

Malcolm Slaney's List of Superlatives

From: malcolm@apple.com

Date: Thu, 05 Jul 90 16:07:42 -0700

Subject: Raft Trip Report[Perhaps other people might want to add their own observations.]

Wow, what a success! Almost 60 people showed up for the 10th annual GSP raft trip and almost everybody made it home in one piece. Here is what I remember most about the trip.....

Best T-Shirt:

Jeff Treece showed up with one of the MRT "New River Swim Team" T-shirts. The back side has a numbered list of big rapids on the river and Jeff has checked off three or four of them already.

Newest GSPette:

Paul and Sue (Carlile/Strang) announced they are having a baby. I hope they remember they can never have too many letter 'e's in a baby's name. Due date is in January.

New Baby Names:

New Baby Names: It was pointed out that (G)retchen, (S)teve and (P)arker started a tradition by naming their baby so that interesting acronyms were formed. Therefore we decided that if (S)andy and (P)hil have a boy it should be named (G)oober. I don't remember the girl's name.

[Ah, well that was "[R]aisinet", in order to assist [T]ony and [M]ichele in spelling out the name of our favorite whitewater outfitter. ---Rsk] Newest Move:

Steve and Gretchen (Higgins) just moved from Poukeepsie to Muncie so Steve could take a position teaching Computer Science at Ball State.

[Late news flash: Steve is back on the net -- beware the return of mass mail abuse! ---Rsk] Best New Technology:

Kirk (Smith) and I tried out some new self bailing (one person) rafts on the lower New. The trip was deemed a success since we only swam five times total (Kirk normally swims that many times by himself from a big raft :-).

Best Ad-Lib:

The Not Ready for Conception players were back once again trying to tell us all why we shouldn't make more babies. At least this time they knew how all the equipment worked (probably due to the fact that at least one of the cast has personal experience now :-). I wonder if the women can top this next year?!?!?!?!?

Location:

This year we camped next to the location of a very secret and successful genetic experiment. Frogs were dunked in beer from out of state and grew to look like cows and were twice as loud. The resulting rivit's could be heard for miles at night. Nobody tried the resulting frog legs.

Newest Sucker :-):

Eileen Gelblat was convinced to organize next year's raft trip. Congrats!

See you next year!

Malcolm

Jeff Treece's "How to Exit a Raft"

From: Jeff Treece

Date: Thu, 12 Jul 90 15:03:44 EDT

Subject: Proper Raft-Exiting Form You asked for it!

[Yes, I did...and I'm really sorry now. :-) ---Rsk]

I would like to explain proper raft-exiting form to anyone who feels that it is necessary to:

enhance rafting pleasure,

improve the safety margin,

earn extra 'style' points, or

make your raft the most popular raft in the crash-n-burn tape.

Proper raft-exiting form requires many skills, none of which are terribly difficult to master. We must begin the discussion at the top of a rapid. Let us take a moment to think about the rapid. The first thing we should do is scout. Scouting is important. Done properly, it will help make the whole exit worth while. Stand up in the boat and shade your eyes with your hand. Look carefully at the rocks. Scan the rocks on both sides of the river. Do you see any camera-man? Assuming there is a camera-man, we can proceed. Now, if you are not familiar with the river, you should ask some questions of your guide: "...supposing I were to fall out here, where should I hypothetically swim?", "...are there any *real* dangerous undercut rocks here?", "...and where are the keeper hydraulics?", "...would you mind holding this suntan lotion for me, just for this rapid?"

You have a pretty good idea of what's in the rapid and where the camera-man is located. Now for some preliminary activities. If the video is not on your side of the raft, see if anyone on the other side is willing to trade with you. Convince them that you want to try out the other side of the raft. If that doesn't work, complain of sore muscles and blisters, and say that you need to switch paddling arms. If you cannot convince someone to switch with you, you may have to do more swimming to get to the other side of the raft after you make your exit.

Now, one common misconception is that one should "wedge" himself in the raft, toes jammed under the tubes, sitting tightly in the raft. You will sometimes hear this called "braced in". Well, this idea is just plain silly. Suppose the raft were to flip over. Would you want to be jammed in there? Also, just think about what could happen to your feet if the raft were to hit a rock. Nope, the best thing to do is prop your feet up on the bailing bucket. You'll avoid the chance of getting stuck in the raft, and as you will soon see, you will greatly enhance the pleasure of the ride.

Now, this is very important: always keep one hand free so that you can wave at the video. When the guide calls out a paddle command, you may have to use both hands, but keep your eyes on the video man, just in case he turns his camera on you.

Exiting from the front of the raft is easy; anyone can do this. If you follow the preliminary instructions above, you are almost guaranteed an excellent exit from the front of the raft. Exiting from the back takes a bit more skill, and exiting from the middle is extremely difficult. It is suggested that beginners chose a spot in the front of the raft.

With your feet up off the floor of the raft, you will notice that the ride is much nicer. The waves will seem ten times bigger. You will "take more air" on the holes and wave trains. Also, when the time for that exit arrives, you feet won't get stuck on anything. There's nothing more embarrassing than a munged exit, where you can't seem to get your legs unstuck from the raft tubes. You will occasionally see these on the video (let's hope it's not your raft!). Often, the individual making the exit is hauled back into the raft by the rest of the crew! How humiliating!

The exit itself is important. More style points are lost here than on any single other aspect. The trick is to be graceful, yet let the water take control. You won't get any style points for an exit that looks more like a planned jump! If things are not going your way, and a good exit is not looking likely, try a draw stroke to turn the raft sideways just before a huge wave or hole. You will be on the upstream side. When the raft hits that wave, lurch across the raft and take the person on the opposite side out with you. That person was probably having trouble with exits anyway.

Don't worry about timing; you will know just when it's just the right time for the exit. It will come very naturally. Lots of stuff can happen here. You're not done yet! Let's assume that you've made a proper exit from the raft. If you have decided to exit at the keeper hydraulic, you may find that the raft has passed you by when you do finally get your head up out of the water. Keep your paddle. You will probably be able to reach the raft with it. It will look great on video. You will look cool, calm, and collected. If you have exited at the top of the rapid, take a more conservative swim. Avoid the big waves and hydraulics, unless they are right in front of the video man. Wave with your paddle as you go by. If someone throws you a rope, make it look like you can't reach it. It will make the rescuers look silly and will make you look good. If you are unfortunate and they hit you with the rope, you will have no choice but to grab it or look silly. In this case, give it a **huge** yank; perhaps you can pull someone else out.

Keep one eye downstream to look for the next big wave, juicer, or hydraulic. You will want to take a big breath of air just before. Above all, you must look relaxed. Don't fight it. Just go with the flow, and make course corrections only if necessary. No sense being out of breath when you get back to your raft.

When you get back to the raft, decide whether or not you can get back in easily on your own. If you think that you might have trouble, pretend that you are exhausted and have someone pull you back in. Better to have someone pull you in than to flounder around in the water trying to get back in the raft. Remember, the camera may still be on you! It's a good idea to practice getting into the raft every change you get. Go for a little swim in every big pool, and concentrate on making your re-entry look smooth.

Exercises:

Beginner:

Exit at Thurmond Ripples from the front of the raft.

Exit at Surprise when you raft flips over.

Exit from a surf at Grayhound Bus Stopper.

Intermediate:

Be the **only** one from your raft to exit at Surprise.

Make a clean exit from the back of the raft at any rapid.

Recirculate at least twice in a hole (must be on film, must hang on to your paddle and wave to the video)

Advanced:

Exit at the top of Double Z

Do a back-flip exit from the back of the raft at Middle Keeneys

Not for Weenies:

On the Gauley, exit at the top of Lost Paddle

Exit at the top of Niagra Falls. No, wait, that's another story.

--Jeff

Don Wegeng's "version of what happened"

From: wegeng@arisia.xerox.COM

Date: 12 Jul 90 12:25:56 PDT (Thursday)

Subject: My version of what happened! have some memories from this years raft trip:

Rsk's dog shaking water all over me at Babcock State Park - pancakes for breakfast - Main Street beer - the red pickup truck - the fourth primary color - Paul Carlile wishing that he had not signed last year's video waiver - we're having too much fun - learning what happens when a canoe hits a big rock - surf until you die - fast, cheap, and out of control - bitchin' whitewater babes - how dare you fall out of the raft is such a small rapid - oh lord preserve and protect us, we've been drinkin' whiskey for breakfast! - Gretchen, Steve & Parker (GSP) - what's all of this Bud Light doing in here?

I had a lot of fun on this year's trip, and really enjoyed seeing everyone.

/Don

Eileen Gelblat describes kayaking the Upper New

From: ehg@ihlpl.att.com

Date: Sun, 15 Jul 90 12:34 CDT

Subject: '90 trip report from EileenTrip report huh? Well the truth of the matter about being thrown off cliffs in a kayak is that I sort of promised I would do it. Ricky (the other kayaker on the Upper New) and I were paddling together, and I was taunting him into doing rolls with Malcolm's hand paddles, which we didn't want to do. But he did it. So when he told me early on in the trip that he was planning on jumping off jump rock in his kayak I figured he was joking and said if he did it, I would do it too (it never occurred to me that he was REALLY planning on doing this). So when we got to jump rock and Ricky went over, it was clear that Ricky was going to make sure that I jumped off. And seeing no obvious affects of Ricky's descent, I figured, what's a bruise or two if it keeps me from looking like a weenie. So I jumped, and found it to be fun (thought I admit I had my eyes closed). The second time, there was no problem convincing me. I wish I had a picture though; I don't think the people at work believe me.

Eileen

[So show them the video where you go off the rock on the Lower New! ---Rsk]

RSK's "Another year, another beer"

From: rsk

Date: Fri Aug 10 07:21:11 MDT 1990

Subject: Another year, another beer Well, I was relieved to find out that nobody brought "Cajun" beer this year; but I was surprised when I found out that our ducky/canoe/kayak trip was going through, uh, Surprise. Still, we all did pretty well in spite of Ken's attempt to resculpture a canoe.

I was relieved to find out that going off jump rock (the upstream one) in a kayak is a survivable exercise, but I was surprised at just how high it looks when you're sitting on the edge.

I was relieved to find out that our Highly Esteemed and Most Venerable Trip Leader Scott survived the Holy Water, but surprised to find out that he was letting Ks guide the boat. (But you did well, Kirk!)

I was relieved to find out that the fence around the campground did keep out the cows, but surprised to find out how loud the frogs were.

I was relieved to find out that Dw was right about the trail at Babcock doubling back, but surprised that it went so far before it did.

I was relieved that nobody tried to fire up the grill with white gas, but surprised at how fast Schwabnose could run when he was carrying a box full of burning coals.

I was relieved that I wasn't dunked at the put-in, but surprised when T3 clobbered me at a dead run shortly later. (How did he manage to build up that much speed in the space of one raft?)

I was relieved that Malcolm didn't have to swim Lower Keeney, but surprised when he ran Double Z on the left. (You big dog river studmuffin, you!)

I was relieved that I wasn't the only one redecorated at lunch but surprised when Higgins asked me for help spraying Bo. Hey, you guys are on your own -- and we're still holding out for Grey Poupon!

In short, I had a great time.