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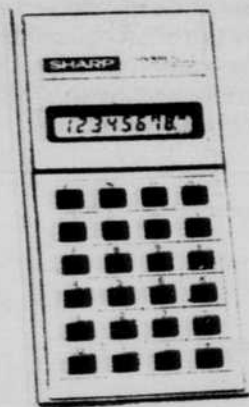
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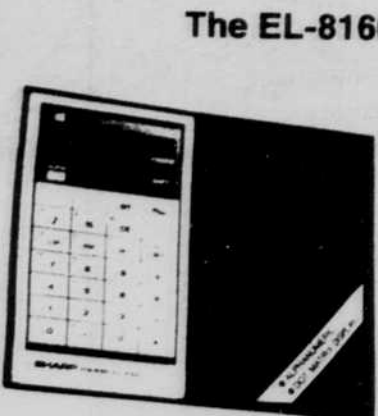
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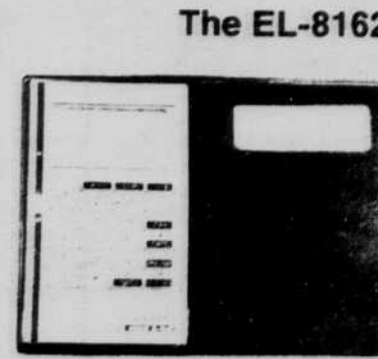


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Bruce Mason and his kayak are headed for whitewater high in the Himalayas.

Rafters head for Nepal

Boaters to tackle Himalayan whitewater

By HARRY ESTEVE
Of the Emerald

With 50 days worth of freeze-dried food on his back and a 36-pound kayak balanced on his head, Bruce Mason will soon be on his way to a remote region of Nepal. At least he'll have company.

Mason, who for the last 10 years has worked with the University's Outdoor Program, is heading a team of nine other boaters to run the Karnali River, a relatively obscure tributary of the Ganges River, India's largest waterway.

The trip is being billed as the "American Himalayan Whitewater Expedition." They are scheduled to leave Eugene on Thursday and return "sometime around the first of the year."

"I'm not a daredevil," Mason says. It's a distinction he's emphatic about.

"They seem to be very popular these days. But what I do is substantial adventure and exploration."

"Substantial" may be just the right word for the trip he and the nine others have planned.

From beginning to end the expedition will cover terrain varying from the icy alpine tundra of the Himalayas to the tepid grasslands and jungle at the India/Nepal border.

The source of the Karnali lies 17,000 feet above sea level, near the Tibetan border. Mason predicts his group will embark at a point 10 miles from and 6,000 feet below the source.

"The quality of maps of that country leave a lot to be desired," he says but assumes the distance from start to finish is 300 miles.

To get to the launch site the group will travel by air to Pokhara, in central Nepal. There they plan to charter a small plane to fly them to Jumla, a small village in the west with one of the two landing strips in that part of Nepal.

From Jumla they will set out on foot, carrying all the gear and food necessary to complete the trip. The walk from Jumla crosses three mountain passes and will take nearly two weeks, Mason says.

"This is the most remote part of Nepal," he says. "Most tourists go to central Nepal. Little is known about the terrain."

Getting there may not be half the fun — but it is more than half the expense, Mason says.

Every member of the expedition had to come up with \$3,500, and most of that went to air fare. Chartering the plane in Jumla costs \$2,000 alone, he says.

In order to make the trip, some of the boaters quit their jobs. Others had to find jobs to

come up with the money. All have at least three years of river running experience.

Two of the group's members are women. Mason says he had hoped for a more even distribution, but Karla VanderZander and Ana Dronkert were the only women to join the group.

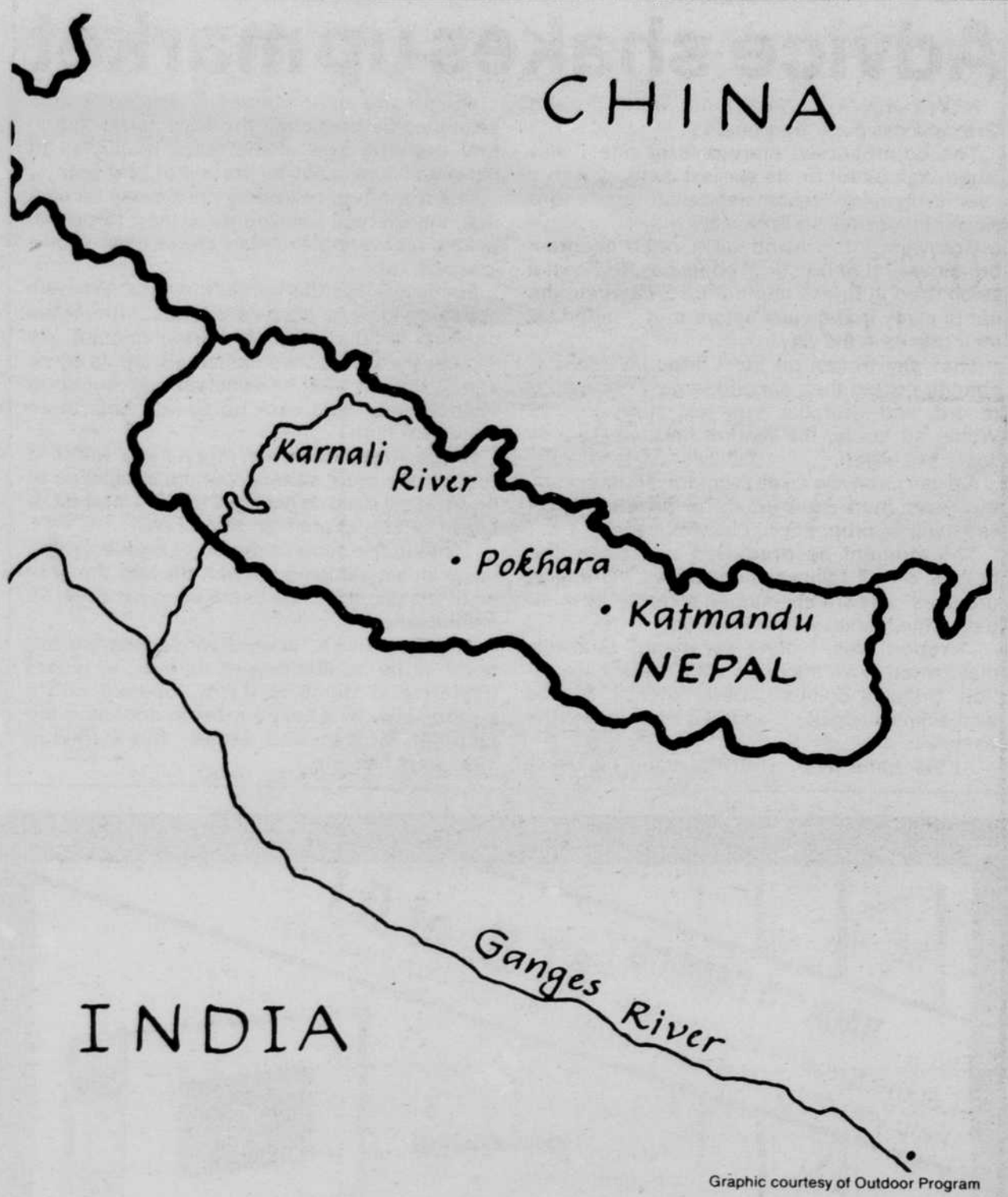
"It was important to us that this was not a macho male attack-the-river kind of thing," Mason says.

The other seven who will accompany Mason, VanderZander and Dronkert are Mark Stevenson, University law school graduate Bill Hanlin, former Oregon Daily Emerald photographer Warren Morgan, University graduate Doug Fischer, Doug Toolee, Barry Miller and Rick Freidenthal.

Although the trip is being organized through the University Outdoor Program, no funds from the University are helping pay for it.

Mason says publicity about the trip has been "well received nationally," and several outdoor outfitters have donated equipment and clothing to the expedition.

Mason also will be bringing along his camera. Several outdoor magazines have expressed interest in the trip, he says.



Graphic courtesy of Outdoor Program

CASIO

ML-90 CASIO



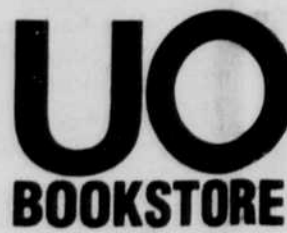
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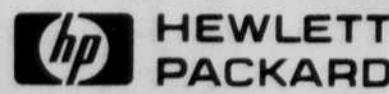


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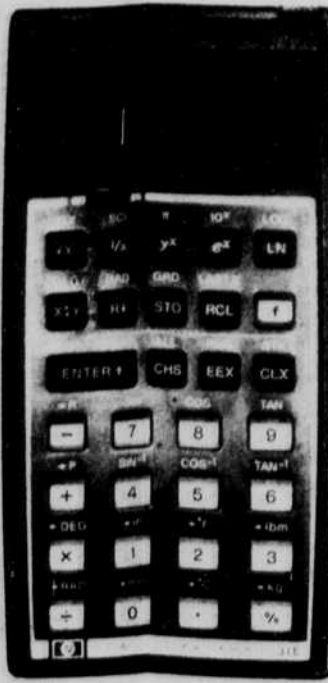
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