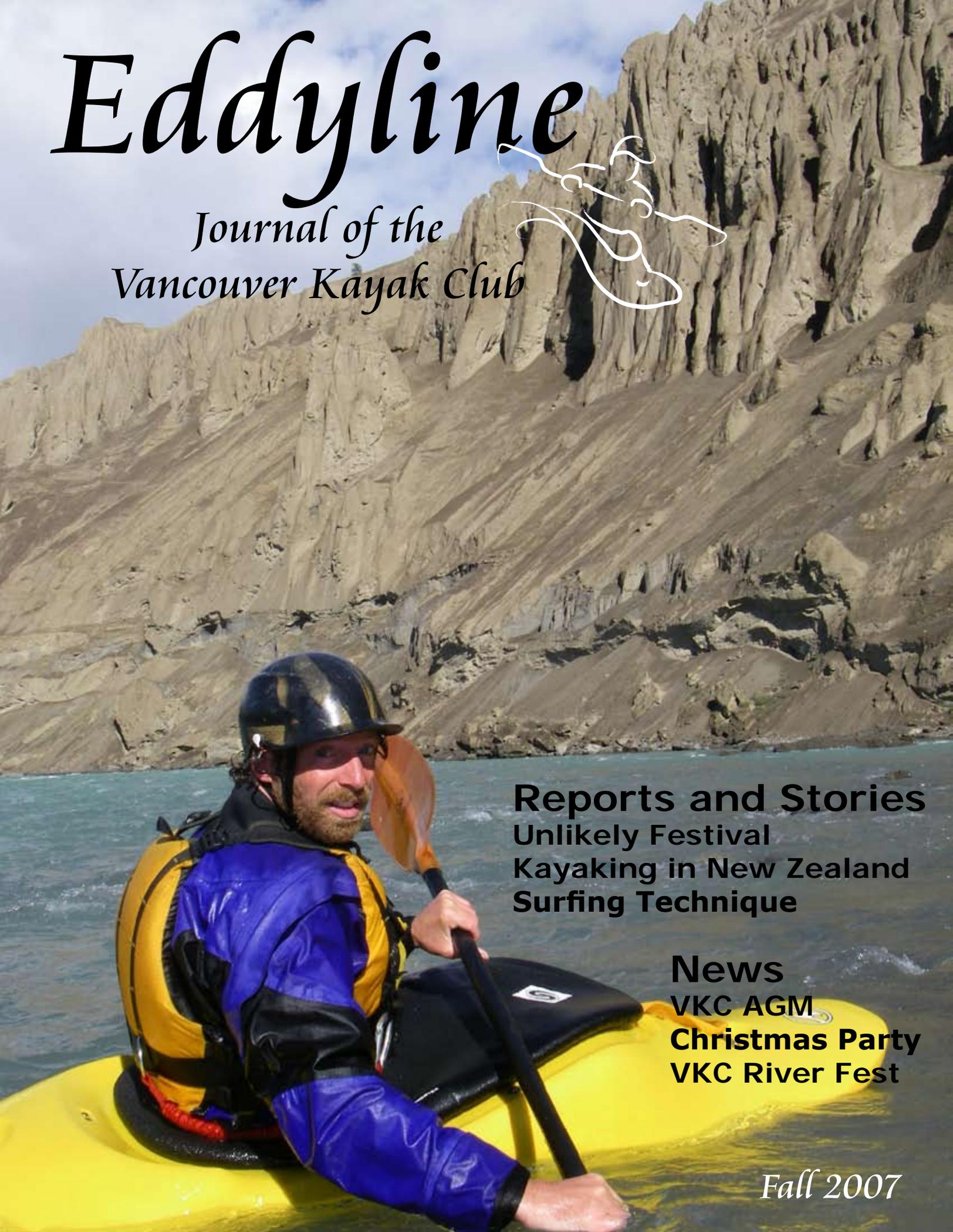


Eddyline

*Journal of the
Vancouver Kayak Club*



Reports and Stories
Unlikely Festival
Kayaking in New Zealand
Surfing Technique

News
VKC AGM
Christmas Party
VKC River Fest

Fall 2007

Eddyline - Journal of the Vancouver Kayak Club

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The Eddyline will be published quarterly, with the occasional edition as a hardcopy. Your stories, ideas, letters to the editor and photos are welcome and needed. Please send your contributions in digital format any time and especially before the deadline for the next issue.

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Club Announcements

Message from the Pres

Greetings to all VKC paddlers,

It's fall again and a great kayaking season comes to its end. Not that hard-core kayakers care about this. To them it is always paddling season on the Wetcoast. But first signs of winter have been spotted – soon it will be time to change “gear” for the rest of us. Hope this was as good a season for you as it was for me. Our club made excellent use of the great snow pack and excellent water levels. The trip schedule was packed with something for everybody. We welcomed several new members and showed visitors from abroad what paddling in BC is all about. Some of the weekends had huge turnouts, like the Similkameen and Clearwater, but also one remarkable day trip on the Chilliwack when close to 30 participants showed. Special thanks to all volunteers for making this happen!

A nice surprise for me was that even after 12 years of paddling there are still new runs to be discovered. Even guidebook authors get to explore new stuff. This season's firsts for me were: Spius Creek (thanks to Sandy Crane), a good, long and remote tributary of the Similkameen, Upper Adams and Upper Bridge, all in the III+ to IV- range. And the highlight of the year was our trip from Chilko Lake to Lillooet. We were surprised by the stunning scenery all along the way, which rivals the vistas in Utah's Canyons. But unlike south of the border – there are no waiting lists, permits and almost nobody else on the river.

So I'm looking forward to a couple of calm weeks before the season starts when I enjoy water in a soft and fluffy appearance.

But even without paddling there is no reason to stop recounting the adventures of the past year or to stop planning for the next year; so I invite everybody to come to our fall and winter meetings (the AGM, the Christmas Party and the Season Starter Video Night)!

Claudia Schwab

Get yer shirt! Cover yer back!

T-Shirts are ready for pick-up. We will have them at all club meetings. You can also get in contact with Phil Morley who has them at the moment. But hurry up, girls and guys! Our treasurer is keen to see the bucks in the bank and there are plenty of VKC paddlers who didn't order and would love to buy one – if you haven't picked up your shirt by the end of the year we will be selling to whoever pays first.

VKC AGM – November 21, 2007

Our AGM will take place on Wednesday, November 21, at 7:30 PM at the ANZA Club (8th/Ontario). Free pizza and entertainment in form of slides or videos will be provided. Come with comments, ideas and suggestions for VKC activities or even better volunteer for an executive position (we are looking for an editor and social coordinator - but every position is up for election).

Christmas Party – December 14th

Never too early to talk about Christmas – and since we have a date already; here it is!

The annual VKC Christmas Party will be on Friday, December 14th, at Rick's place (4460 Welwyn St., Vancouver).

VKC River Fest 2008 Call for Volunteers

Did you know? The Vancouver Kayak Club is 50 years old? To celebrate, club Executives would like the VKC to host a Party! ...Kayak style of course.

To be successful, this will be a 'by the members, for the members' affair. We want your ideas - What would you like to see? Where? Why? And of course - the Call for Volunteers starts early! Let us know if you can lend some time, energy and effort!

Watch our club internet forum (<http://www.vankayak.org/forum>) for a thread on this topic soon or contact Christian (christianandfarzanavogl@shaw.ca).

Remember, costs and size of the event will depend on our expense and efforts...

The Unlikely Festival

Story Tony Sloane

Photos Dave Elliot and Tony Sloane



Chilko Hazard

After many weeks of badgering I finally managed to get another person to join me on the trip up North to Likely. Dave Elliot and I flew up taking advantage of the great weather, taking in some great scenery. We were both a little nervous and unsure of our abilities and if we were ready for the Chilko which we planned to run Monday.

We originally planned to camp at Cedar Point away from the madding crowd but when we arrived in Likely there were all ready a couple of kayakers camped, so we decided to be social and pitch our tent outside the general store. Likely pretty much consists of a hotel/Inn and a General store, the camping was free so what the hell.

We spent a pleasant evening chatting and getting beta on the up and coming festival with our neighbours. The Festival is based on two rivers, the Cariboo and the Quesnel and if you wanted an extension to the Festival the Chilko on the Monday. The Cariboo contains two runs, lower (class II) and upper (III+/IV-). The general opinion was that the Quesnel was a step up from the Cariboo so Dave and I decided

to start off with the Cariboo and move up to the Quesnel. After a couple of beers and viewing the awesome display of stars we turned in for the evening keen to tackle the mysteries of the unknown rivers tomorrow.

The night was a long one. The temperature plummeted, equipped with my summer bag I was cursing my decision as I counted goose bumps to try and fall a sleep. I nodded off only to be woken by a local yahoo who felt it necessary to race and demonstrate his (presuming it was a male) driving skills at 2 o'clock in the morning. There were donuts, revving and pipes to amplify the sound of his V8. Dave muttered "we should have camped at Cedar Point." I thought, No S**t!

I did the classic! Float over the horizon line freeze open mouthed...

We woke to a beautiful day, the ground and boats were covered in frost but the sun was climbing. After a scenic breakfast on the banks of the Quesnel we loaded our boats for the first shuttle of the day up to the Cariboo put-in.

The put in was below a small falls. Some of the talk had been about running the falls but when I caught a glimpse I put that idea straight out of my head. Although the falls weren't high they packed a nasty punch. The seal launch

Had I picked a bad day to be off?

was nasty enough for me, a couple of people slipping and nearly having premature entries to the white Labyrinth below. The seal launch was a couple of feet higher than the Cap but the water was pumping by heading into an angled headwall. Little room for error as you needed to make the ferry to the eddy on the far bank to avoid the hole below we had already been warned about.

I missed the boof stroke and entered the water near vertical. I braced to avoid the flip but had no momentum to make the ferry. This was not a good start. I managed to pause in a tight

swirly eddy just above the head wall. This left me a lot to do to make the ferry across the river. I had visions of headwall on the Nahatlatch which I hadn't paddled well just a couple of weeks ago. The only way across was to use the foam pile off the headwall and surf across to open water, it was important not to get turned against the wall as that would definitely suck. I paddled hard and made the ferry, the reward was a view of the rest of the group making easy work of the seal launch. Below this eddy was a nice wave with a little bit of breathing space before the hole. If you washed off the wave

you needed to use a couple of eddies and ferries to get back up to the eddy at the wave. I tried it a couple of times but struggled, losing too much ground on the ferry. Had I picked a bad day to be off? We left the eddy and ferried past the hole, this brought us straight into "Bubble Yum" This

was pretty full on and continuous, it was a large boulder garden with lots of maneuvering and some pretty big holes. We didn't scout the rapid which was probably a mistake, paddling it blind and boat scouting lead to a little bit of survival paddling, picking a line through exploding whitewater isn't the easiest or wisest. The rapid culminated in a challenging exit move that only had clarity when looking back upstream. In the eddy below "Bubble Yum" Dave and I gave one another a concerned look. There were nine of us in the group and we probably had nine different lines through that rapid. It was a very different culture than we were use to. You picked your line and paid the price. Thankfully things eased off and the run became more relaxed if that was possible. We found a good play wave but all the harder stuff was in the first quarter of the run. At the take out we enjoyed a cold beer whilst waiting for the shuttle, relaxing in the sun and enjoying the mosquito free wilderness.



Cariboo Seal Launch

We returned to camp to plan for the afternoon, Dave was unsure about running the Quesnel after the Cariboo and decided to check out the Provincial campsite to see if it was yahoo free. I'm booked to travel to Ecuador in January so need to push myself and the

In the Sweet Spot



grade I'm currently paddling. I joined a group for the Quesnel and intended to stick close to Richard our neighbour who was familiar with the run and had paddled it the day before. The run starts off slowly with the play wave in Likely. This is a great play spot although the water level was getting low, resulting in a few scratched helmets. It was getting late so the run was going to be a fast one. The first significant drop of the run is aptly named "First Drop" its big waves, big holes and a meaty hole/wave for those that want to play. The biggest drop on the river is "Best Drop" and all the talk had been about this drop. The drop happens fast, it consists of a horizon line that feeds you into a diagonal reactionary that pushes you left to right into a huge haystack. If you don't want serious air time you need to avoid this wave. All the locals want to see first timers run this drop as the result is almost identical every time and makes for great entertainment. I did the classic! Float over the horizon line freeze open mouthed at the size of the thing and hit the reactionary, got pushed straight into the haystack for serious aerial acrobatics. From here on the run picks up through the "White Kilometer", "Bullion Pit" and into "Dark Side" a head wall that never gets the sun. The run moves in to a fantastic canyon

section that has big wave trains and holes you need to move around. If you're still upright you can get to see the "Devils Eyebrow" high up on the canyon wall looking ominously down as you pass by. An exciting S-bend spits you out of the canyon and the run pitters out with a relaxing paddle to the take out. This is a great, big volume run that requires more maneuvering than the Thompson and gets pretty pushy I believe at higher water.

This is probably the biggest night of the year in Likely. The festival organized by Adrenalin Mountain Adventures (Meryl & Alison) moved to the Likely Hotel. Dinner was part of the festival and one of the few things you had to pay for. It was an impressive spread but was definitely advantageous to be at the front of the queue as the last few to eat had slim pickings. We had great entertainment that continued into the early hours and was enjoyed by kayakers and locals to boot.

The next days paddling had a sluggish start, Dave and I decided to paddle the Quesnel. We joined a group of about eight others. This time I had the opportunity to play a lot more and also redeemed myself at "Best Drop" now that I knew what to expect. Dave had a smile from ear to ear pretty much the length of the run. Another priceless day was had on another BC gem. This brought a close to the festival and the campsite was starting to look deserted. We still had time to kill so we spent a couple of hours on the wave in Likely. Dave found a sweet spot on the wave and managed to link several spins before getting flipped. I managed to find the rocks just downstream that proceeded to give my new helmet a vintage look. We

played away in sunshine and had the wave to ourselves, pausing only to give the occasional wave to our new friends as they departed. We reluctantly decided to call it day. We both knew that it would be unwise to be spent for our first encounter with the Chilko.

It was a 09:00 meet at Red Shreds in Williams Lake for the shuttle bus. We were there slightly early and everyone else was there late. The bus had been having engine trouble all weekend, so now we were going to use it on what is a pretty remote forestry road. Was this going to be an epic? We picked up the other group, stopped for a "safety talk" and then headed out. There was about fourteen of us in total and I think only four of us had never run the river before. The shuttle drive was about three hours. This gave us plenty of time to get to know the rest of the group. We also stopped at Alexis Creek for arguably the worst coffee in the Chilcotin Range. We missed this experience as Jesse insisted he share his now famous Green Tea and Kahlua with us, which was actually pretty good.

We had several "safety meetings" before even putting on the river, this gave Dave and me the knowledge of who we could count on for help in the chance we may need it. It also made it very clear we should follow our own lines. The Chilko flowed in the valley below us radiating a deep emerald green blending perfectly with the crystal clear blue skies. The clarity of the water is something to be cherished and protected, when followed always leading to beautiful BC kayaking paradise. The Chilko like many other BC rivers gives to those that venture. The first rapid encountered is probably the biggest "Bidwell" it is three to four linked moves with the nastiest features waiting for those that don't navigate the upper sections successfully. It reminded me a little of one of the drops on the Upper Petawawa with its high unassailable walls. Looking down into the canyon I picked my line. I observed the first four boats go down, none of which followed the line I had chosen. I went down to water level and had my last look picking the corner of the first hole I wanted to punch. The worst thing I could do was to be indecisive and enter without commitment. The way it

We had several "safety meetings" before even putting on the river

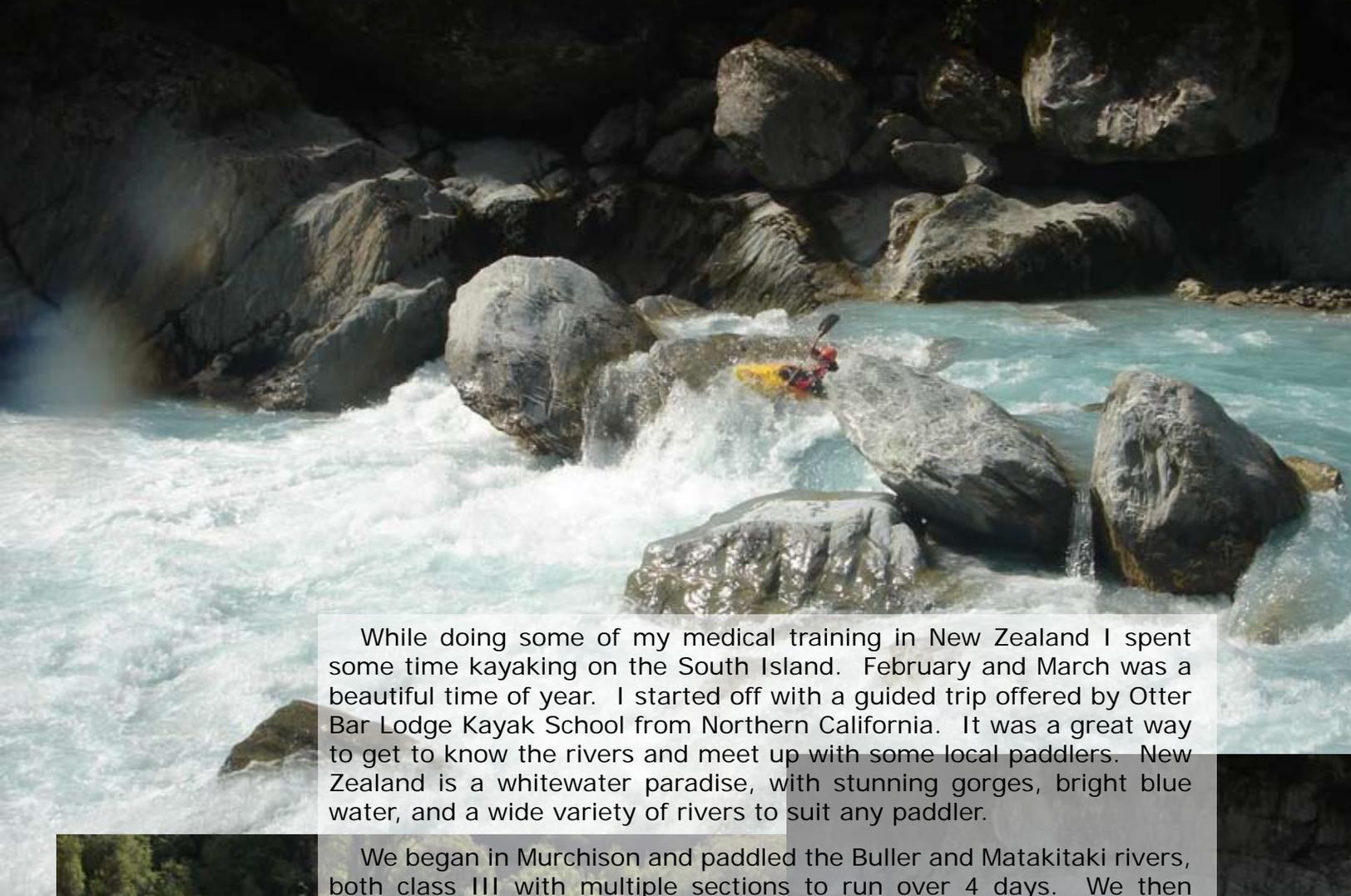
timed out I entered the canyon on my own, clipping the hole I wanted then ferrying left to miss the second hole. This meant I was totally committed to hitting the tongue between the canyon wall and the biggest hole so far. I was so focused everything was moving in slow motion. I nailed the tongue allowing me to turn into the escaping water from the hole, slowing me enough to make the most critical ferry from left to centre above the logs and horizon line that I knew lay below. I joined the wave train and the exit corridor, leading me to an eddy and imminent safety. I looked back through the sun and spray and knew that was the pinnacle of my season so far. We continued down river enjoying what the river had to offer. The speed of the water increased, the number of standing waves beyond counting. We were approaching the "White Mile" although Dave and I thought we had been in it for at least half a mile. The "White Mile" was not as demanding as I was expecting but I was also relieved it wasn't one mile of "Bubble Yum." We skated through "Eagles Claw" and were mesmerized at the display of exposed strata in "Lava Canyon." We saw the much publicized bears along the river banks. This helped reinforce the habit of looking hard before eddying out close to shore. We finished the run with a great dinner and camp fire at the take-out and a couple of cold beers. To round the day off we were joined by a couple of familiar faces at the campfire. The Chilko is a wonderful river in a magnificent setting and is a fantastic culmination to a great paddling weekend. The Unlikely Festival is a must do event for the strong intermediate paddler. Even though I didn't drive this time, it would be definitely worth the drive up there. Looking forward to next year and already adding this festival to my list of weekend trips.

P.S.: A message from Josh to the guys/girls of the VKC from the Puntledge Festival, "You should have been tailors...ha..ha"

Kayaking Kiwi Style

Text and Photos by David Jungen

Most fun drop of trip

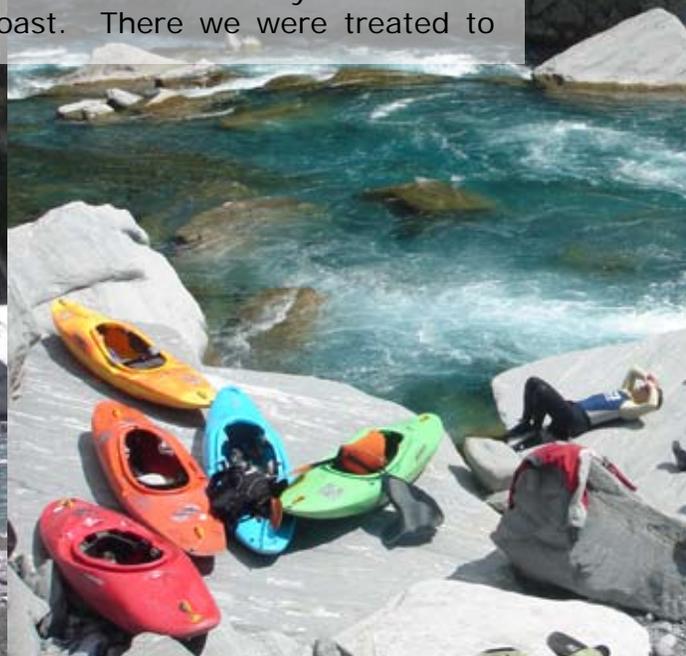


While doing some of my medical training in New Zealand I spent some time kayaking on the South Island. February and March was a beautiful time of year. I started off with a guided trip offered by Otter Bar Lodge Kayak School from Northern California. It was a great way to get to know the rivers and meet up with some local paddlers. New Zealand is a whitewater paradise, with stunning gorges, bright blue water, and a wide variety of rivers to suit any paddler.

We began in Murchison and paddled the Buller and Matakītaki rivers, both class III with multiple sections to run over 4 days. We then traveled to Hokitika on the West Coast. There we were treated to



Ideal put-in





helicopter shuttles because there is no logging road access. It is amazing how a 7 minute helicopter ride can turn into a 5 hour run. We paddled the Hokitika, Whataroa, Wanganui, and Taipo, averaging class III+ with some IV- drops.

After the guided trip ended I managed to get out a few more times on the weekends and attended the Buller Fest, a large kayaking festival in Murchison, and gave a shot at competing in a down river race and slalom. So if you happen to be down there - bring your paddling gear!

Down river race



Lunch stop

Technique:

Surfing on the Fly



Text Peter Spear
Photo Claudia Schwab

Everyone loves eddy serviced waves but sadly the majority of waves on the river lack the convenience of a neighboring eddy. The ability to catch and surf waves on the fly is an important skill to learn in order to maximize your play to float ratio.

Picking the right wave

The easiest way to pick good waves is to paddle the same section over and over and pay attention to where the good waves are. On a new river you can still get good rides if you are attuned to what good waves look like from upstream.

In today's short play boats it is hard to surf fast waves unless they are breaking. Slower green waves can be surfed but it will likely not be a very exciting ride. The following is a rather simplified description of the various signs you may look for as you line up to surf a wave.

Good signs:

- Smooth regular pile
- Wide face
- White water and green water meet with very little angle.

Surfable but tricky:

- Steep waves
- Surging and collapsing waves and piles
- Fast green waves (unless you are in a circa 1995 play boat)
- Very narrow faces (as often found behind isolated rocks)
- Diagonal waves (tend to flush you off the downstream end)
- Waves with big pushy foam piles
- Waves where the white water meets the green water as it is still dropping. This is actually a hole rather than a wave. It may still be fun to ride but maybe not in a front surf.

Bad signs:

- Mist rising from behind a prominent hump (this is a pourover)
- A dark shadow within the wave (again a pourover)
- Slow moving water behind the wave (there is a pour over behind the wave)
- Waves where the white water meets the green water as it is still dropping but at a very sharp angle. This is a sticky hole which will window shade you
- If old tires and debris are recirculation in it then it is a weir and a full on death trap.

To maximize your rides be sure to paddle over to every possibility and check it out.

How to get on

The biggest mistake made when trying to catch waves on the fly is to drift backwards on to them paddling like crazy. It is much better to approach the wave from the side. The benefits of this technique are numerous:

1. You can see the wave during the whole approach. You can ensure you are lined up on the steepest part of the wave and haven't been pushed off target by vagaries in the current.
2. You will not accelerate down the back side of the previous wave. Instead you can slip into the trough with minimal downstream speed.
3. You are much less likely to catch your nose on the back side of the previous wave
4. You can often use the shoulder or lead-in wave to get up to speed.

The following are a number of suggestions for using the diagonal approach.

- If you are directly upstream when you spot a wave, paddle to the side and then line up for a diagonal approach.
- Use other waves or holes to slow your downstream speed but don't try to use the wave just upstream. The speed gained when you fall off is often too much to overcome.
- Keep watching the wave throughout your approach. Try to aim to put your feet in the trough.
- If the wave is breaking, aim for it. It will really help to catch you.
- As you ferry towards the wave keep a good boat lean by weighting your downstream butt cheek. This lean will help prevent small waves from catching your nose. It also keeps the boat tracking straighter so you are less likely to get pushed off line.
- This point is a bit weird but I find this technique makes a huge difference in my success rate on mid size waves. I approach the wave with a significant ferry angle (30 to 40 degree). Just as the nose of my boat

starts to slide into the trough, I give a strong sweep stroke to straighten the boat up. I immediately follow it up with a strong stroke on the other side that aims my nose back into the deepest part of the trough. This second stroke with a good forward lean seems to really hook you into the wave. The first turn seems to prevent the nose from catching and the second gets you surfing.

- Be ready to strongly edge the boat if the nose catches. With the boat on edge the water sheds off the bow and buoyancy will pop it back up again. If you follow up with strong forward strokes you may be able to recover and still get a ride.
- Forward lean is almost more effective than paddling. Sit up – lean forward. Use fast slapping paddle strokes if necessary.
- Look for the deepest part of the trough. This is generally the center of the wave. Make sure you don't surf off the far side but turn back towards the center.
- You can use a forward sweep or a reverse sweep stroke (rudder) to straighten-up onto the wave. The forward sweep is better for slower and smaller waves where the rudder may drag you off. The rudder stroke is much more powerful particularly if you use a vertical blade in the water right at the back of the boat and use body rotation to apply power. Try to avoid using braking strokes for steering.
- If the wave is diagonal, approach it from the upstream side using the lead-in to accelerate you up to speed. Once you are surfing turn back to keep from being surfed off the flushing side.

How to stay there

Once you are surfing there are lots of things you need to be doing if you want to stay there. What that is depends a lot on the type of wave:

- Big or small,
- Fast or slow (planing or non planing),
- breaking or green,

- steep or low angle,
- wide or narrow,
- surging or stable,
- straight-on or diagonal,
- or any combination of the above

For low angle, fast waves, (e.g. Swirly Eddy wave on the Wenatchee), it is usually a struggle to stay on, especially in small play boats.

- Chase the deepest part of the trough with the nose of your boat.
- Keep leaning forward
- Be sensitive to the nose lifting, it is a sign that your about to fall off. Lean forward and paddle.
- Often these waves build and die. Try to time spins or other tricks with a surge.
- Surprisingly, aggressive carved turns are often still possible. The rudder combined with a good boat lean can push the nose back down the wave on each turn.

For small, slow, steep waves (e.g. the majority of small breaking waves in Chili Canyon) the problem is to prevent your nose from catching.

- Keep turning back and forth across the face of the wave. Try to prevent the boat from surfing in the trough. Surf the face of the wave.
- Tip the boat aggressively if the nose does catch.
- Use shove-its (half-spins where you alternate pointing bow and stern upstream) or spins to keep the nose from catching
- Alternatively hang out on the shoulder where it is not so steep
- Leaning back a bit is OK but if you are flat on the back deck, then you are overdoing it and should try to turn a bit more instead.

For big breaking piles (e.g. Skooks) the problem is the pile pushing the tail of your boat around.

- Try side surfing, shove-its and spins.
- Front surf at the edge of the green and white.

For big fast green wave (e.g. Lunch Stop on the Thompson) the problem is getting on.

- Paddle hard!
- Once there, pay attention to where you are and don't let it surf you off one side or the other.
- Try to stay on the face. Sliding deep into the trough may slow you so much that when you slide back up the face you keep on going over the top.
- Try a grind. A grind is side-surf on a green wave. Surprisingly, these little play boats surf faster in a grind than in a front surf and will slide down the face of the wave.

For diagonal waves (e.g. the Jolly Green Giant on the Thompson or the wave above Rodeo Hole on the Wenatchee) the problem is that it flushes you off the down stream side of the wave.

- Always keep the boat ferrying towards the upstream end of the wave.

For play holes (e.g. Turkey Shoot on the Wenatchee or Little Pink on the Clearwater) the problem is both being pushed around by the pile and catching the nose

- Side surf, Spin, Shove-it, Loop, Cartwheel
- Front surf at the corner between the white and green water. Use that position to setup the other moves or to get on top of the pile.