GCA
GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION
Post Office Box 7023
Atlanta, Georgia 30357

THE EDDY LINE

VOLUME 49, NO. 4 JULY/AUGUST 2014

Inside this Issue:

- *Message from the President —page 5*
- *WW Warriors and Warriorettes Weekend—page 5*
- *Bite the Bullet—page 6*
- *2014 Canoe Club Challenge—page 7*
- *Methodical Approach to the Combat Roll—page 8*
- *Personal First Descent—Chattooga 3.5—page 9*
- *Slalom Racing is Not Just for Racers—page 10*

Photo courtesy of Katherine Fulk

The West Virginia Connection, part 1 of 2

As published on Handpaddler.com Report and photos by Jana Walker

All we knew was that we were headed for Albright, West Virginia to meet Jim Snyder, famous paddle maker, boat designer and squirt boater; and Attila Szilagyi, owner of Custom Inflatables and builder of the most excellent "super-ducky" known to mankind – the ThrillSeeker. My husband Stephen and I were ready to hit the road.

We set out from Buford, Georgia on Tuesday evening after an unexpectedly long day of work. We had no destination in mind for the evening, deciding to drive until we wanted to stop. We sailed across state lines through Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. By that time, we were ready to look for a place to rest. Stephen found a nice little campground in Fancy Gap, Virginia. We arrived long after dark and proceeded past all of the

(Continued on page 3)

21st Annual GCA Chattooga River Clean-Up Saturday, June 21, 2014,

Report and photos by Roger Nott

We had great weather and a hard-working, congenial crew for the GCA's annual clean-up of our adopted section of the Chattooga River, from Thrift's Ferry to Highway 76.

The participant paddlers included kayakers Alex Daniel, Frank Lorch and Dave Taylor, Chuck Wilburn and his dog Sheltie in an inflatable C-1, and Jim Neukum and I in OC-1's. Mark Neisler and Steve "Chainsaw" Smith helped us clean the area around Highway 76 but did not paddle with us. We collected a total of 7 full bags of trash, as well as parts of a couple of tires. We also rescued a large machete and a waterproof camera. If you lost either of these items, contact me and I will return them.

Below are, from the left, Frank, Alex, Jim, myself and Dave with some of our booty, while Chuck and Sheltie guarded our equipment.

We cleaned the parking lots and river access areas for almost three hours before setting shuttle and putting on the river about 1:20 PM. We had

(Continued on page 2)

21st Annual GCA Chattooga River Clean-Up, continued

1.55 on the USGS Highway 76 gauge, a near perfect level for cleaning which allowed us to get a lot of trash from the riverbed and still enjoy the river's fine whitewater. We all enjoyed clean runs and were tired when we finally hauled our boatloads of booty to the Highway 76 parking lot about 6:45.

After refortifying ourselves with cool beverages, we all set off for Woodall about seven PM. We touched no further trash but played with renewed vigor and very much enjoyed our treasured river and thereafter the libations and good fellowship at the take-out. Many thanks to our eight-man crew, the five others who volunteered to help but for whom fate thwarted their intentions, and co-sponsor American Rivers, which provided trash bags as part of their National River Clean-up Program. *EL*

West Virginia Connection, continued

RVs down through an open field and entered a densely wooded area where the campsites were located. There wasn't another person anywhere in sight. We decided it was too late to set up the tent so we would sleep in the truck but we did want to enjoy a campfire first. We worked for the better part of an hour to get that fire going but despite our efforts, it just would not stay lit. Stephen even used a significant amount of a bottle of Jameson's which resulted in a lovely fire for about 15 seconds before dying over and over again. We were about to give up when I remembered something. I had left a small can of hair spray in my bag from a work trip! Two blasts from our makeshift blowtorch and we were enjoying a ripping fire!

We retired to the truck and slept surprisingly well. Wednesday morning, we had breakfast at a little diner on the Blueridge Parkway in

Fancy Gap before getting back on the road. We passed through two long tunnels carved through the mountains before crossing into West Virginia which is absolutely beautiful. We arrived in the New River Gorge around noon and found an outfitter to see about our boating and shuttle options. The outfitters don't shuttle private boaters so our only options were to go to the take-out and hope to catch shuttle with locals, skip going downriver, or join the 1:00 rafting trip. We opted for the rafting trip so at least we'd get to see the New and we definitely made the right choice.

We paddled the New River Gorge from Cunard to Fayette Station. The river is warm, natural flow and drop – pool for the most part. The New has its headwaters in North Carolina and flows north and west until its confluence with the Gauley. By the second named rapid, Upper Railroad, we were glad we were in a raft! There is a significant drop in the neighborhood of 6-8 feet into a massive hole and this was a relatively low water run at about 2700 cfs – the raft companies will run it all the way up to 30,000 cfs which I can't even imagine! I had done some research about the river in preparation for our trip and the only rapid that gave me pause was Double Z because there are technical, must-make moves with massive undercut rocks. What I totally underestimated was the set of rapids called "The Keeneys". The Keeneys consist of three distinct rapids without much space between and with some potentially serious consequences, namely "The Meatgrinder". The name says it all and the main flow wants to take you right into it. Double Z turned out to be much more straightforward than I expected. We ran the first drop before ferrying into an eddy to look at the rest of the rapid before running it. I definitely recommend running the New if you're in the area. The scenery is great with high cliff walls and numerous giant boulders on the banks and in the river. The water is pleasantly warm and deep and most of the rapids are followed by long pools. Do a rafting trip as a scouting mission or find someone to show you down. The only comparable rivers for southeastern boaters would be the love child of Ocoee and Chattooga on steroids. The waves on the New are bigger than anything on the Ocoee and there are numerous potential consequences but the drop-pool nature of the New is very different from the continuous nature of the Ocoee. I felt like I had time to process the previous rapid and relax before the next one was upon us. The trip ends with an amazing view of the New River Gorge Bridge, the largest steel single span arch bridge in our hemisphere and the fourth largest in the world. On the shuttle ride back from the river, we spotted Dirty Ernie's Rib Pit and decided it would be ribs for dinner!

We were on the fence about whether to push on to our end destination or camp and finish the drive in the morning. We decided to stop but the universe had other plans. We found a campground on google maps and I turned off the highway onto a two-lane road. As soon as the road dropped around a corner, it became a barely passable gravel drive and I hoped no vehicles would come from the other direction. After 20 minutes of driving, we never found the imaginary campground even though Ms. GPS clearly stated, "Your destination is on the left." Liar. Back to the highway we went! There was a KOA on the map a few miles away and while we've had some not-so-

Continued on page 4

West Virginia Connection, continued

great experiences with KOAs before, we figured we'd give it a shot. The check-in for this KOA is inside a Days Inn. Weird. Stephen went in to pay for our site but returned empty handed. No tent camping at this KOA. We had the option of paying for a hotel room but our boats were in the back of the truck so we decided to press on. Stephen found a small hotel on the map so we pulled off the highway yet again to take a look. Sketch city. A couple of men milling around the parking lot of the cinder block building. No. At this point, it has become a comedy of errors. We looked at the time we had spent in search of lodging and realized that if we had just kept driving, we would have arrived at Jim's by now. We saw a sign for yet another campground on Sutton Lake and decided to try one last time. After driving past the dam and around the lake, we arrived at the gates which were, of course, locked. We looked at each other and laughed. Then a car came speeding up behind us, horn blowing. We pulled around the loop, unsure whether we were about to be escorted into the campground by a ranger or robbed at gunpoint by a marauding gang of meth heads. An older lady emerged from the car and lumbered to the gate. After fumbling with the lock for a minute, she opened the gate and waved us through. She told us that we needed to drive around and see if there was an open spot for us, then return to the payment box and deposit cash because the ranger drives through at night and checks for anyone who has snuck past the gate. Do we have cash? You know the answer. We drove through mostly just to turn around. The campground ambassador stopped us again on our way out and offered to let us camp on her lot which was very sweet of her but by that point, we decided it was Jim's or bust.

After returning to the highway, the rest of the drive was uneventful and we arrived at Jim's house after midnight, tired but happy to have made it. We unpacked and settled into Jim's "Playhouse" which is essentially a backyard fort for boaters. I was struck by the light source – a ceramic Cabbage Patch Kid lamp attached to the wall with no shade – just the light bulb protruding from the top of her head as if she had a good idea. The walls, beams, and ceiling are covered in quotes, sketches, and expressions of thanks from the many people who have been guests in the Playhouse over the years. Once we had unloaded, we set up our camp chairs in the yard and admired the beautiful sky with the sound of the Cheat River flowing nearby. Perfection! About 2:00 AM, Jim emerged from his house and greeted us. Somehow it came up in conversation that Fallingwater, the famous Frank Lloyd Wright house, was located about an hour north in Pennsylvania so that was added to our list of things to see. Finally, we headed to bed.

Thursday, we slept in a bit. Then Jim treated us to a tour of his workshop and explained his paddle-making process. Just incredible. I knew his paddles were beautiful but I had no idea how much time, thought, and care went into creating them. They are true works of functional art. We also got to see how Jim designs and creates prototype fiberglass kayaks and learned

that he was the designer of the first kayak I ever paddled, an Emotion Mojo. Crazy! From there, we crossed the street to see Attila so he could get final measurements to complete our new custom ThrillSeeker. She is a beauty! Attila explained many of the reasons why his ThrillSeekers are no duckies – although he does have a large yellow duck wearing a PFD and rafting helmet on the roadside exterior of the building which definitely makes it easy to find. With the fitting complete, I went with Stephen and Jim for a squirt boating session/lesson at Fascination Alley on the Cheat River.

Attila joined us in his Thrillseeker and did some exceptional rock splats and stern squirts while in "blast mode." When the squirt session ended, we headed to dinner at the Preston County Inn where Stephen's dad and stepmom, Robert and Miranda were staying. Attila and Jim joined us along with Jim's lovely wife, Doris. We had a good evening of eating and visiting and then it was back to the Playhouse to rest up for a big day on Friday.

Continued in next issue

Message from the President by Todd McGinnis

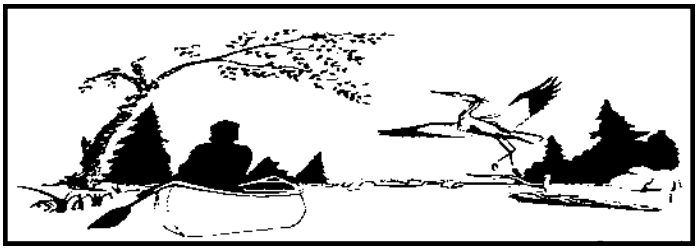
Years ago when I was in high school my Principal told me that if I ever got into paddling that I needed to join the GCA. He stated the GCA was a great group of folks and that they would teach me how to safely paddle. That stuck with me for years and when I started paddling I joined the GCA as instructed. Other than my wife, Georgia, it may have been one of the few things that stuck with me since high school.

The club has been very good to me. Through many paddling trips I was given good guidance and advice by some pretty awesome folks. It was because of their time that I became a stronger paddler. GCA members willingly took me under their wing and helped me learn how to paddle. That is the one of the great thing about clubs and what they offer their members – instruction, friends to paddle with, and most importantly the knowledge of rivers and resources. It was a huge help for me.

An awesome club is not measured by its size of membership but by what it does for its members. We have a rich history of promoting river safety, having fun and throwing some awesome events. Thanks to Jana Walker our VP, Shirley Tharp, and our members showing up to help coordinate trips we had one of the all-time best Spring Extravaganzas. If it were not for you our members we would not have been able to put on such a great event.

Through the years I took part in many of the club events and eventually started volunteering. Next thing I knew I found myself as an officer of the club. It has been a great experience. For me personally there has been no greater experience than helping someone get down a new river. It has also been rewarding to know that we as a club were instrumental in helping Laura Dillon start the Atlanta Chapter of the Team River Runner. I am enjoying my time as President and look forward to continuing to contribute to the GCA.

I want to encourage you all to think about helping coordinate a trip or coming up with an idea for a great event the club should do. To continue the tradition of the GCA we cannot let a few lead the charge. We need fresh ideas and paddles on the water to keep it going. Thanks for being a great club and more importantly some of the best damn paddlers and people out there. It is awesome to be a part of it all. *EL*



WHITEWATER WARRIORS AND WARRIORETTES WEEKEND

By Chief Silver Fish (aka Jack Taylor) xl13jdt2@bellsouth.net

This is a smoke signal for the annual "Whitewater Warriors and Warriorettes Weekend" (WWW) on the Tuckaseegee and Nantahala Rivers on August 8-10, 2014. WWW will camp as a "War Party" at the Smoky Mountain Meadows Campground on Friday night August 8 and Saturday night August 9. Please make your own reservations at SMMC, 828-488-3672 and ask for campsites 43-49 (if you prefer other sites that's fine).

A "Scouting Party" will go to dinner in Bryson City both nights. "Pow-wows" will occur at SMMC for those braves and bravettes who prefer to have dinner there so they can get to the firewater quicker. Campfires will blaze both nights. Bring some firewood if you can. Chief Silver Wolf (Brannen Proctor) will be the lead campfire tender, he has been on a steep learning curve lately.

"Raiding Parties" will paddle both the Tuckaseegee (trip coordinator needed) and Nantahala Rivers (trip coordinator needed) on Saturday August 9. Then, at Saturday night's campfire pow-wow we will decide which river(s) Raiding Parties will paddle on Sunday August 10.

Please send an email to me, Chief Silver Fish, or call 770-998-0350 (so we have an idea who is coming) to join this WWW Weekend. If you cannot camp, but want to paddle, give me a call shortly before the event to learn the meeting places and times. Last year's WWW Weekend succeeded and fun was had by all.

May you be mooned by a pretty full moon.

Keeping In Touch

To contact the GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 7023, Atlanta, GA 30357.

Groupmail: GCA maintains a group email list to help members share information of general interest. To sign up, send an e-mail to gcalist-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Website: Information about GCA, forms (including membership application and GCA waiver form), a link to the GCA Store and links to *Eddy Line* advertisers are all at http://www.gapaddle.com.

Facebook: Visit the GCA Facebook page for photos, video, trip reports, or to join an upcoming impromptu trip.

Bite the Bullet

Stories and photos By Lydia Cardinal

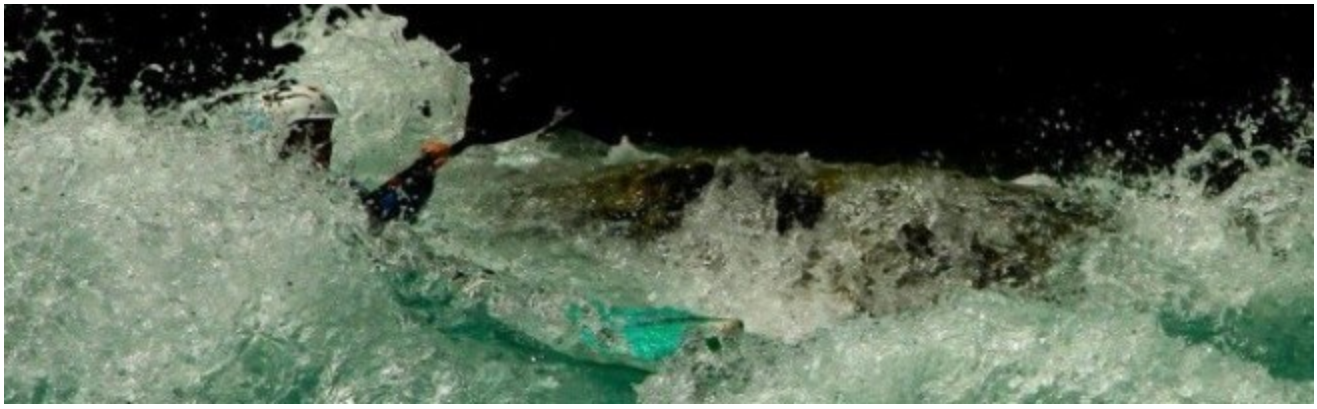


Photo by Sam Fulbright

I've always taken comfort in knowing that, for the most part, the worst that can happen while I'm paddling is swimming; bottom line: when the going gets tough, I pop the spray skirt and BAM! Game over.

This musing is brought to you by the harsh reality of whitewater where bailing from your boat does not always mean a fluffy exodus from trouble. Result? Street cred.

In this case, walking… but back upstream for second helpings!

I wondered in retrospect how I could (finally) emerge from the ledge hole gasping for air and coughing up water and not have the same knee jerk reaction I've had so much of lately, "Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope. No more of that. I'm out." As soon as I caught my breath, my voice was calm and steady and my head was clear. Since I've been doing so much walking and walking out and saying no in general in recent paddling, I had to think hard about why this experience- of all the more stressful experiences I've had on the water- this one was the one that didn't leave me scrambling back up the river back with my boat on my shoulder headed back to my car. This one, I knew, had only one resolution: biting the bullet and getting back in my boat to head down stream.

To paraphrase a paddling friend of Chris's: "You know, sometimes you walk. And sometimes you walk a lot… but there will come a day when if you walk it one more time, you might never get back on the water, and you'll always be walking."

It was time to change the status quo.

Let's recap: ledge holes can be very retentive and difficult to exit whilst in your craft. After a few windowshades where I (proudly-thanks playboating!) managed to roll back up still in a surf, I realized just how deep in the seam I was: the aeration of the hole seemed to be closer to my head than my kayak. Another powerful windowshade and I realized I wasn't coming up from this one. I tried changing my shape a few times by moving my paddle around but to no avail; I was going to have to swim. No problem! I'm not too proud to pop the skirt when need be, especially when there's no other way out. I yank my grab loop and kick my boat off of me, waiting for that big, fresh gulp of air that, unfortunately, doesn't come. And it still doesn't come, and I'm still waiting to resurface as I continue to get throttled by the full force of the pour over that is refusing to let me go.

I finally get my head out of the water briefly enough to yell for help, just in case it were possible for someone to not notice I was stuck in the pour over out of my kayak. I catch someone's boat from the corner of my eye as I am pummeled back down below the surface, swallowing more water. It is now that I realize I'm in more trouble than I originally thought and my mind quiets as I know I have to hang on for the ride. I think of the story of a friend who was stuck in a hydraulic on the Green and had to go deep to get out and I start shoving my body

Continued on page 7

Bite the Bullet, continued

weight down in hopes of a flush… nothing. From somewhere in the cobwebby corners of my head, I remember advice to ball up and spread out, ball up and spread out when stuck in a feature and I grab my knees for a moment before spreading out like a starfish. I do this a few times hoping that I'll at least get another chance at air until someone can get to me; after all, I was on the river on a busy day and I could at least take comfort in knowing there were plenty of other boaters to help me out if I could hang on for long enough. Something I did worked and my next breath of air was well downstream of the pourover- thankfully- and a local boater graciously gave me his stern to take me to shore. As soon as I caught my breath, I realized I wasn't shaking or crying or paralyzed with fear; in fact, I was articulating clearly and, well, positively. "That was wicked!" I remember exclaiming. Was it my big water swim on the Futa that prepared me for such down time? Or something else?

I sat downstream with my gear which had been so wonderfully collected during my ass kicking and thought how easy it would be to hike out. I was a bit winded and this was early in the day; I knew what was waiting downstream. The exit was so clear and familiar… and tempting, since I could recognize the comfort of this option from past experience. And I thought about how I've battled with my confidence and my fears the past few months, clawing forward and slipping back so frequently and I remembered the advice from Chris's buddy. I've walked out before. I know it's the right choice sometimes… but I also feared what it would do to my paddling. If I throw in the towel now, will I ever get back on the water?

I tell students all the time, "Make a new reality for yourself." So often these boaters are grappling with negative and sometimes even downright harrowing experiences they cannot help but carry with them from put in to take out everywhere they go. "Set a new precedent," I say. Sitting on the river bank, I realize it is time for me to take a page out of my own book, to follow the strength and determination of the boaters I see triumph by choice, and create my own new reality. If not now, when? I feared never.
I get back in my boat and paddle around, feeling the power of the river beneath me. Throughout the day I'll fall subject to its will and whim, but I make the choice to savor it with patience and understanding. I choose to remember all the strong, positive experiences I have had on the river instead of feeling weak and timid.

I don't have to just let the river happen to me; I can be a part of the circumstance, I can savor and accept and embrace the reality, and make it mine. I can take ownership. Looking back, I realize that I set myself up for success that weekend. "Point positive," is our mantra right now, twisting our tongues to spin positive, encouraging language even when we find it difficult

Continued on page 13

Canoe Club Challenge 2014 Finale'
Southeastern U. S. Wildwater Championships!
Calling all racers of all skills and boat types and a dozen volunteers!
When: Slalom - Sat August 16th; Downriver- Sunday a.m. August 17, 2014
Where: Nantahala River, Bryson City NC

VOLUNTEERS:

We need 6-8 volunteers to help with gate judging/time on Saturday. On Sunday we can use a few volunteers to help with registration 6 volunteers to help with timing at the finish line. No experience is necessary, we will teach you.

RACERS (of all levels and boat types):

The Southeastern U. S. Wildwater Championships, the oldest whitewater race in the Southeast, lives on and has become hugely popular! This will be our 46th year for the classic top to bottom downriver/wildwater race. Under the joint sponsorship of the Nantahala Outdoor Center, in conjunction with the Canoe Club Challenge (slalom), and the GCA, the weekend of racing and good times has become a huge event.

We are delighted to keep the classic top to bottom downriver/wildwater race as a key component of the finale' of the NOC's "Canoe Club Challenge" series. The slalom races will be held on Saturday, and the downriver/wildwater race will be held Sunday morning. You can earn participation points for your club by racing in both the downriver race and up to two slalom races, and there will be a boat raffle based on these points at the end of the event series.

The Downriver Championships will begin in mass start waves and run 8 miles from the Forest Service's private boater put-in just above Patton's Run to Finish Rock just upstream of the NOC. The race is geared towards all paddlers and will likely include a few USA Team members who will be participating in the "championship" classes. To keep it interesting, the Georgia Canoeing Association will continue the tradition of paying you $100 if you break any of these course records:

- K-1 – Terry White, 42:04.85, 1981
- K-1W – Kathy Bolyn, 45:20, 1989
- C-1 – John Pinyerd, 46:43, 1997
- OC-2 - Bill Baxter and Les Bechdel, 50:06 1983
- C-2 – David Jones and Mike Hipsher, 45:11, 1989
- OC-1 – Angus Morrison, 50:12, 1983.

The winners' names and the fastest boater overall, usually a K-1, also are engraved on the old Southeastern's trophies. Come and race, volunteer to help with the race, or just watch and share the good times. For further information, visit http://www.gapaddle.com or http://noc.com/events/canoe-club-challenge-3. To volunteer or for more information contact: John Pinyerd: jpinyerd@cs.com, or Todd McGinnis: paddlin@bellsouth.net. See you there!

A Methodical Approach to the COMBAT ROLL (or you could just go buy a playboat) By Jay Davis

You know who you are. You never really wanted a little playboat; you bought a creek boat to paddle the metro hooch and Etowah. You started kayaking when you weren't a yung'un. You've done the Nanty too many times (Well, some of y'all just might be really new paddlers, and that last one isn't totally true). You want to be a solid intermediate boater (defined in terms of WW paddling, not general paddling, meaning you are comfortable on class III and have a reasonably reliable combat roll); you want to give the Ocoee a shot, but you just can't get comfy with your combat roll. You can roll in a pool all day long, just not on the river. You know who you are.

Yeah, you see that 19 year old kid, who's athletic and fearless. He got a playboat, and rolled it the first time he was in a pool. He made a combat roll his first month kayaking, but that ain't you. If it is you, why are you reading this? Go buy another playboat and tear it up!

So, now that we know who we are talking to, let's work on that roll. When you go to the river, I see you catching all those eddies, working those ferries and peel outs. I even see you going for some decent surf sessions. You are proudly working the river, developing your skills as a kayaker, building your boat control and confidence. But, that confidence is shaky because in the back of your head you tell yourself "if I flip, I'm gonna swim". Now folks, I know exactly who this boater is, cause I've been that boater. And, while I'm not the best boater in the world, and don't have the best roll in the world (still trying to make that offside into a combat roll!), just knowing that I have a fighting chance of rolling really changes how you can enjoy the river. It's time to work on your river roll the same way you work on catching eddies, and all that other stuff.

When you go to the pool, and you've gotten comfy with a set up roll, it's time to add some stress to that situation. If you haven't got comfy with a set up roll, then you need to practice that roll until it's routine and boring to do so. Yes, it's work, but fun is work that you wanna do. Rolling should be fun. If you don't have a work ethic about this, don't expect much to change. Once you understand the mechanics of rolling, then the problem of course is 90% headgame. You know that, of course, so now it's time to put some stress on yourself in the pool, cause that's for sure what the river is going to do, and as my martial arts instructors oft repeated, "every drop of blood you spill in training is one you don't have to spill on the street". So, why not try rolling without setting up? Now, when I go roll, I do 3 warm ups with a set up roll, all the rest (at least 25) are done without setting up, with my paddle and body in various positions. There are numerous variations to make the basic roll more challenging in the pool and plenty of "how to roll" videos and in person instructors can tell you more. You need to do stuff like this, in the pool or lake, until it is also routine and boring. It needs to be automatic, like driving a car, otherwise it won't work under the real stress of the river.

When you go to the river, you need to be rolling in every eddy. You will only get comfortable with rolling at the river, by rolling in the river. You should set a goal (as EJ suggests) before you paddle as to how many rolls you will do. And guess what I'm going to say? You need to roll in eddies until it's boring and routine...see a pattern here? Work ethic? Once that's boring and routine, find some mild current to try your roll. Again, until doing so is boring and routine. See? You are slowly and methodically rewiring your neurological response to stimulus so it is less stressful, and you can also react better to the stress.

Now, why just wait for the river to flip you to do a combat roll? Go to an easy river you are very comfortable with, and paddlers you trust. Let them know you want to work on your roll from the get go. And then when you are staring at the rapid that is unobstructed and relatively deep, tell them you are going to flip on purpose without setting up to work on your roll. Successful? Unsuccessful? Great! Now repeat until it's routine and boring! Go find other fairly "safe" rapids with different characteristics (fast flow, swirly boiling water, etc) and repeat. I think Whirlpool on the Cartecay is just great for this kind of stuff. Try to surf some stuff that's a little bigger than your britches (maybe not holes). I see people all the time who I know have a good pool/eddy roll. But, I rarely see them even executing an eddy roll, much less trying it out in current. WHY? Come on folks, let's get wet! I also see folks who had pretty good combat rolls, to match their other skills. But they get comfortable, they rarely flip, and they also rarely do practice rolls. Then, suddenly, they need to roll and they are swimming on the Tellico/Ocoee/Chattooga/Wherever. Rolling is not like riding a bike. Rolling is a perishable skill. Practice your skills methodically. Just the opinion of a very mediocre, barely intermediate paddler. *EL*

GCA
GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION

Personal First Descent – Chattooga 3.5

Story and photos by Angela Greenwell from http://theunboredlife.com

Rambling Intro

I am probably the world's most impatient beginner. I hate feeling awkward and incompetent. I get that there is no secret to getting better other than putting in the time and focusing on using that time purposefully to build skills. I sometimes get lost in a task at hand and forget to smile and have fun. It is a balance. Leisurely play means you don't get better and white-knuckled focus means you don't have fun, are too uptight to really learn and burn out while annoying those around you. If the river's first lesson for me was to trust people, its second lesson is to relax and not fight the process. It will be a long lesson, I am sure.

I sometimes ask myself what is the point? Why are you trying so hard and pushing yourself even at times when you don't feel like it? The long and short of it is that it gives me a purpose, something to channel all my extra energy toward, and lets me feel my ever-changing edges of comfort. And then there are the rewards. I am beginning to think everything in my life is apples for elephants. You give many many apples over many many days to get one elephant. One big fat reward when you stop expecting it. My personal first decent on Chattooga 3.5 was that reward.

How can you wrap up two days and ten hours on a river with 20+ different people? The river is absolutely beautiful. I hear people say the 3.5 run misses out all the prettiest parts of section 3 and all the beautiful parts of section 4 but whatever. I was perfectly content with what I saw. The water is so clear and comfortably cool. The trees are so tall that they framed the bright blue sky making you feel small but protected. Chattooga is a cozy river to me. Not so wide like the Metro Hooch or Hiawassee but not so narrow like the Cartecay. Just right for this Goldilocks.

Saturday started out well for me hitting my first three rolls out

of the gate. That's a first. I would sooner go down a big rapid than try my first roll. My heart races and I hesitate until it is nearly unbearable. I'm so uptight about it that I gather a small army of boaters to t-rescue me. Do you really need more than one? Oh, I'll grab four if I can. But I've made the promise to myself from now on, every river there will be rolling, every time. So be it.

The first half of the trip was relaxed and fun. Good easy rapids. Stopping to play. No rush. No cares. We got to a beach area with a nice current and a big open space behind it. Hmmm… Current roll practice. I don't want to. But I do. Alright then. I gather the troops: Jay, Bryan, Brett, Dave and a few others stand by. Several failed attempts. Head up? Probably. I feel calm now. Go again. Then finally my first current roll! Wonderful delight and triumph. Cheering. Relief. Then I hear Bryan say – do it again. One failed. The last one successful. A great milestone.

We carry on and the Bull is coming up. I already decided to portage it, just take pictures and run it another day. There is a must-make eddy and although I made truckstop by sheer necessity at the Nanty due to a swimmer in front of me, I decided I didn't need to must-do anything today. Jay respectfully said okay but had this look in his eye that he knew I could run it. I think I was the only one who opted to walk my boat down. As the group lined up and went over, I took some great shots, which is a joy in and of itself for me. All but one made the eddy. One of our first timers went over double-drop upside down but finished with a combat roll. Oops.

With most of our group down the rapid and some going for a second run, someone says to me: ferry over, climb up and run it. That was just the push I needed. Bryan offers to guide me down. Alright then! So we

Continued on page 10

Chattooga 3.5, Continued

ferry over, drag boats up some rocks and talk about the run. "You can approach this rapid very slowly. Look for the tongue over the edge. Watch my line." Got it. My mind goes quiet and everything is peaceful as I make the approach. I don't think I could have taken a better line. It felt like gliding on slick glass. Later, watching the GoPro video, it was really touching to see how many people were cheering and clapping. So sweet and touching. Wooo hoo first timers!

From that point on, we were told that the rapids get tougher and that we need to maintain space between boats in case people get stuck on rocks. Fair enough. It seems like every rapid has a hole. It also seems like the water is a little more unpredictable than I'm used to and I find myself getting turned on approaches and navigating down rapids backwards. Accidental styling. I'll just go with it.

Continued on page 14

Slalom Racing is Not Just for Racers by Todd McGinnis

As published on http://paddlinh20.wordpress.com/

This blog was born out of a write-up on the Alabama Cup Race series. These are citizen Slalom Races with participants that range from Olympians to the casual whitewater kayaker. That write up morphed into why I feel slalom is good for a paddler's skill set.

To kick this essay off let's define slalom: whitewater slalom is a competitive sport where the paddler's objective is to navigate their canoe or kayak through a whitewater course of hanging gates with the fastest time possible. Several years back I started running slalom courses for fun and ultimately found it to be a challenge to my skills and great exercise. Eventually I started racing and soon learned two things; I have a competitive edge and running gates is hard. As slalom paddlers go, I am no expert but it feeds my competitive side. It also gives me goals to achieve and the opportunity to work on skills. To navigate a course one needs river reading, eddy catching, and ferrying skills. The more I ran, the better those skills got.

From my experience, I truly believe slalom is great for improving your ability to read water, plan moves, and learn how to adjust your path on the fly. When on the slalom course, you need to find a path that allows you to not only make a clean move through one gate but also through a series of gates. Essentially, when running one gate you are looking to and setting up for the next gate move.

There are two types of gates; upstream and downstream. Downstream gates are green and upstream gates are red. Typically a downstream gate is located in the flow of the current and upstream gates are in eddies (this can vary depending on the difficulty of the course). Many times it is best to slide in right behind the upstream gate high enough that you do not lose momentum. Negotiating gates downstream is not as easy as one may think. For these gates one must plan ahead and take into account current, river features, and what is the next move that has to be made. If you do not navigate either of these gate types just right you can lose time, hit a gate or even worse just miss the gate all together.

So let me paint a picture of the course. Think about a nice class two river bed with poppy wave trains, cross currents, and with both flakey and crisp eddy lines. Now overlay that with around 20 slalom gates scattered about the river like buckshot on that old stop sign on route 9. Some gates are lined up with ever so slight an offset while others are found far river left, right, or mid river. Once on course you have to use all your tricks and skills to move from one gate to the next. Taking a practice run at normal paddling speed is a challenge. In Doug Ammons' article; " A different View of the River – Slalom

Continued on page 11

SLALOM RACING, CONTINUED

Skills", he states, " I guarantee you will find even a simple course will teach you more in an afternoon then you are likely to learn in several years of running rivers." I have to agree with Doug's comments. The first time I tried it, my eyes were opened.

Now take that course you just practiced and amp it up with speed, endorphins, and concentration and it becomes just a bit more difficult. As a paddler you are pushing yourself at 100% and at times the currents are fighting with you. This time when you slide into the upstream gate there is a boil that deflects you downstream. After each run, thoughts of how to improve time and boat control race through your brain. It has happened to me on more than one occasion.

One such occasion was this Spring at the Locust Fork Race. I had practiced this one gate several times and had the line down perfectly. My approach was nice – the bow slid right under the pole of the upstream gate. It was sweet and I was ready for the race. Once on course my perfect line fell apart. I was so focused on my speed and ignored the current. My boat was deflected and I had to expend more energy than I had anticipated to get up and through the gate. After that run I broke down my approach to the gate and planned for my next run. What I had to do was prepare for the gate two gates before. In order to make it clean with less energy I had to come out of gate 14 angled in such a manner that safely brought me through downstream gate 15 and carried my momentum across the current and up and through gate 16. On my second run it was much better. This same process used to break down a slalom course can be used when breaking down a rapid on the river.

Once off the race course you can take your mad slalom skills back to the Nantahala, Chattooga, or Tallulah. They transfer directly to scouting rapids and deciding on the cleanest or in some cases the safest route through a rapid. New lines appear and back up plans become evident. When executing the moves through the rapid use the gate catching techniques to catch that menacing micro eddy you have been trying to hit for years. All those gate to gate ferry runs help make that hairy ferry above the drop not seem as hard.

Let me apply this to a rapid that many of us here in the southeast know well – Ocoee's famous Broken Nose. Through this rapid there are a series of eddies you can catch. If you simply run it down the middle you miss all the awesomeness that makes that rapid what it is. So many do not want to mess with catching eddies because they feel it is dangerous or frankly just too hard. Let me point out that it is a challenging rapid and my comments are not meant to trivialize its potential hazards. That said the moves through this rapid are a series of eddies and ferries that with practice, you will be able to nail. In a sense, it is nature's slalom course. Here is my Broken Nose challenge: pick some less consequential water/rapids on your favorite runs and set up your own slalom course. You do not need actual gates to accomplish this. Simply pick spots and mentally designate them as either upstream or downstream gates. Then work on your ferries and make it a goal to hit the exact line that feeds the desired eddy. Next, take that same exercise and notch it up and find a series of rapids that are more challenging. Keep doing this – you will be amazed how your river running skills improve. Once comfortable grab a good crew and take on Broken Nose. Try for the eddies and I think you will be amazed how awesome it is to break the rapid down.

For the benefit of the locals, some great river sections to do this would be:

Devil's Race Course on the Metro Chattahoochee – narrow channel with swift water, nice eddy lines and stable eddies. The consequences in this section are small. Class II river section where you can practice class III and IV moves.

Double Drop on the Tuckasegee River – Nice area with swift moving water and awesome eddies on the right side and really good strong current to ferry through.

Chattooga River sections III and III.5 offer great opportunities to practice big water ferries.

Nantahala River—My favorite spots for ferry and eddy practicing are found at Quarry Rapid and Nantahala Falls is great as well. If you can comfortably catch 4 to 6 eddies above the falls then you are looking pretty good.

Finally, go find some gates and practice your moves. All the skills used are used when negotiating gates on a slalom course. So go out and find a Slalom course to mess around on or heck make up your own. In the simplest sense, slalom builds a stronger, fitter, and more strategic paddler. *EL*

TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

Upcoming 2014 World Kayak Events

August 2nd - Lower Amicalola Boatercross For more details, contact Rick Thompson 678/907-1378 rdt70@bellsouth.net
September 6 - Sweetwater Creek falls rodeo

Upcoming Classes and other Events

8/2/14	Intermediate Kayak, Ocoee Skills Clinics
8/2-8/3/14	Beginner, Trained Beginner, Intermediate WW Canoe and Advanced WW Kayak Clinics
8/12/14	GCA Social featuring Team River Runner
9/26-9/28/14	GCA Fall Gala at Smokey Mountain Meadows Campground

For more details, see www.gapaddle.com or call Todd McGinnis at 770-856-4489

2014 Heartland Rivers of Georgia Paddle Series
Flatwater Paddling With The Georgia Conservancy
Register for all trips at Georgiaconservancy.org
Submitted by Bryan Schroeder

8/09	Georgia Conservancy Whitewater Day in Columbus
9/6-9/7	Upper Flint River Adventure
10/17—10/19	Chattahoochee NOW Paddling and Camp-ing Trip at Chattahoochee Bend State Park
11/7 —11/9	Ocmulgee Water Trails Camping Weekend

The 2014 *Heartland Rivers of Georgia Paddle Series* introduces people to Georgia's Altamaha, Chattahoochee, Flint, Ocmulgee, Ogeechee, Satilla and Savannah rivers and includes stops in more than 15 Georgia counties, running through or nearby Savannah, Darien, Thomaston, Hazlehurst, Hawkinsville, Columbus and Augusta. An estimated 500 people, ranging from expert to novice, will join the paddle series - making it the largest trips program in the Conservancy's history. Many of the paddle programs are hosted over a full weekend and include the opportunity for camping, hiking and live music. Georgia-based musicians Sailing to Denver, City Mouse, and the Little County Giants have pledged to lend their musical skills to the campfire setting.

Check the calendar on the GCA website at http://www.gapaddle.com for additional trips, social events, safety classes, and more.

Your Trip Could Be Listed in This Space — Call Cruisemaster Robert Iseley at 678-325-8630!

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS
Flat Water - no current will be encountered; safe for new paddlers.
Beginner - mild current, occasional Class 1 ripples; new paddlers can learn basic river techniques.
Trained Beginner - moving water with Class 1-2 rapids; basic strokes and bracing skills needed.
Intermediate - rapids up to Class 3; eddying and ferrying skills needed; kayakers need solid roll.
Advanced - rapids up to Class 4; excellent boat control and self-rescue skills required.

Signing Up: Call the trip coordinator listed to sign up for trips. Most trip coordinators will move a trip to an alternate venue if the water levels and conditions for a particular trip are not favorable. Call early in the week to ensure you get a spot on the trip, and in consideration for the coordinators, PLEASE avoid calling late in the evening.
Training Trips are a combination of recreation and training designed for those boaters who have completed a formal training clinic and would like some on-the-river time with instructors practicing what was learned in the clinic and expanding skill levels.
Canoe Camping Trips are multi-day trips, generally on flat or mild water, with at least one night of camping. For details on a scheduled trip, call the trip coordinator. To arrange a trip, call Vincent Payne at 770.834.8263.
To Volunteer To Lead Trips: Call Cruisemaster Robert Iseley at 678-325-8630. As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flatwater to Class 5 whitewater. Our excellent trip schedule depends on the efforts of volunteers, so get involved and sign up to coordinate a trip on your favorite river today! The GCA needs YOU!
Chattooga Trips are limited to 12 boats on ANY section on ANY trip, club trip or private (USFS regulation). Boating is prohibited above the Highway 28 bridge. Your cooperation in protecting this National Wild and Scenic River is appreciated.
Roll Practice: see gapaddle.com for information

Bite the Bullet, continued

to do so. It sets my mind, my energy in a different direction. I think back to my experience on the Futa and a handful of other really low days on the river and understand that I created a negative experience before it even began. There was no way I was going to have an encouraging time on the Futaleufu because I shot myself in the foot before I ever even got there by internet scouting and reading horror stories, so much so that when I inevitably crashed, I was shaken to the core. I've walked off the river before- the right choice- because of the wrong choices made long before I ever even got to the put in. I created a reality for myself that didn't have to exist.

I didn't have a perfect day moving down stream. I had a few rolls and missed a few eddies, but I was able to paddle the rest of the river not just hanging on for dear life but actually having fun and a few great lines, too. The river taketh away… but the river also giveth back.

Sunning myself on an ancient stone that must have fought its way to a stand in such an awesome resting place, I slowly take in a juicy apple and squint against the diamonds bouncing off the water. I watch the flow carry from as far as I can see upstream until it disappears around the bend, not knowing direction but trusting it will go somewhere, somehow… this is how the river is to be enjoyed, I think. I know now that the river is to be savored, slowly and with much humility. It offers us a choice that we can take or leave, and we alone decide to be subject or participant… we alone can know if walking this one means walking always. We know the gifts downstream will dance without us, otherwise, so we choose to dip around the bend and soak in the reality we've created for ourselves this day. *EL*

Lydia Cardinal and Chris Wing provide paddling instruction through their venture, H2ODreams.

Brett Russell with a mighty air brace on Bull Sluice, Chattooga River

Photo by Angela Greenwell

KEEP YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS CURRENT

Each month numerous "copies" of the pdf version of *The Eddy Line* bounce back due to bad or outdated email addresses. If an email to you bounces back, you will be deleted from the recipient list until we get an updated email address.

When the GCA receives a mail failure notice in response to an email to you on the GCA email list, you will be automatically unsubscribed by the listserve software. If your email changes, please "unsubscribe" and re-subscribe with your new address.

ALL ABOUT THE EDDY LINE

The Eddy Line, the official GCA newsletter, is available in print or pdf format. To subscribe, contact Ed Schultz at 404.266.3734 or heloeddy@mindspring.com, or mail your request to P.O. Box 7023, Atlanta, GA 30357.

Submissions/Advertising: All submissions and advertising should be sent to *The Eddy Line*, at: **the_eddyline@yahoo.com**.

Deadline: The deadline for all submissions, classified ads and commercial ads is the 20th of the previous month (e.g. August 20 for the September/ October issue).

Chattooga 3.5, cont'd

We get out and scout Woodall and talk about the hole and the danger of it. Perhaps I decide that the right line means really really right, the further from the hole the better? I end up running the rock slide where there is no water and get stuck. Bryan to the rescue, dragging my boat off. With the take-out in sight and the potential of making it through this PFD with dry hair, I run the shoals and feel amazing. To celebrate a bunch of us get out of our boats and go for a swim in the current a few times prior to the long uphill takeout.

Post PFD

I've run this section now four times since my first descent. Each time it has gotten better and better. On the third go I started my day with a crappy ferry that turned into an unbalanced peel-out that resulted in a flip. In the wide-eyed moment of going over, I had the sense to try to roll – and made my first ever combat roll. There were plenty of cheers in that moment! Then, later on the same day Brett did an excellent job leading me down to catch the must-make eddy for the first time and running single drop like a pro. At Woodall, we ceremoniously flipped for fun and swam to the shore which was liberating. After draining boats, I decided to practice my roll and knocked out the best four rolls I've ever done. I should swim more often for fun, I tell myself.

On my fourth run of Chattooga, Ian had me lead nearly every rapid to practice reading water, worked on my surfing, got me ferrying across stronger current – to which I then surprise him with a successful attainment on my first try. I had another successful run on the Bull, seven great rolls and got to try Ian's boat which included a nervous wet exit, a roll, lots of twitchy ferrying, a flip and an inevitable swim.

What more could a girl ask for from a river over two weekends? Great people, great support, so many accomplishments, plenty of laughing and cheering. I was with Joey for his first combat roll and first descent as well as with Patrick for his first river roll, current roll and first descent. All two-month beginners. There are so many milestones as a beginner; quantifiable steps to be hungry for, struggle with and have elation when you make it. I know at some point these highs will slow down and the accomplishments will be more subtle and refined. Or maybe they won't? Here's to finding out. *EL*

Views and opinions expressed in articles and editorials are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the official views and policies of the club. Material not individually designated as copyrighted may be disseminated **only** by paddling organizations having a newsletter exchange agreement with GCA: proper credit should be given. Publication of paid advertisements does not

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

The GCA web site now features a "GCA Supporters" web page with links to those who support GCA financially by advertising in *The Eddy Line*. Help those who help us — patronize our advertisers. And when you do, let them know you saw their *Eddy Line* ad and appreciate their support. Thanks!

OUTSIDE WORLD
Outfitters
Dawsonville, GA and Columbus, GA

Dagger
pyranha
liquidlogic
jackson kayak

Come get a GCA member Discount at Outside World
10% off Accessories*
8% off Boat purchase*
* All discounts from MSRP in stock items

We match prices Nationwide
Just give us a chance!

471 Quill Drive
Dawsonville, GA 30534
706-265-4500

OUTSIDE WORLD OUTFITTERS
www.theoutsideworld.net
info@theoutsideworld.net

1025 Broadway
Columbus, GA 31901
706-322-4200

TELLICO WILD : EXPLORE OUR BIG BACK YARD
A Weekend of Wilderness on the Cherokee National Forest

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9TH

Guided hikes on the Cherokee National Forest
Brookshire Creek, Sycamore Creek, and Unicoi Turnpike Trail,

Interpretive Hikes
Mosses, Liverworts, & Hornworts, and Old Growth & Recovering Forest

Stand Up Paddleboard Demos by Rock/Creek - Beginners Welcome!

Trail Stewardship Trip
Brushing the Jeffrey Hell Trail with the SAWS crew

Tellico Plains 'Trail Town' Dedication & Ceremony
Celebrate the official Trail Town designation then stick around for some food, prizes, music, and fun! At the Outpost Pavilion, Tellico Plains, TN

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10TH

Guided hikes on the Cherokee National Forest
Bald River Gorge, Mill Branch Loop, and Unicoi Turnpike Trail,
Simply Better Pictures: Tips, Tricks and Techniques

Stand Up Paddleboard Demos by Rock/Creek - Beginners Welcome!

Snorkel Citico Creek
With an expert guide, explore the abundant life in one of the most biologically rich creeks in the USA!

Full schedule and registration available at:
www.meetup.com/Tennessee-Wild or
Facebook/TennesseeWild

Tellico Plains, Tennessee - The Little Town with the Big Back Yard!

The Eddy Line, © 2014, is published bi-monthly as the official newsletter of the Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., publication address: 3060 Pharr Court North, #315, Atlanta, GA 30305. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Eddy Line*, c/o Georgia Canoeing Association, P.O. Box 7023, Atlanta, GA 30357.

THE EDDY LINE

GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.

Post Office Box 7023
Atlanta, Georgia 30357

WE'RE ON THE WEB:
www.gapaddle.com

The purpose of the GCA is to have fun and promote safety while paddling.

GCA is a member-operated paddling club with over 500 family and corporate memberships comprising more than 1500 Individuals. Canoeists and Kayakers of all ages and paddling abilities are equally welcome. Some of our mutual interests include whitewater river running, creeking and playboating, river and lake touring, sea kayaking, paddle camp outs and competition and racing activities. We espouse conservation, environmental and river access issues as well as boating safety and skills development. Group paddling, training and social activities of all kinds are conducted throughout the year thanks to the volunteer efforts of our many members and friends. Membership is NOT limited to Georgia residents.