

# The DDRC Current News

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The Official Newsletter of the Dallas Downriver Club

August 1999

## Can You Say Eau' Vive?

by Debbie Meller

Eau' Vive is French for whitewater, or swiftwater to be precise. It's pronounced as 'ooh veeve' (silent 'e' at the end). I recently came back from paddling eau' vive in France for 6 days.

After spending a day and a half in Nice (woe is me), my friend Denis Kervella and I drove for 3 hours into the southern Alps. Some of you know Denis, pronounced Duhnne. He is French and used to be an open whitewater canoer....well, I guess he still is an open canoer although he learned to kayak for the France trip. Anyway, he used to live in Dallas and was a member of the NTRR. He now lives in Austin.

So on the way into the Alps I notice how familiar the countryside looks. The outskirts of Nice look very similar to the Texas Hill country and further in it looks very similar to northern New

Mexico without the mesas. Our destination, which was the southern most part of the Southern Alps, continued to remind me of northern NM and southern Colorado. We head straight to the outfitters, in the city of Embrun, for our rental boats. I pick a Perception 3D and Denis picks an Eskimo Diablo. Everything else I had brought over with me, including a 3 piece break apart paddle that is otherwise identical to my regular paddle. See Keith Smith for a good deal on one of these babies.

Forgetting that we had read about a law that prohibits kayaking before 9:30am and after 6:00pm in France, so as not to interfere with fishermen, we put on the Durance river at 4:30pm. The Durance is rated a big, bouncy class III river and holds the equivalent to the Ocoee Hell Hole where rodeo competitions are held. The Durance hole is called Le Rabioux. We found



*La Rabioux Hole on the Durance River*

the water level low, but it was crystal clear and aqua blue. Le Rabioux wasn't so much a hole as a large 10 foot wave that had a perfectly sweet, sticky part that we took turns riding with all

the peoples of Europe. There were Austrians, Germans, Irish, English, the French, and little ole American me. More like little ole Texan me, because at one point I forgot where I was and belted out a big 'YEEHAW!' when coming off the wave after a long surf. Denis probably wanted to flip over, hide his face, and hold up a sign saying 'I'm not with the yahoo'.

Back to the time schedule. Sometime after 7:00pm we were

## Trinity River Challenge News

The TRC '99 is on for September 11, only 1 month away! Thank you to everyone who has volunteered so far to help in this race. It will not go unnoticed.

We need raffle prizes!! If you or someone you know would like to donate an item for raffle please contact me. Names of donors/sponsors will be included on our website, race T-shirts, and announced at the race depending on the value of the donation. This doesn't have to be a product, it can be a service or discount offer. Currently we have as sponsors:

**Helen Livingston**  
**High Trails**  
**Mariner Sales**  
**Mountain Sports**  
**North Texas Canoes**  
**Old Town Canoe**  
**REI**

Listed below are our current coordination leaders:

Debbie Meller – Race Coordinator  
Kathy Berns – Bake Sale  
Chris Cockrell – Race Registration  
Al Curry – Awards Ceremony  
Jack Deatherage – Dinner and T-shirts  
Jerry Kier – Raffle event  
Mary beth Kvanli – Safety  
David Lamb – River Cleanup  
Rich Manning – City and Corp contact.  
Officiating  
Steve Schleiter - Posters  
Richard Steppe – Insurance  
Classifications and Rules  
Putin Site Preparation

Pat Tittle – Flier

Any one of these people may be requesting volunteers for their individual tasks. If you would like to volunteer before hand, please contact them. For any other inquiries, please contact Debbie Meller via email or by phone.

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# 1999

## DDRC OFFICERS

**President:**

Jack Deatherage 972-222-1407

**Vice President:**

Debbie Meller 972-727-9290

**Secretary:**

Eric Rounsefell 972-370-5844

**Treasurer:**

Chris Cockrell 214-340-3181

**Newsletter Editor:**

Steve Schleter 972-329-5502

**Internet Webmaster:**

Rich Grayson 214-827-0144

**Environmental:**

David Lamb 214-931-3068

**Librarian:**

Keith Smith 940-566-4869

**Roster:**

Marvin Dietel 972-564-1545

**Trip Coordinators:**

Charles Edwards 972-867-6579

Jerry Kier 972-869-2642

Sam Sloan 214-826-6159

**Membership:**

Cyndy Meijer 972-342-5821

**Racing:**

Richard Steepe 972-252-2493

**Raffle:**

Judy Purze 972-717-5053

Yo Deatherage 972-222-1407

**Safety:**

Mary Beth Kvanli 214-352-5446

**Training:**
**Kayaks**

Debbie Meller 214-727-9290

## President's Column

by Jack Deatherage

Well summer is definitely upon us, it's 105 outside and no rain forecast for the next week. Makes you want to take up a new sport. Maybe caving would be nice this time of year!

Speaking of new sports, I heard of a new one last week, canyoning. I first thought it was some form of backpacking, but no, it is whitewater at its worst. You put on your helmet,

wetsuit, booties, pfd, etc., and then just go jump in the river! No boat of any kind is needed for these daredevils.

The bad news is the reason I heard about it was that 20 of them died in a flash flood. And people call us crazy! These people paid money to do this, guides and everything. I'm thinking of a new skydiving fad, minus the parachutes! Save a lot of money on labor, repacking all those chutes. No repeat business you say? Well, also no whining customers to put up with.

Seriously will people do anything for a thrill? The news clips showed them jumping off a small cliff into a pool with at least a class 3 insight, big rock garden below to have fun with, and then a nice waterfall over the next drop. Guess I'm getting old, it did not look like fun to me. On to happier subjects.

It's time to go out and find your Dutch oven. Scrape out last year's chili or crumb cake and give it a good cleaning. It will be Halloween time before you no it. We all need to work on those recipes for the Dutch oven cook-off. Everyone has to eat on the river and the Dutch oven can be our best friend. All manner of culinary surprises can be cooked and you only have one pot to wash. I know some of you are hooked on MRE's but there is life after peanut butter. Give it a try. A 10 or twelve inch aluminum oven is very light and easy to clean. A hungry kayaker can be sent to bed with a spoon and your oven and next morning it will be shiny as new.

.....See y'all on the river.

.....Pray for Rain!

### Get Connected on the Internet

DDRC's website is provided by Inturnet, inc., a local ISP based in Richardson. In addition to providing our club with FREE web space, inturnet also offers access to DDRC members at a 10% discount off the regular monthly rate of \$19.95 per month for unlimited, 24 hours per day access.

To top it off, DDRC receives a 10% bonus for each member signing up, so it's a double win-win for you and the club. If you want your own web pages, inturnet provides 10MB FREE space, enough space to create about 900 pages (more or less)! You will also receive an e-mail address so you can communicate easier.

Call Tod E. Weber at (972)783-0066 for an account and be sure to tell him you are a DDRC member so both you and the club get the bonuses, or contact Rich Grayson.

**Newsletter:** The DDRC newsletter, Current News, is a monthly publication distributed to club members and affiliated paddling organizations nationwide. The deadline for submissions is the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month. Information may be submitted via e-mail, at [schleter@dallas.net](mailto:schleter@dallas.net), or fax/phone to Steve Schleter, at (972) 329-0729. Articles about and of direct interest to DDRC members will receive first priority, paid advertising will be given second priority, and other materials will be included on a space-available basis. Unless otherwise specified, all information about river trips will be added to the DDRC Internet website trip calendar.

**Change of Address:** Please contact Chris Cockrell, Treasurer, if you need to report a change of mailing address. If you fail to get a newsletter, it will be because we do not have a current address or your membership has expired. Chris will be happy to correct wrong addresses, and take your dues if you are in arrears.

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### DDRC Annual Membership

\$20.00/year - Individual or Family  
\$200.00 - Lifetime Membership

Send to:

**DDRC**

**P.O. Box 820246  
Dallas, Texas 75382**

*continued from page 1*

floating merrily along the Durance and I noticed a growing number of fishermen. Some would shout, what I thought were friendly tidings, and I would shout back 'Bon Jour!' (pronounced basically 'Bone jur'). One fellow was speaking at us and pointing at his wrist. Not speaking French I told Denis that the guy wanted to know what time it was. It then occurred to Denis that we were on the river after hours and we should just keep ignorantly smiling and waving as we had been. The takeout just happened to be at the outfitters, so we brought up the schedule. He told us not to worry about it, that if anyone said anything just to start speaking English, or better yet speak German.

The second day was the Durance again, starting at Le Rabioux, where we happened to be camping in the adjacent campground. The campground was quite nice, inexpensive, right on the river, and had the best bathhouse I had ever seen. I got into mischief again at Le Rabioux. This time I noticed the surfers weren't pushing themselves to do a whole lot on the wave so I did the trickiest thing my skill level could handle and that was to twirl the paddle over my head while surfing. WELL, that got em goin! The next guy on the wave twirled the paddle

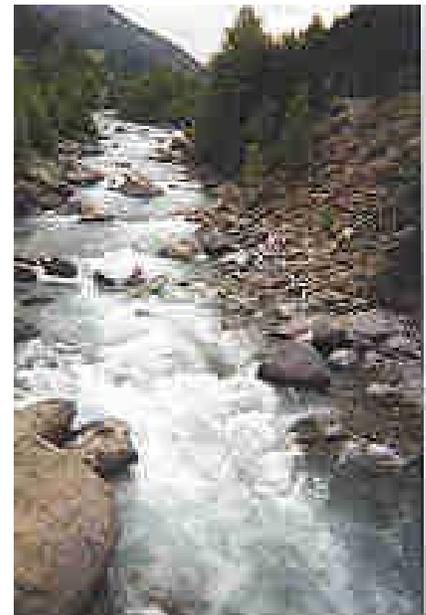


*Waterfall on the Guil River*

over his head, then threw it up in the air to catch it, then put it under his chin to hand surf. Several more followed suit with different paddle tricks. Me being the rowdy one, I hooped it up for each one's accomplishments. I asked one of the better surfers, an Austrian, if he could take a picture with my camera while he was surfing the wave. He said, in English, that he wasn't too sure. But he did and I have the picture!

Denis, by the way, after having only been kayaking for 3 months was doing a ripping good job of surfing, paddling, and rolling. After the Durance, that same day, we drove up to a small section of the Guil (pronounced Geel) that was hard to find and took us through a castle in our wanderings. We finally found the putin and were disappointed to run it in less than an hour. It was quite narrow and pretty, with a long and scenic waterfall dropping from the lip of a side cliff onto large boulders then cascading down the side of a hill to join the Guil. The Guil then emptied into the Durance.

The third day I woke up dizzy, with the tent spinning. I laid there for awhile, trying to figure out what was wrong. When I heard Denis stirring out of his tent, I called him over to tell him the bad news. He had to help me stand up and walk to the bathroom. Parts of my face were swollen, from sinuses I guess. I have never had anything like it happen to me before. I couldn't walk a straight line and even when standing still I'd start to sway. A doctor back in the states guessed it must have been Vertigo induced by a virus or the flying up and down then going into the Alps (although the Alps we were in were not very high). Needless to say, we didn't paddle that day and I should have gone straight to a doctor, but I never did that either. We did drive around scouting sections of the Ubaye river (pronounced Ubi) that we would do the next day. On one of the Class V sections, which we had no intention of paddling and was now a Class IV+ at low water, we watched a couple of rafts pinball their way down and over continuous large holes and boulders till they disappeared



*Class 4+ rapid on the Ubaye River*

around the bend.

The next day, on our way to the putin of an easier, upper section of the Ubaye we stopped here again to admire the whitewater. We got our first show of the popular European whitewater sport of Hydro. When I had first heard of this sport, I thought it was absurd. That was until I saw it this day. A Hydro is a foam block in the shape of a high volume kayak bow. A swimmer, that's right, a swimmer puts their hands up inside the Hydro and rests their chin on top, pointing the nose in the direction they wish to go. They then have on a high floatation PFD all the way past their waste, a wetsuit, and then flippers. I would not have believed it without seeing it, but these folks (who we found out had only been doing it for 4 days) were in total control of where they were going. They were swimming Class IV+ water and eddy hopping without a problem! Never the less, my heart was in my throat the whole time watching them. I was impressed and I'm eager to order a Hydro and play around with it in the states.

Although I was still quite dizzy and unbalanced, I was a bit better than the day before and hell bent on paddling.

*continued on page 5*

## THE SAFETY SECTION

The intent of this monthly article will be to communicate basic information that can be used to help prevent accidents or at least minimize injury, involving paddling sports.

The information will come from a number of sources such as the Whitewater Rescue Manual, the Outdoor Action Program of Princeton University, and the American Canoe Assoc.

The first part of a safe river trip is planning a safe river trip. Princeton University's Outdoor Action Program, gives us a helpful outline.

Preplanning involves:

- **Knowing the river**  
Be familiar with the 6 river classifications.  
In remote locations you need to exercise additional precautions. One common method is to increase the class rating of a river by one. For example, a Class III becomes a Class IV.
- **Knowing your group**  
The river or river section should be chosen based on something that the person(s) with the least skills in the group could run. The person(s) with the highest skills should feel comfortable in performing rescues in the most difficult section of the river.
- **Knowing your own skills and resources**  
It is important to analyze the possible accident potential, based on environment and human factors. Ask yourself what is the worst case scenario. Then ask yourself what can you do to reduce the accident potential.
- **Having the right equipment**  
At it's most basic would include a PFD, paddle, boat, helmet for whitewater paddlers, appropriate clothing for the potential weather, throw bag, and first-aid kit.

Once on the river:

- Travel Safely
  - Keep the group together in some fashion
  - Be prepared for a rescue
  - Have the proper paddling and rescue skills
- These can be obtained from the DDRC and it's members.

For Sale: Blue Prijon T-Canyon. Trained on big drops and wicked water. Gets helacious enders! Hard to flip, but easy to roll. Good beginner and expedition boat. Includes flotation. \$350. Contact Whitney Peters at 817-540-4636 or email [Steep89359@aol.com](mailto:Steep89359@aol.com).



*continued from page 3*

We put on a section of the upper Ubaye that is rated a Class III at normal flows. At these low levels this section was very technical with nonstop, tight maneuvering around small rocks and a few strainers. This was a bad place for a flip and took focus to avoid pins. A creek boat would have been a better choice for this run than a 3D playboat. This was the friendliest section of river too, because it ran along a road and had many people watching and waving. At one point a group of school children were crossing a bridge and enjoyed waving at us, calling out 'Bon Jour!'.

We paddled for a good 18 miles, the last section quite flat. We entered the town of Le Tuille (pronounced Twill) and came upon the bridge that signified the beginning of a Class III+ rapid and then Class III technical rapids for several more miles. At this point, I unfortunately felt quite unbalanced and down right crummy (pronounced like crap) and couldn't go on. The Class IIs were feeling like Class IVs. I took out at the bridge and snapped a picture of Denis running the III+ rapid. We were fortunate (because we only had the one car and the two of us) that hitch hiking in Europe is so easy. We always left the car at the putin, took out where ever we wanted, changed into dry clothes we carried in the boats, stashed the boats, and quickly got rides back to the putin. We were picked up by all sorts of people, elderly couples, singular women, an Italian business man on his way back to Italy, etc. I really enjoyed this part of the trip. Denis always had to explain that I wasn't weird for just sitting there looking out the window while they chatted away, I just couldn't speak



*Typical French Village*

French (and felt like crap). On this particular hitch, we were dropped off in one of the many villages to check out a pharmacy for my ear. It took some convincing, but Denis got the pharmacist to recommend and sell us some ear drops. We were convinced I must have an ear infection, but the medication didn't work.

The last two days were spent on the Upper Guisane (pronounced Geesane). This was another narrow, crystal clear, aqua blue, and very cold river. It had continuous rapids of mostly Class II/III-, with one Class III+ or IV- called S-bend that started off steep and technical for 50 yards then leveled out to big waves and some holes around a bend for another 200 yards. I'd like to go back some day when the flows are normal (and I'm feeling normal) and run both the Upper and Lower of this river.

Denis goes to France to visit his family every year. He plans on including paddling every time and is thinking about coordinating a trip for other paddlers. I would recommend you join him one year. The villages in the Alps are unique, inexpensive, and friendly. Everything was very affordable from kayak rental to eating out and there was a variety of water to choose from.

## Trinity River Trips

### Fall 1999

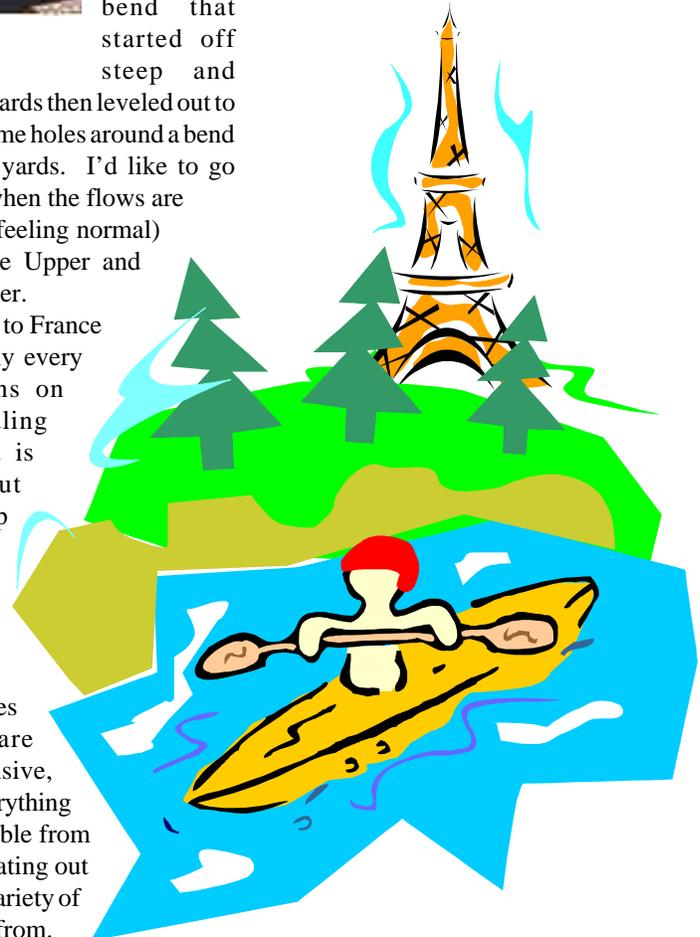
September 11 - Trinity Mainstem, South Loop 12 to Dowdy Ferry, 8+ miles, meet at 8:30 a.m.

October 9 - Elm Fork, Belt Line Road to California Crossing, 8 miles, meet at 8:30 a.m.

November 13 - West Fork, Belt Line Road to Sylvan, 13 miles, meet at 8:30 a.m.

December 11 - Trinity Mainstem, Sylvan to South Loop 12, 10 miles, meet at 8:30 a.m.

Call Charles Allen at  
**214-941-1757**  
for more information.



## Labor Day on the Sabine River

September 4, 5, and 6 will be the annual Sabine River float, come hell or low water. This trip is sponsored by the Big Thicket Voyageurs but they let most all tag along. We will meet under the Highway 63, bridge Saturday Sept. 4 at 0900, and unload boats and gear. This is near Burksville Texas. Take highway 63 east out of Jasper Texas heading towards Louisiana. 1100 will see the states biggest shuttle procession heading to the take-out. In the past the local Leesville, La. Community has provided school buses to haul us back to the put in at no or low cost. Please don't assume it's free though, take a five spot and at least offer your shuttle driver a token of your appreciation. They don't always take it but they a doing us a BIG favor. After the shuttle it's a half day on the river and then we camp on a big clean sandbar. Set your camp up above the generating water line or face midnight moving. The water level changes from 200 cfs to 16,000 cfs almost daily. Sunday will be a full day on the river and then another sandbar. Monday is about a half day out to the vehicles and 5 hours back the Big D.

It's always a fun trip but it's also almost always hot. Bring sunscreen, a hat and even some shade if you have room. There are no supplies available on the river so bring everything you will need for this 28 mile trip. There is a little store at the put-in that has ice, drinks, gas, bait etc. but not a big grocery list.

Any questions call or e-mail

Jack Deatherage  
@ 972-222-1407  
jfd2@airmail.net

## Arkansas Canoe Club Rendezvous

You are invited to the 7th annual Arkansas Canoe Club Rendezvous on Lake Catherine at FFA Camp Couchdale. This year Rendezvous will be held September 17-19 and we'll have a lot of fun activities for the adults and kids. If you've never been, Rendezvous is a big get together for the ACC and we put on paddling clinics, roll sessions, GPS classes, and of course, surfing at Rockport. This year we're even going to put on a very informal whitewater rodeo. If you'd like further information please look at the ACC website at [www.swalaw.com/acc/](http://www.swalaw.com/acc/).

**Cost:** A minimal admittance fee is charged to cover the cost of the campground for the weekend. Each adult is asked to pay \$10. Kids aged 6 - 12 are \$5 each with kiddos 5 and under FREE! The maximum charge for a family will be \$30.

**Camp Couchdale Information:** The Arkansas Canoe Club has rented the entire Camp Couchdale facility for the weekend. There is ample camping area available for car/tent camping or small pop-up campers. There is not a lot of space or hook-ups for motor homes.

Camp Couchdale has several non-air-conditioned cabins that are available on a first-come first-served basis. There are also several air-conditioned cabins that are available for rent from the Camp Director Eva Fletcher for an additional charge. Contact Eva directly to reserve an air-conditioned cabin (501/262-1326). Bring your own bed linens and towels. Camping will be allowed in two main areas. One area, near the front gate, has traditionally been the gathering spot for the campfire. Don't camp here if you want to go to bed early! The area near the swimming pool has traditionally been the quiet area. Quiet time will begin at 11 pm for the entire campground. Earplugs will be available at the Registration desk for light sleepers. Campfires will be permitted, but practice safety! No fires are allowed on the baseball field. Liquor is available at Diamond Head Liquor Store or you local store - please, no glass. Pets are welcome - on a leash only. There are three large camp dogs that live there and roam the area. They Rule the Grounds!

**Meals:** Breakfast and Lunch will be served by the Camp staff in the Dining Hall. The cost is \$5 per meal. You must prepurchase your meal tickets on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning so the staff will know how much food to prepare. Tickets will be on sale in the Dining Hall. Potluck Dinner - Bring your favorite dish to feed your family plus one other camper. The kitchen will be available to warm food and provide drinks. Bring your own plate and utensils. Due to past complaints we will set up two separate serving lines to speed up the process. Please make sure to bring your contribution. We will be hungry by Saturday night!

**Includes the following activities:** Silent Auction Dagger Legend Canoe Raffle, New Gear for Sale Used Gear for Sale (Bring your used gear), River Videos (Bring your favorite), Canoe & Kayak Clinics Moving Water Rolls, Kid's Activities Howdy Party, Whitewater Rodeo @ Rockport Gardening for Backyard Wildlife, Hand Quilting Discover Diving, Margaritaville Mixoff Dutch Oven Cooking Challenge, Bonfire Instructor Forum, Throw Bag Drills Ouachita River Float Trip, Solo Playboating Skills Cold Weather Gear

All possible effort has been made to create an up to date and accurate schedule. However, it is a work in progress. Please check back on the ACC website for the latest news on events. If there is something not quite right or an event you'd like to do, please contact me at [t.yama@mail.atu.edu](mailto:t.yama@mail.atu.edu)

Hope to see you there!!!

T Yamashita

1999 Rendezvous Chairperson.

## August 21, Saturday Brazos River Moonlight Paddle

Brazos River below Whitney Dam.  
Contact Bonnie Haskins at  
972/254-9672 or Jerry Johnson at  
817/267-5375 or email:  
[jjohnsn@airmail.net](mailto:jjohnsn@airmail.net)

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A Public Safety Message from the National Safe Boating Campaign

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**DDRC Roll, Paddle, and Rescue**

Sessions are every Wednesday from 5:00 pm to dark at Lake Grapevine, Rockledge Park. Everyone of all skill levels is welcome to come practice strokes and rolls or get in a boat for the first time.

The Park is located at the northwest side of the dam (off the other side of the road from the spillway). If there is a dam release, then go to the spillway. No park fees. If you'd like to come out and need a boat call Keith Smith ahead of time at (940) 566-4869 and he may be able to supply a kayak and gear.

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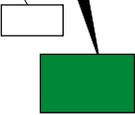
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