[Jim Payne’s update from 60th Reunion...]

Yes, after 20 years and 16 long distance solo voyages I’m about wrapping up these escapades. I like to think this fourth book brings together all the elements of my travel writing: adventure, meeting people, history, culture—and of course, the folly of the driver!

Chasing Thoreau; An Adventure in Paddling and Philosophy describes my effort to trace a rowboat trip taken by Henry David Thoreau and his brother in 1839 on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. Rather surprisingly, this effort to track Thoreau’s physical trip connected with Thoreau’s ideas in an exciting and personal way, so the book makes a fitting celebration of Thoreau’s bicentennial this year.

For those of you with a computer, you can learn more (and order) at the dedicated website: http://www.chasingthoreau.com/

Rivers navigated:

One Inch Above the Water includes the Potomac; Columbia; Hudson, Erie Canal, Champlain Canal, Lake Champlain, the Richleau River and the St. Lawrence; Florida Keys; and the Mississippi.

Worlds to Discover includes the Connecticut (and the visit to Hermon), the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola (GA and FL), The Bio Bio River in Chile, and the Ohio River.

Discovering England was on the Thames.

Chasing Thoreau involved the Concord River in MA and the Merrimack.

I also did voyages on the Ijssel in Holland, and the Pend Oreille River in ID/WA (these write-ups are mimeos).

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[From Jim's publisher...]

At age 10, Jim Payne daringly rode his bicycle from his home suburb of Leonia, NJ along highways and across the George Washington Bridge into New York City - and then, alarmed at what he had gotten into, he turned around and pedaled back home. The episode prefigured the wanderlust deep within that, some 50 years later, gained expression in his solo kayak journeys on American and international waterways.

Payne became an academic, specializing in political science, and earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley in 1968. He has written dozens of books, including works on Latin American politics, foreign policy, the US Congress, taxation, welfare and voluntarism. He also penned a series of allegorical works on political philosophy, disguised as children's books (the Princess Navina series and Take Me To Your Government).

Successful as he was, Payne's adventurous nature prevailed, and in 1985 he left the security of a tenured professorship to become an independent scholar and freelance writer. "It was the smartest move I ever made in my life" he affirms. Settling in Sandpoint, Idaho, Payne conducted research and writing for various 'think tanks' and gained outlets as a freelance writer, appearing in Fortune magazine, The Wall Street Journal, Reader's Digest, and many other publications, as well as radio and television interviews.

World to Discover marks Payne's third travel adventure novel, chronicling four of his more recent voyages. Payne has also written numerous articles about his solo kayak tripis that, to date, have covered many of the major US waterways as well as special trips abroad. Payne recently returned from kayaking in Holland.

In Idaho he also met and married his second wife, Judy, with whom he lives most happily, running away now and then, returning each time younger and wiser.

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[From 50th Reunion Yearbook...]

Wife Judy Payne

I went on to become a political science professor, teaching at Yale, Wesleyan, Johns Hopkins, and Texas A&M. In 1985, to save my soul, I left academia to become a free-lance writer and researcher, and moved to Sandpoint, Idaho, where I now live.

My studies led me to the conclusion that most government policies, and indeed the enterprise of welfare-state democracy itself, are grounded in illusions and irrational yearnings, and I have enjoyed exploring and explaining these fallacies. Some of my books in this vein include The Culture of Spending Why Congress Spends beyond Our Means, Costly Returns The Burdens of the U. S. Tax System, and Overcoming Welfare Expecting more from the Poor-and from Ourselves.

I believe that broad social trends, including disenchantment with government, will gradually lead to smaller-scale and voluntary systems for addressing public problems. This theory is expounded in A History of Force Exploring the worldwide movement against habits of coercion, bloodshed, and mayhem. Pursing this theme, I write extensively on voluntary organizations, and compile a "Directory of Voluntary Organizations" for my hometown of Sandpoint.

One of my major hobbies has been taking long-distance solo kayak trips. Journeys have included the Potomac, the Columbia, the Hudson, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, and Miami to Key West. I am writing a book on these adventures, One Inch above the Water A Kayak Odyssey on America's Waterways.