

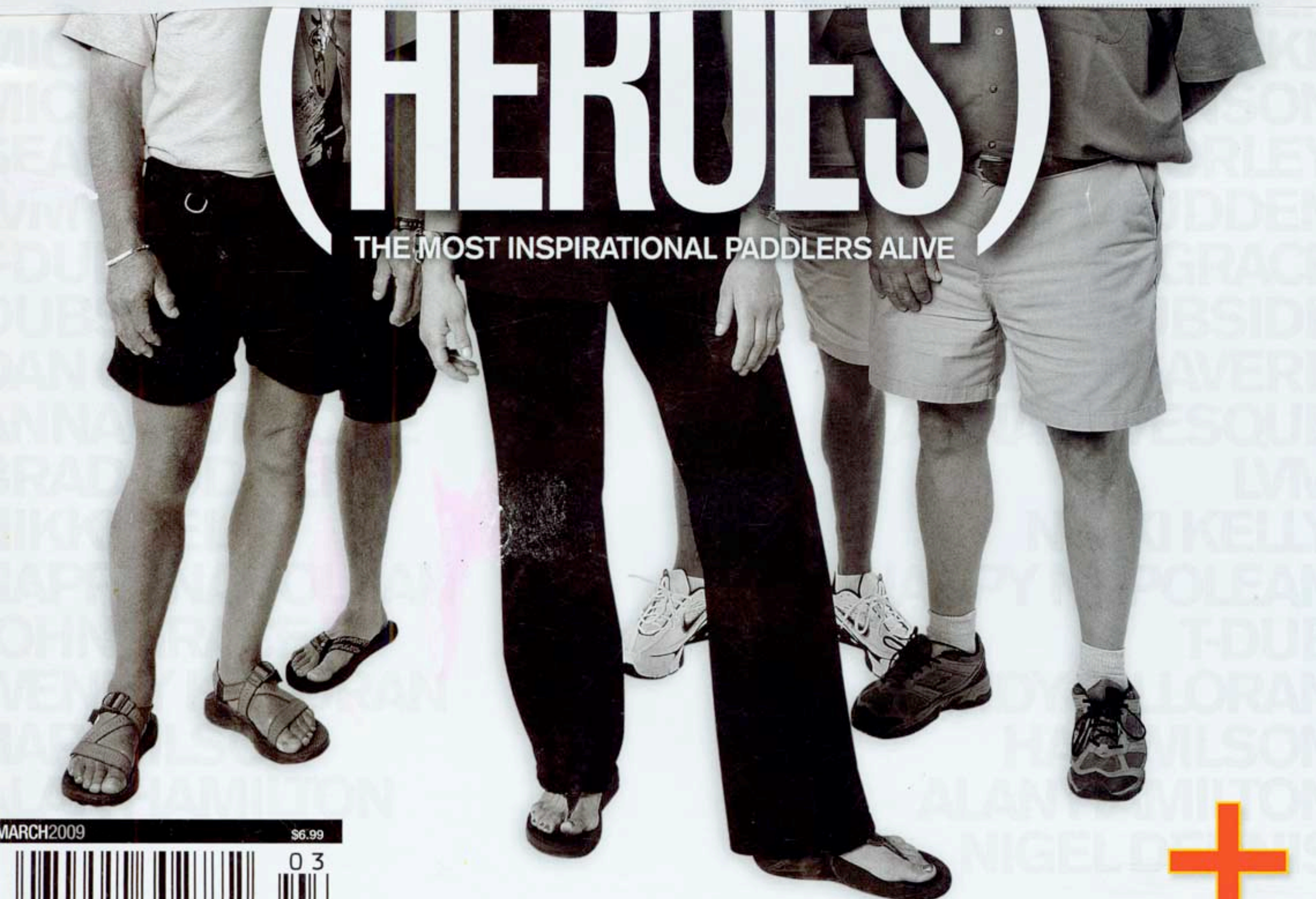
CANOE KAYAK

→ ANNA LEVESQUE

If you've ever paddled with your girlfriend or gal pal on the river, you know that women approach kayaking differently than men. No one knows this better than Anna Levesque, the 34-year-old founder of Girls at Play. A five-time member of the Canadian freestyle team, Levesque (LUH-veck) remembers feeling "very alone" when first paddling hard rapids with the guys. She made her first women's instructional video in 2003. Since then, Levesque, who also teaches yoga and studies meditation, has helped countless chick boaters build confidence through kayaking. "I am very open with the fact that I have fear, and keeping it together mentally is a challenge for me," says Levesque, also an instructor at the Nantahala Outdoors Center. "My whole mission is to make it okay to enjoy kayaking without showing off or being super hard-core." —Kate Stepan



Blake Gordon



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