first time, I can say that I have run ALL of the drops on Mill Brook without a swim (though never all on the same outing)!

- Tony Shaw

Joe's Brook (Massacre): Sunday Oct 16, 2005

Character: advanced WWW

Water Level: medium high

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Participants: (K1) Dan Beideck, Dave Gurtman;

(OC1) Eric Bishop, Tony Shaw

Gauge Info: USGS Flow: ~900 cfs



It seems whenever we've run Joe's Brook in the past we are left saying: "It would be nice with 6 more inches of water". Well...this day was an occasion to experience those extra 6 inches of water...and then some!

For Dan and Dave, recent emigrants from Philly and Portland, OR., respectively, this was their first Joe's Brook trip. I can only imagine their horror when their fearless open-boat leader (me) and his trusty open-boat sidekick (Eric) accelerated cockily over the first faint horizon line without scouting and proceeded to both ~simultaneously flip and swim! I am no mathematician, but it seems to me the length of a rapid most certainly varies with how high up in it you SWIM! All I remember is glancing over to my right now and then to be sure Eric was doing OK, and then finding the adrenaline rush I needed to self-rescue not one canoe...but two (a first for me)!

The rest of ride to the Greenbanks Hollow covered bridge was uneventful, though Dan in particular voiced his unease over the brook's tendency to pick up speed around every blind corner and how this has deposited several strainers in hard-to-avoid places along the way.

It was too juicy a level to consider running the steep Covered Bridge section or the gorge section below Morses Mills, in my opinion, at least for open boats. So we loaded up the gear, scouted the tail end of the gorge section on foot, and then shuttled down to "Bottom Joe's" - the seldom run last 2 miles to the Passumpsic. Even this section (considered tamer than those above), gave the open boaters some difficulty. After one short swim here, I had a chance to see how well my canoe can side-surf holes ALL BY ITSELF. I know now this can go on for 5 or 10 minutes, at least, before the randomness of churning waters eventually nudges it onward!

In the future when GMP says the Joe's Pond dam bladder is all the way down I will take heed, and stay off Joe's Brook in my open boat, though the decked boaters in our group seemed eager for their next juicy Joe's adventure...

- Tony Shaw



Uganda 2005

After much deliberation Si and I decided to return to Uganda for our 2005 Christmas vacation as our 2004 Christmas vacation in Uganda had totally exceeded our expectations.

This year we were joined by local Vermont star Max Koch and a friend of a friend named Fred. While Nile 2005 was a little different; the lack of rain in the past months had made the river considerably lower by about one foot or so, the volume of water was still pushing the same as the St. Lawrence River in Quebec. In 2004 we could guarantee low water in the morning and high water in the evening. The low water had stopped the dam releases being so predictable and more than ever it was kept at a constant low water.

The low water made some rapids harder while others easier. Sadly the low water had consumed our favorite playspot named Malalu. We were informed Malalu hadn't been in for months!

During our first four days the guys regularly ran the Day One section and on the final of these days they returned from a rather unique adventure! Both Si and Max had run Itunda, a huge (well I like to think a gigantic grade 6 rapid), with holes named Pencil Sharpener, Cuban, Ashtray and topping it with two called Bad Place and The Other Bad Place. It turned out they hadn't run the conventional line. While Max cleaned it, Si's run took an unfortunate turn. As he surfed off Pencil Sharper the dynamics in the current forced him back into Ashtray, a violent hole. After a short beating he was very luckily swept down stream.

The whole event was captured on that day's rafting video. I was horrified to say the least when I saw it...they played the death march drum roll as Si was violently tossed around in the hole...I can only say he was lucky to get out!

So while the guys had been enjoying themselves I regularly visited the local playspots (still too chicken to do the Day One) the Campsite Hole and the Back Wave which is very similar to Pushbutton on the Ottawa. I would surf till the sun was almost setting then head back.

Of course I didn't do this all day. For two days I dedicated my time to Jessie Stone, A US kayaker (Team Jackson) who is doing great amounts of work with locals to reduce malaria. I spent my time going around a local village meeting the locals who had purchased subsidized malaria nets from Jessie. My job was to document and ensure the nets were used correctly and that the people were seeing the benefits. It was definitely an eye opener. I was educated in their lives and made overwhelmingly welcome. In one household I was given two eggs in another I was given a very rare and expensive seed to eat which has a multitude of uses from purifying water, stomach upsets to a supplement for stews and soups. Jessie's charity is called Softpower Health and is in association with Softpower Education, the previous charity I had worked with. In January this year Jessie opened the first children's malaria clinic.

After four days we headed to paradise...actually it is an island called Hairy Lemon...but seemed like paradise...to spend our days relaxing and playing. Hairy Lemon is situated on the Day Two section. When we could actually get transport we would run the Day Two section.

However disaster struck two days in, actually Christmas eve. Because the dam didn't need to produce electricity, water was shut off to a minimum, now not only was Malalu not in but the world famous Nile Special was now not in...it is the first time I had ever seen rocks in the middle of the Nile Special rapid. We tried surfing a green wave behind it, but it took such energy and force to get at that it wasn't worth the effort. We thought this would last a day or so, but the water levels had just barely returned to low levels as we left Uganda over a week later.

Over Christmas we did paddle the Day Two section a few times. Max showed his awesome skills by running another grade 6 called Kalagala. Let me try and describe this, think of the biggest hole you have ever seen triple it and put it at the bottom of a 15ft steep slide with a narrow curling tongue at one side and you have Kalagala..I was scared just watching...Max ran it to perfection!

We also did some Monkey watching...the monkey's on hairy lemon are very cheeky and love to torment the islands Dog poppet. The poor thing goes crazy at them. With three full days left we returned to Day One site. After a great day of surfing at the back wave. I finally decided it was now or never to run Day One.

The biggest issue is the first rapid, Bujigali, a huge stomping class 5. The rapid can be split into two, top and bottom. While the bottom has a huge hole it is actually easier and much safer than the top. The top channels, known as rib cage and the hump have significant pinning potential, and since returning we have found out that this spot took the Niles first fatality, just weeks after we left.

This part is easily walked but I knew I wanted to run it. I memorized the line in my head, and ran it over and over, as we approached. I made it through partially unscathed but a nervous wreck!! I began to set up for the second half. I watched as Si slipped into a small eddy, as I followed I got stuck in the hole...I was apparently quite good at surfing my boat upside down...Thankfully my swim was clean into the eddy. I didn't run the rest of the rapid and opted to walk...I actually was going to walk off until Fred reminded me that the rest of the river wasn't that bad and he had swam everything on it and it was pretty safe...or so we thought!

I put on and went through the next series of class 4/5 rapids, the first hard one is called Total Gunga (class 5) with a hole known as G-spot. To run this it is basically straight down the middle and pray to god your boat takes you up the large waves...I remember this one in particular as I watched these huge waves consume Si in front of me. I felt alone and dug hard while I leaned forward and paddled with all my might. After the first huge wave I barely felt as if I touched the water and then the rapid was over, Luck of the draw I guess!! It was at the end of this particular rapid that Max needed to empty his kayak...he caught an eddy emptied and came flying out at lightening speed shouting "I have just seen a crocodile" it turned out it was about 4ft long and had swum off as soon as it had seen him. Crocodiles didn't exist in this part of the river in 2004 but lower waters have forced the crocodiles down stream from the Dam...gulp!!

Silverback completed the Day One section for me. There are four further rapids including Itunda. Two would be must portages for me and to get there is a huge flat section. Silverback is known as one of the largest wave trains, it is again class 5 with four huge

waves, when I mean huge we are talking 3 meter high waves that every raft flips in and not many kayakers make it upright. The problem with this and as with most of the rapids on the White Nile (except Bujigali) is they are unscoutable. I took a deep breath as I paddled down in to the mouth of the first. After clearing it, the second one was like paddling up a vertical face. I over balanced and flipped. I quickly rolled up to face the third then fourth. With a sigh of relief I shouted and waved my blade in excitement. The run ended with my first Silverback moped race back to camp...my god it was scarier than the rapids themselves.

The sunset on another Uganda holiday just as good as the first, I can't wait to return again. Sad news, however, the White Nile Dam Project has received its final go ahead following large influxes of money. In summer 2006 a second Dam will be built at the Silverback Rapid flooding all of the rapids above it. Although the work will not be complete until 2009 the work itself will have a serious effect on some of the rapids. We can only hope that somehow the project is delayed or in true Ugandan style the money is lost to corruption.

- Cheryl Robinson

