

# White water rafting in the Chilliwack

By GARRY MARR

Was I excited when I received an A on my first report card. Fifteen minutes later my brother burst through the door and told Mom about his three As.

Suddenly I didn't seem too smart. Everything we do seems to be measured by how well our neighbour is doing. Only an extraordinary person can receive his or her grade, salary or reward and walk away satisfied without knowing what the competition did. It starts in school — sneaking a look at someone else's mark — and continues into adulthood.

Think of the greatest accomplishment in your life and you'll realize it was great only because few had done the same. We kid ourselves by wishing success to friends when we know their success will compete with our own.

My most memorable moment was my dive into the Chilliwack River in British Columbia. Ten boats rafted down the river; my friends and I were in two of the boats to a lagoon for a rest. They recommended we dive from a cliff into what they said was deep enough water. My first thought leaned towards fear. I couldn't swim very well; friends had pressured me into coming at all, and my fear of diving dated back to childhood. At 21 the fear was cemented in my brain.

I climbed to the top of the cliff and decided there was no way I could jump. But behind me were 50 other rafters in a hurry to jump. I stalled and let two people go before me. They made it look easy, and there was no way I could walk down the hill without facing stares from everyone.

The moment of decision had arrived; the people behind me were anxious for their turn.

Before I could decide, one of the raft guides pushed me off the 50-foot cliff into the river. Waiting to hit the water was like waiting for death. Finally, I was immersed and, to my surprise, I came to the surface naturally. I swam as hard as I could against the current. When I reached the shore I'd lost a contact lens and my fear of water.

There was no fanfare, no congratulations — everyone was already watching the next jumper, Mike. I wondered if he had any doubts, but the all-American type never do, or at least we think they don't. After Mike, two more guys jumped — head first. My accomplishment seemed to be fading quickly.

All my friends had jumped, some more than once, except Selina. She was at the top of the cliff, facing my indecision. I wanted her to jump.

She decided to face the bigger challenge of walking down. I resented her because she hadn't done what I was forced to do. Two other guys didn't make it either. We asked Selina and the two "chickens" if they had dived. We all knew who had dived and who hadn't, but we had to gloat. It wasn't enough that we had dived, somebody had to not have done it.

It's simple: what's the use of having a million dollars if everyone else does? Most people can live with a Honda as long as their neighbour owns a K-Car and not a Mercedes. Sure — some people don't care about their neighbours' accomplishments, but they are our betters. Perhaps we should be jealous of them for that. Believe me, I am.



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#### YEOMEN

- Football York at Guelph  
Saturday Sept. 10, 2:00 p.m.
- Golf Windsor Invitational  
Monday Sept. 12, 10:00 a.m.
- Soccer Ryerson at York (exh.)  
Thursday Sept. 8, 5:00 p.m.  
York at Laurentian  
Sunday Sept. 11

#### YEOWOMEN

- Soccer York at Seneca College (exh.)  
Wednesday Sept. 14, 7:00 p.m.

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