



## Words from the President

### FLOW elections

It is just a year since FLOW had its first election, at which time you voted me in as president. I have enjoyed my term of office, during which the club has grown from about 40 to over 120 members. We sponsored over 60 trips last year. We built a whitewater training site at Lock 32. We spearheaded a cardboard canoe race. We published 11 issues of FLOWlines. We conducted 11 lively meetings and three parties. We have tried to seek out what YOU want in a club and make it part of the club mission. One of the continuing questions is whether one club can serve the needs of both the whitewater and flatwater paddling communities. I have taken the position that FLOW IS A CLUB FOR ALL PADDLERS. One of the most effective ways of insuring that this continues to be true is to see a good mix of whitewater and flatwater paddlers in the club leadership. At the moment, we need more flatwater paddlers in leadership positions. I would like to nominate a flatwater paddler to succeed me as president and to further the club mission. Unfortunately, my first choice for president has declined the nomination. So we need your help. Please step forward to help your club. Come to Steering Committee meetings. Provide us names of potential officers. Volunteer your services as an officer or committee member.

*-Steve Kittelberger*

Needed committees:

*Pool practice coordinator*

*Web site (upcoming)*

*Monthly programs*

## Pool Practice dates in 1998

FLOW pool practices in 1998 have been scheduled at **Wheatland-Chili high school**. The pool will be available from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday evenings from February 26 to March 26, plus April 7 (a Tuesday).

All are invited. Cost per evening: \$3 for members, \$4 for non-members, free if you volunteer at the door for an hour (contact Steve Kittelberger at 442-6138 to volunteer). Please clean off your boat before bringing it, if possible. A hose will be available at the pool. (We are surcharged for cleaning leaves and mud from the pool.) Thanks to Bob Pierson for handling the arrangements!

Pool practices at **Letchworth Central School** are being sponsored by FLOW and Letchworth Outfitters. The pool will be available to boaters on Saturday February 21 and Saturday February 28 from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and then on Tuesday evenings from March 3 to March 24 from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. For further information, contact Dave Bojanowski (237-6180).

## February meetings

### General meeting

**Time:** Thursday, February 12, 7 p.m.

**Place:** Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Ave., on the lower level, near the library. (*Notice the new location for winter meetings*)

February's meeting will be dedicated to discussing the 1998 trip schedule. Come find out what FLOW has planned in 1998, and let us know how you want to participate. We will discuss the upcoming elections, Web site, and other news.

### Steering committee

**Time:** Thursday, February 5, 7 p.m.

**Place:** Steve K.'s house, 160 Penarrow Dr., near 12 Corners (442-6138)

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## FLOW organization

### Officers

<b>President</b>	Steve Kittelberger 716 442-6138
<b>Vice President</b>	Harry Weidman 315 524-9295
<b>Secretary (Interim)</b>	Dorothy Sullivan 716 359-4710
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mike Shafer 716 227-9291

### Committee chairs

<b>Facilities</b>	Rick Williams 716 381-3418
<b>Membership</b>	Art Miller 716 334-5810
<b>Programs and Trips</b>	Noreen Wiatrak 716 288-5839
<b>Communications</b>	Heather Mummery Mike Marini 716 288-5232
<b>Education/Instruction</b>	Ardie Shaffer 716 334-4487

## Newsletter submissions

Send us trip reports, articles, letters to the editor, ads for our classified section, or anything else you'd like to see in FLOWlines.

### If you have e-mail:

Send articles in the form of a text file to:  
heather.mummery@nortel.com

### Written submissions:

Preferably typed in a 10-point font or larger, double-spaced.

Hand-written submissions must be reasonably legible, or great editorial license may be invoked.

### Mail to:

Heather Mummery  
221 McKinley St.  
Rochester, NY 14609

## Contacts

FLOW Paddlers Club	.....(716) 442-6138
Seayaker Outfitters	.....(315) 524-9295
Pack, Paddle, and Ski	.....(716) 346-5597
Endless Adventures	.....(315) 536-0522
Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK)	..(716) 223-5023
Ardie Shaffer	.....(716) 334-4487
Oak Orchard Canoe	.....1-800-4-KAYAKS
Letchworth Outfitters	.....(716) 237-6180
.....e-mail:	letitout@wycol.com

## FLOW HotLine: 716 234-3893

### To access the FLOW HotLine:

1. Dial 716 234-3893 from a touch-tone phone.
2. To listen to messages left by other paddlers, **press the remote access code** any time **during the greeting**. After entering the remote access code, listen to instructions for how to access messages.
3. To leave a message for other paddlers, listen to the greeting and leave a brief message after the tone.

*The FLOW HotLine is sponsored by FLOW Paddlers Club for FLOW members. The FLOW HotLine is hosted by Bay Creek Paddling Center.*

## Membership and Mailing List

To join FLOW, send name, address, paddling interests, and \$20 per individual membership to:

Art Miller  
Re: FLOW Paddlers Club  
264 Vollmer Pkwy  
Rochester, NY 14623

## Upcoming trips/events

**Contact Noreen Wiatrak (716 288-5839) with trips scheduled for 1998. Come to the February meeting for a trip planning session!**

## Gauge numbers

Genesee River (Letchworth)	.....716-468-2303
Cattaragus River	.....716-532-5454
Salmon River	.....1-900-726-4243 #365123
Keuka Outlet	.....716-234-0090

### Pennsylvania rivers:

Philadelphia (Lehigh and others)	.....
.....	1-800-431-4721
Harrisburg (Loyalsock, Susquehanna, Pine Creek)	.....
.....	1-800-362-0335

Pittsburgh (Yough, Slippery Rock Creek, and others) .....412-262-5290

### West Virginia rivers:

Gauley River	.....304-872-5809
Southern WV rivers	.....304-529-5127



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*Thanks to Perry Vayo for bringing this article to our attention. Corran Addison is a former Olympic whitewater slalom champion and world-class rodeo boater.*

## Addison's Scale

### “The examination of a static rating system in a dynamic sport”

By Corran Addison

John is not an expert kayaker. Far from it in fact, but he does have a good time paddling, and he really loves the sport. He has been paddling a season now, and has progressed quickly. So fast in fact, that just last week he ran his first class five rapid.

Actually, it wasn't really all that hard, and he was a little disappointed really. Sure, he was nervous, but everything had gone well, and despite a few small mistakes here and there, he had managed to make it cleanly through.

Now he stood on the edge of what looked to him like hell. Beside him was “Mad” Marco - a veteran hair boater with the name to prove it. Marco was a legend. He had run more hair than most people are willing to even consider, and here he was paddling with kayaking's greatest extremist. What an opportunity to prove himself.

He looked again at the towering cascade before him, then at Marco. Even Marco seemed nervous, but he had insisted it was a class five - no better or worse than any other he had run. Well, it's not like John had the experience to question Marco's judgement, so he took it at face value, despite a rather uneasy feeling in his gut.

After a few minutes of studying the line, they began to trek up the side of the cliff back to their kayaks. The higher they climbed, the more ominous the rapid became, and John began to feel really uneasy about it. Again he asked Marco about the difficulty of the rapid. Again Marco insisted that it was a solid class five. No worse.

It sure didn't look like the class five that he ran last week. Marco went first, and after what looked like a survival run to John, emerged from the bottom. Two deep breaths, and he peeled out of the eddy, took a few hard strokes, and dropped into the throat of the monster. The first big hole slapped him so hard to the right that he knew he'd never make it back to the left to skirt the big keeper half way down. But to the right of the keeper was an undercut with several logs protruding. He'd try to cut between the two.

But John couldn't see, and even if he could, he simply didn't have the skill to make that kind of move. The last thing he ever saw was a broken and battered limb rushing towards him at blinding speed, and thinking, “This cannot be. I ran that class five last week easily.”

Last week, John's paddling partner was an upper intermediate by the name of Dave. Dave was one of the old guard that had been paddling for over twenty years. He was experienced, cautious and safe. They had come upon a rapid that was rated as a class five. It consisted mainly of a wave train down the center, and far off to the left, an undercut. Someone, ten years ago, had for some reason gone over there and been killed. Ever since, this rather mild rapid had been rated as a class five.

John had never questioned Dave's ability to assess the rapid. He had more paddling experience than all of his friends combined. Yet, looking at the cascade with Marco, he had been confused. And rightly so. You see, Marco was restricted by the rating system, and obliged to rate

*continued on p. 4*

### Addison's Scale—continued from p. 3

the rapid accordingly. Class five is as hard as it gets, and this rapid was hard. Dave had rated his rapid the same way - it has very real potential to kill, and in fact has so in the past. John, being a first year paddler, had neither the skill nor the experience to question either paddler, and since all of his natural instincts had so far proven to be wrong (like leaning downstream rather than upstream, which was his natural instinct), he was unable to rely on his own judgement.

Effectively, the rating system designed to provide a safety net had killed him.

The problems lie in the very foundation of the system. With one number, we have attempted to describe the difficulty, element of danger and exposure. Combine this with the fact that the latest breakthroughs in equipment and techniques have allowed us to push the limits of the possible, and that the system has a cap, and we find that the last digit of class five has as wide a range of rapid difficulties as all the preceding numbers combined.

What the system fails to see is that the elements of danger and difficulty (the principal concerns) are not the same thing. A rapid can be dangerous, but easy to run (a wave train requiring no boat skills, but with an undercut off to one side). Another can be technically difficult, but with very little danger (a series of waterfalls into deep pools). The third and seemingly less important, though it is not, is exposure: if things go bad, how long will it take to get help? An hour; a day; a week?

Given that our sport is still young and developing, we can continue to assume that the limits of the possible are still being pushed, so to have a cap on the system places unnecessary pressure on the lower scales, or packs too many variables into one number. Considering that our sport takes us to the most desolate corners of the earth, the element of exposure is also an important one. A broken leg on a roadside run an hour from a major metropolitan area is no real concern. A broken toe in the most remote corner of Tibet is a very real concern. As such, you are more likely to take chances on your local run than on an expedition where even if there were medical help, it would be questionable.

So an effective system would include the element of (1) Difficulty (what is the absolute minimum amount of skill needed to successfully

run this rapid), (2) Danger (if I make a mistake, what are the consequences of that mistake), and (3) Exposure (once I have made a mistake, how long before I get help).

Let's address point (1). As stated before, it needs to be open ended. No consideration for the consequences should be used while addressing this rating. It is a pure and cold assessment of the minimum skills needed to run the rapid. It should be open ended (no cap), with the current rating difficulty used as a starting point, spread over one to ten, with the ability to add eleven, twelve and so on as needed.

Point (2) is much simpler. Again, using our current rating system as a base, we give this a one to six assessment. One, there is almost no danger at all. Three there is the possibility of minor injury, including bone breakage, serious cuts and bleeding (basically, you're in serious trouble, but death is unlikely - depending on point 3). Five there is a high probability of serious injury (spinal breakage, etc.) and a very real possibility of death. Six, you die. This has a cap, as you can't be any more or less dead. The key to remember here is the "most likely" scenario. You can drown in a small ripple, but the chances of it are so slim that it is not realistic. You might also swim out of a hole that has killed many people before you, but again in assessing the danger, you need to keep in mind that IF you swim there, you will "most likely" die.

Point (3) is linked to point two. A broken rib with some internal bleeding one hour from a hospital is not a very real concern. However, a day or more from help, and now you have a problem. This is broken into three letters. A is less than an hour to receive help. B is more than one hour but less than 24 hours, and C is 24 hours or more. This rating considerably changes the importance of the first two points.

So to recap, the system reads like this: "How hard is it for me to run this, and if I blow it, what'll happen to me?" Some examples are:

Niagara Falls: 3.5A (3 for difficulty - not that hard, 5 for danger, and A for help). Five falls on the Chattooga at 4 ft.: 6.3B. And the upper Zambezi above Victoria Falls, 2.5C (easy, but if you swim you get eaten by a croc or hippo, and you don't want to be treated in one of those hospitals).

This system, which I have been using for several years (and is jokingly referred to as "Addison's Scale" by

*continued on p. 5*

**Addison's Scale—continued from p. 4**

my paddling partners) has proven to be very effective in describing a run to paddlers familiar with its workings. Because of its effectiveness, I am now making a push for its international acceptance and use. Such a system (which has evolved to its present form over about ten years' use and modification) could very effectively eliminate many of the problems that arise constantly from our current system.

If you support the system, please mail a letter to the effect to:

Corran Addison  
International Whitewater Federation  
CP 232  
Valley Fields, Quebec J6S 4V6  
Canada

I will use these letters of support for such a change to lobby the governing bodies of all countries involved with whitewater paddle sports.

*Editor's note:*

*Though FLOWlines does not normally publish articles by non-members, this article is published in its almost-entirety due to the clear and effective argument Addison makes. The article has been mildly edited for length.*

*In my experience, a three-tiered rating such as the one proposed here would do much to improve the established confusion surrounding "what exactly is a class five rapid?" Compare what Addison proposes to what your experience has taught you, and if you support this proposed scale, drop us a line, answering the following questions:*

\_\_\_ *Yes, I think Addison's Scale is a good idea.*

\_\_\_ *Yes, I think it's a good idea, with the following suggestions/provisions:*

*Send replies to Perry Vayo at:  
pgv@aol.com*

*Or send a postcard to:  
Perry Vayo  
353 Oxford St.  
Rochester, NY 14607*

*Bay Creek Paddling Center*

*Conveniently located on Empire Boulevard,  
next to Irondequoit Creek and the Bay*

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*Harry Weidman contributes the following:*

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, but when they lit a fire in the craft it sank.....proving once and for all that *you can't have your kayak and heat it too!*

*Thanks to Ardie Shaffer for bringing this to our attention. The Democrat & Chronicle published a profile on Terry Kent on 12/14/97.*

**Local Olympic paddler coming home to Rochester**

Rochester has a local hero in the canoe and kayak world, and if you're like me, you didn't know it. Terry Kent, the executive director of the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team (USCKT), was born in Brighton, NY, according to a recent profile in the D&C. Kent will be returning to Rochester in March "as part of his portage across America with a canoe or kayak on top of his head," according to the article. Kent competed in the 1984, 1988, and 1992 Olympics, and became head of the USCKT on December 1, 1996.

Belated congratulations to a local paddler who much deserves it, from Rochester's local paddling club!

## You spent nine days doing what?

by Heather Mummery

*"If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster,  
And treat those two impostors just the same..."*  
-Rudyard Kipling

When local outdoor champions Pack, Paddle & Ski encountered the wilderness medicine leaders at Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities (SOLO), several fundamentally inter-connected things occurred. On December 27, 1997, a group of otherwise normal people converged on the West Henrietta Fire Department. Most of them carried some flavor of Jell-O, a metal cup, and two plumbers candles. Then two mystical men arrived carrying bundles of rags, piles of Insulate pads, and other bewildering, magical tools. And perhaps the strangest thing, of all the strange things that happened, was that 23 people spent nine days learning skills they never want to use again.

We had come for a Wilderness First Responder course. From just up the street and from as far away as Detroit, we were outdoor leaders and professionals, devoted hikers, climbers, and paddlers, and general wilderness enthusiasts. Some of us had no experience or training with medicine, and one of us was a veterinarian with some training to undo (no, Doc, you can't shoot him just because he has a broken leg!). We had in common a desire to be useful in a particular category of emergencies. We were in the right place, at the right time.

Over the next nine days, our fearless SOLO instructors, Dave Krause and Eben Widlund, guided us through the hazard-fraught trails of backcountry medicine from the safety of the fire department's second floor. Within days, we had covered basic first aid and patient assessment. A few of us became experts in "infant wildlife" CPR, saving the lives of a baby pink flamingo and various teddy bears. From CPR, which is by necessity performed only when someone is already dead, we moved on to more exciting topics where our patients were alive (and human). Broken bones, internal injuries, dehydration, allergic reactions, altitude sickness, lightning strikes, hypothermia, and shock . . . what would you do if any of these things happened to someone in your group and you were 10 miles from a road with only the contents of your pack? What would you want to have in your first aid kit? The course emphasized prevention and common sense, improvisation, and above all, personal safety. Because of Dave and Eben, the American wilderness is now a little bit safer.

Of course, the class was not without its disasters, all of which were valuable learning experiences constructed for our benefit. Once a whole legion of construction workers fell off a roof while eating oatmeal for lunch. Then there was that group of interpretive dancers who simultaneously collapsed and broke their forearms. Every single patient was handled with expert care and miraculously cured—it was a week for strange, improbable things.

One of our grandest scenarios began when Randy French, of Pack, Paddle & Ski, pounded on our classroom door screaming "My brother! My brother's had a terrible accident! Someone come help my brother!" We had jumped into our gear and headed out the door before anyone noticed that Randy was "missing" a finger. The first lesson learned: count your patients. Meanwhile, a few of us had found Rick French screaming in convincing agony on the cold pavement of the parking lot.

Dave and Eben stood back and watched; the rest of us went through varying degrees of panic before newly-learned instincts kicked in and things started getting done. Is the scene safe? Are the patients breathing? Bleeding to death? Risking hypothermia? Someone hold his head! Is that blood? What do you mean there's a finger over there? Get him off the ground; someone get that blanket out of my pack. OK, we're gonna roll him on 3 . . . Yes, I know your leg hurts, we've gotta make sure you're not bleeding anywhere else. Your brother's alive . . . Yes, I know we have to do that, someone get his boot off. I know it hurts, we're trying to make it better. Pulse, 74, respirations . . . 18. Is someone writing this all down?

Half an hour later, Rick had finally stopped screaming and Randy had his finger back. Rick had played his part so well that he ended up in a full traction splint on one leg and one arm splinted in a sling. He would have been carried away in a litter had Dave and Eben not intervened. They finally told us the ambulance had arrived, the patients were healed, and we could all go back inside.

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## Wilderness First Responder—continued from p. 6

The second lesson learned: emergency situations require leadership and a chain of command. It is common sense—but not always easy to remember or implement—that healthy rescuers and a well-organized rescue scene can make the difference between life and death for all parties involved. Fortunately, SOLO emphasizes leadership and survival skills as well as medicine.

For those who are unfamiliar with SOLO, they are an emergency medicine, rescue, and survival school located in Mt. Washington Valley in Conway, New Hampshire. As far as I can tell, their home campus lives under the permanent cast of a slightly indigo aura of mystery and wonder. There are rumors of frequent, unexplainable disasters and equally miraculous rescues.

The OLO in SOLO is about open learning opportunities, which is the practical application of a theory that you can't learn when you're not comfortable. Our classroom was a temporary haven of indulgence as people lounged in their Crazy Creeks and shared stories and experiences. In an atmosphere of camaraderie, Dave and Eben brought the course material to life with humor, intensity, and vivid practice scenarios. They de-mystified the intimidation of holding another's life in your hands, without ever belittling the gravity of wilderness emergency care. SOLO's unique learning environment is particularly suited to the material they teach. It's not just that learning occurs most rapidly and successfully in a non-competitive environment, it's that lives cannot be saved without one.

The best prepared Wilderness First Responder has the knowledge to treat a handful of life-threatening injuries, improvise splints and litters, and provide basic nursing care over a long walk- or carry-out. Most people who have ever thought about the risks inherent in entering the wilderness could do the same; the difference is that the trained WFR has proved to herself and a certifying body (e.g. SOLO) that she can perform those skills with confidence and competence. And she has a signed certification card, good till the year 2000. Though the class was invaluable, in many ways that card is no more than a reminder of the knowledge we gained and a talisman against the inevitable dangers we court by leaving the safety of home.

*Wilderness First Responder class, sponsored by Pack, Paddle & Ski  
December 27, 1997 - January 4, 1998  
Henrietta, N*

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FLOW has six members who are now Wilderness First Responders: Bob Thompson, Bob Pierson, Harry Weidman, Deb French (also of Pack, Paddle & Ski), Marc Ornstein, and Heather Mummery (if there were any others in the class whose names aren't listed, it is entirely my fault). This article was written to commemorate the class and recognize the accomplishments of those who participated. It began as an article for this newsletter, intending to somehow tie wilderness medicine with paddling, but took on a life of its own and grew past the boundaries of this newsletter's normal fare.

So since I have the space, here are my thoughts about wilderness medicine and paddling: Once we paddlers enter the water, we tend to forget about the rest of the world. Sometimes the transformation is so complete that the memory of vestigial gills starts itching in the back of our minds, until we're forced to re-emerge onto dry land and give up our aqueous lives. I know that most of my safety-consciousness surrounding a paddling trip is concerned with safety in and on the water. On whitewater, I think along the lines of avoiding holes and pins, carrying a throw bag and a knife, and keeping my head above water (because despite my amphibious tendencies, I am still a mammal). On flatwater, where I am less experienced, I try to not get too far from shore, keep my boat upright, and paddle with someone who knows what they're doing. This course reminded me that I still have to get to the water, and that an accident at the put-in, the take-out, or on a rock in the middle of nowhere on a lunch break can be just as deadly (as if what we do isn't dangerous enough already?). Important things to be aware of, but just part of the risks we all assume, if not seek. Keep paddling, be safe, and stay on the dry side of the water. *-Heather*

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## Deadline for next newsletter

The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is Monday, February 16, 1998. Submit articles, news of activities that may be of interest to FLOW members, or anything else that you want to share with our readers. Send submissions to Heather Mummery (address on page 2). Send trip announcements to Noreen Wiatrak (see p. 2).

## Classified ads

### FOR SALE:

1997 Dagger Outburst w/float bags and paddle, ~1 month old, \$600. Lee Gassler (716 586-5677)

TOURING PADDLE, like new, Werner SanJuan, 240 cm., \$150. Al Pietzold (716 388-1279)

DANCER XT, yellow with flotation and spray skirt, \$350 (716 889-2753)

OLDER COVERED C2 (fiberglass, end hole), \$75 or best offer. Ed McDonald (716 544 3467).

### WANTED:

COURAGEOUS AND ENTHUSIASTIC FLOW MEMBER to accept the title of "Pool Practice Coordinator" for a two year term (negotiable). Must be dedicated, earnest, and willing to handle communications with local Powers-That-Be in regards to our desire to put our boats in their pools. Responsibilities: co-ordinating annual pool practices, organizing volunteers, and others to be determined. Incentives: most of the work has already been done for 1998. Contact a member of the steering committee.

POOL PRACTICE VOLUNTEERS to take money at the door, enforce standards of respectability (i.e. all debris, dead fish removed from boat—by owner—before boat enters pool), two volunteers per evening. Incentives: work an hour, practice an hour for free; you get to make other people handle dead fish. Contact the pool practice coordinator (see ad above).

To submit advertisements contact Mike Marini at 288-5232. Please notify us if your ad is no longer needed.

FLOW Paddlers Club  
264 Vollmer Pkwy  
Rochester, NY 14623

stamp

