# GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.

P. O. Box 7023, Atlanta, Georgia 30309

May, 1979 NEWSLETTER Vol. XIV, No.5

Deadline for material for the June newsletter is May 15. Submit material to Gary DeBacher, 1191 Conway Rd., Decatur, GA 30030. When typing material, please use the **smallest** margins possible.

GCA TRIP LEADER TRAINING SESSION WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 7:30 PM AT FERNBANK SCIENCE CENTER. The main emphasis will be on safety and the basics of first aid, but many other topics of practical value will be discussed. One big advantage of becoming a qualified trip leader is that you don't have to wait around for your favorite rivers to appear on the schedule--- you can call the cruisemaster and volunteer to lead trips on the rivers of your choice.

MAY TRIP SCHEDULE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | 5 | Hudson class I(II) | Jimmy Gunter | 424-0850 |
| | | Toccoa class I-II | John Shumaker | 874-6716 |
| | | Chattooga sect. 3, III-IV | Jack Weems | 938-5263 |
| | 6 | Broad class I-II | John Brower | (Call J. Gunter to register) |
| | | Little R. Canyon III-IV | Roger Nott | (Call J. Gunter to register if you live in Atlanta area) |
| | 12 | Lower Amicalola III-IV | Allen Lewis | 427-6155 |
| | | lower Chauga class III(IV) | Hugh Stubbs | 262-2110 (o); 971-9167 (h) |
| | | upper Flint (easy) | call J. Gunter | 424-0850 |
| | 13 | middle Flint I-II | " | " |
| | | lower Flint II-III | " | " |
| | 17-18-19 | GCA beginner training session | | |
| | 19 | Sunday afternoon trip | Gary DeBacher | 288-1773 |
| | 26 | Etowah class I-II | Jimmy Gunter | 424-0850 |
| | | wild card trip, I-VI | Gary DeBacher | 288-1773 |
| | 27 | Ocmulgee I, easy II | Wanda Gunter | 424-0850 |
| | | Cartecay II-III | George Neill | 294-9736 |

If you don't see what you want, give Jimmy a call and volunteer to lead something else. I am looking for a chance to rerun Chauga Gorge, to do upper Amicalola, and perhaps to get a "laurel" family run in on the Nacoochee. Get in touch if you are interested. ---G. DeBacher, Ed.

Atlanta City Solicitor Hinson McAuliffe has requested that all GCA members still holding copies of the X-rated George Neill centerfold special newsletter issue turn these in to his office immediately to avoid prosecution. Rehabilitative counseling will be available for the writers, to restore their sense of redeeming social value.

DE-AUTHORIZE THE SPEWRELL BLUFF DAM? In our last chapter, Georgia governor Jimmy Carter put the hex on the dam projects on the Flint, but these projects are still technically active, and could be started up again by the Corps of Engineers if another governor were more favorably inclined. Congressman Newt Gingrich is cooperating with other legislators to get Spewrell Bluff and a number of other limbo projects around the U.S. permanently de-authorized. He needs your interest and support.

REMEMBER THE RACES! Reserve the 16th and 17th of June and call Gwen Bergen to volunteer to help with the GCA- sponsored Southeastern Canoe and Kayak Championships on the Nantahala River. Many hands make light work!

I'm told that participants in Mark Warren's slalom racing clinic in Helen, Georgia thought it was a really terrific event and learned a lot.

And with respect to the Nantahala, I will reprint in this issue or the next an appeal by Payson Kennedy of the Nantahala Outdoor Center that canoeists consider not camping along that river any longer. In a nutshell, the campsites are getting too littered and abused. Also in the NOC newsletter is news that the U.S. Forest Service is going to construct a new parking and put-in area at the top of the Nantahala. This will greatly relieve congestion and frustration for everyone in that area. Problems at the bottom of the run will continue. We can all help by trying our best to take our cars there only when really necessary, especially in the peak use hours on summer weekends. ---Ed.

Section III Chattooga, Saturday, March 31. The water level was a steady 2.2, and the weather was partly cloudy and mild as our party of ten boats left Earl's Ford. There were eight (8!) C-1's, including Bronwyn Fowlkes (trip leader), Ken McAmis (hot dog), Gary DeBacher (me), Tom Dallinger, Barbara Osgood, Hal Herndon, Allen Lewis, and Bob Cheek of Carolina Paddlers. Also from that club was Bob Steiger in K-1. Dave Ballard was the sole Blue Hole representative.

Having seen Cheek before, I know he is a decent kayaker, but C-1's are different, and on this, his first trip in a brand- new boat, he flipped 7 times, or once every 1.8 miles. This is not the record for C-1's; I flipped at the rate of once every .8 miles on a Hiwassee training trip some years back, but then I had Cleve Tedford urging me into trouble. Other anonymous decked boats flipped occasionally, but Ken squirreled his Noah all the way down without having to roll once, which one gathers is a great accomplishment in a low- volume C-1.

The Chattooga had a flood-washed appearance after so much high water this spring. Not much was blooming except for some wild plum here and there. We saw 2 1/2 torn up aluminum boats; should be a bumper crop of Butterball™ Turkeys this year. For me, the high point of the run was the super foam pit at the bottom of Second Ledge, and the surfing waves just below. And a word of advice: if you ever decide to try the alternate route down Eye of the Needle, which starts at the right bank and ends at the pop drop, keep an eye on that keen little triangular rock in the chute on the way down. I have never felt the boat bend so much without breaking.

Between Fall Creek and Roller Coaster we found three cows on the right bank. They said they were heading down to The Bull for religious observances. As for us, the agnostics ran down the rocks on the right side, while only Dave Ballard had faith enough to think his open boat could span the hole. He made it, more or less, until a blort got him at the bottom.

The walk up to the new parking lot is a paved trail, easy on the feet but hard on the heart. The old roadside lot is still open (and some Indiana paddlers took advantage of the situation to gross out passing cars by changing clothes in the open), but probably the Forest Service and the SC Highway Dept. will close it off by summer. I guess that is progress. — Gary DeBacher

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A NASTY EDITORIAL. Now that we have the Guidebook, under TRIP LEADER DUTIES a much nicer person than I am has written, "As an advisor, try to screen registrants as to qualifications" and "Try to persuade a person not to participate beyond his proven ability." But a little farther down the list, she strips away the thin veneer of civilization and southern gentility and says, "Remind participants that in the interest of safety, the trip leader's decisions are FINAL." I lead a lot of club trips, but I would never lead another if I thought that any registrant had a right to force himself onto a trip regardless of ability, equipment, or past record of waterborne misdemeanors. All of you so far have shown a willingness to be advised and persuaded. But like most trip leaders, I reserve the right to insist when "advise" does not lead to "consent," and in fact I see no responsible way to abrogate this right, even if I'd rather not seem authoritarian or nasty.

Usually when I turn a registrant down, my reason is a concern for his own safety, and that of other participants on the trip who might have to try and rescue him. Less vital but also important is my intention that the majority of the folks on a trip have a good time, which they cannot do if they spend much of the trip rescuing or waiting for one or two boaters who can't really handle most of the river. This depends a lot on the difficulty of the river in question. Spills on the Etowah or Broad on a warm June day are amusing, and folks will cheerfully help collect loose gear and paddlers. Multiple spills on a long, cold run down section III of the Chattooga are another matter. In general, the harder the river, the more ready you have to be to handle it safely. A beginner on the Nacoochee is in far less danger than a senior intermediate on section IV or the Ocoee.

And by the way, the nice person who wrote "advise" and "persuade" once had to throw a whole scout troop off a trip on the Nacoochee! —Ed.

Tesnatee - Middle Chestatee; Sunday, March 25, 1979: Only 11 of the expected 23 paddlers joined the hardy bunch who met strong headwinds and snow flurries during the entire trip. The Hwy 52 gauge read 2.7, a very ample level at which both Coppermine and "Blasted Roaks" were very exciting but less treacherous than at other levels. We put in on the Tesnatee at Slabtown Rd. At the confluence with the Chestatee we sadly encountered carpenters erecting a house close to the river. Here too some paddlers hiked up the Chestatee to view the dramatically beautiful Grindle Shoals. Most of the group considered the possibility of an icy swim & opted to portage Coppermine but ran "Blasted Rocks." Here there were many fine runs, particularly by our tandem paddlers. We were all very glad to thaw out after reaching the take-out at Crusher Rd., .8 mi. above Hwy 52, particularly some novice decked boaters who discovered that winter is not the ideal season to test one's roll. Paddling polar bears included: Brook Brower - K-1; Les Davenport, Danny Landers and Milton Mills in C-1's; John and Tee Brower - C-2; Don and Bettina George and Larry Smith and Betsy Darken in tandem opens; James McCay and I in solo opens.

- Roger Nott

Little River Canyon, Mid May, 1979. It's a darn good thing we did not run this trip in March as scheduled, because as everyone knows, March weather is lousy. There's no way March 17 could be as beautiful as it was, so it had to be May! The water was low, but crystal clear. And cold! But the weather was fantastic.

After an easy class VI put in, we ventured down river. The trip was uneventful until we reached Bottleneck. Ken, Richard and I tried it, and it took two shots each to get it right. The turbulent water at the top flipped Ken and me to our "off" sides. Since Richard does not have an off side, I can only assume that it flipped him end-over-end. Nevertheless, we conquered the bloody thing on the second try.

Congratulations should go to Bronwyn and Gwen for paddling the entire river without a single turnover. I can't imagine such a thing.

Enjoying the river were: Gwen Bergen and Richard Schmidt in K1; Jack Weems, Bronwyn Fowlkes, Allen Lewis, Hal Herndon, and Ken McAmis in C boats. --- Jack Weems

Little River Canyon, Saturday, April 7. This trip was listed in the newsletter without a trip leader, so in spite of perfect weather and plenty of rain earlier in the week, the rush to sign up was a little underwhelming, to say the least. I called a bunch of people to try and stir up interest, to no avail. Having missed countless canyon trips, including Jack's described above, I was **determined** to go this time, even if I had to run the bloody thing sight unseen by myself. So I patched my C-1 thoroughly and questioned several people about the difficulties and hazards I could expect to encounter. On Friday evening Roger Nott called and said he and Beth would like to try the run tandem. Roger hadn't done the run before either, but since he and I are sometime river explorers, we figured we could wing it.

Canyon Mouth Park still being closed after flooding, we left my car down at the highway bridge and burnt up half of Roger's clutch getting up the enormous grade to the top of the mountain. For me, the walk **down** from the skylift to the river was easier than the walk **up** from the river to the new Chattooga III parking lot. But then I am one of the minority who have bothered to efficiently solve the problem of portaging boat and gear without excessive suffering. Roger attached the center thwart of his Blue Hole to the top bar of a back pack and found that this worked quite well, although he was temporarily a little weak in the legs when we reached the river. (Another tip: don't try to walk down wearing wet suit booties. More substantial footwear is essential.) This is really only a class IV put-in.

We found plenty of cold, clear water down there, enough to cover everything quite thoroughly without washing out the eddies we needed. Arriving without incident at the class ?? with the undercut rocks on the left, we elected to sneak, Roger down the left center and I to the right bank where I dreamed of finding a good slot. Twas not to be, but there is a long, flat ledge over there which makes a dandy portage route. We stopped at the waterfall and overhanging ledge on the left to quench our thirst. (Since the land above the canyon on the left is almost undeveloped, the streams on that side are generally safe to drink.) Arriving soon thereafter at Bottleneck, we walked our gear down the right bank as we scouted it. The problem is not Bottleneck itself, a violent and twisting two-step into a long, flat exit pool; rather it is staying upright through one of the approach slots at the top. These little two foot drops hide some vicious blorts and sprovits. Fearing that the sprovit in the right slot was stronger than any low brace known to mankind, we chose the left slot, which leads to a short pool affording a chance to roll or bail. Roger ran the slot OK, bailed, ferried back to the main chute, and was smartly hugging the right bank when a river troll spun his bow and sent him down backwards. Since I thought he would make it anyway, I took lots of pictures. When I tried the left slot, the sprovit had alerted his friends and they tried to eat my brace, but I narrowly escaped, and ran Bottleneck with no further incident. After this point (about 1/3 of the way down the 6+ mile run), the rapids ease up to an occasional III. I had some anxious moments when, after stopping to recover a lost paddle, I couldn't find Beth and Roger. It seems they had eddied out behind a large rock and we all happened to be lookin the wrong way when I passed them. The rest of the trip allowed us to relax and enjoy the exquisite scenery and super waves. If you paddle this river and have to go past Canyon Mouth Park to the first road bridge, be real careful of which passage you choose in the alluvial fan. There were a number of submerged trees and blind passages.

--- Gary DeBacher

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**BEGINNER'S CANOE AND KAYAK CLINIC.** May 18, 19 and 20 are the dates for GCA's annual whitewater clinic for beginners. Friday night's and Saturday's instruction will be held at American Adventures in Roswell. On Sunday trainees will paddle a North Georgia river.

Cost for GCA members is $7 per person, non- members $10. Paddlers must furnish all their own equipment. Life jackets are mandatory for all; decked boaters need helmets. Bring a lunch for Saturday and again on Sunday.

Send fee to training director Mark Warren at P.O. Box 856, Willeo Rd., Roswell, GA 30077. Make checks payable to: Georgia Canoeing Association. Direct phone calls for further information to Jack Weems at 321-7544 (office number).

This is an opportunity for new paddlers to receive instruction at unheard-of prices and to meet nice folks who share your level of experience. Safety, paddling technique, and reading water headline the program.

Friday night. **Don't miss Friday** if you plan to come Saturday and Sunday; it is unfair to other trainees if an instructor must catch-you-up at every point along the way. Class begins at 7 PM and will go until 9:00. Please be punctual! Latecomers will have to demonstrate a capsize in the lake on Saturday.

DIRECTIONS: If traveling from the Atlanta area, go north on Roswell Rd. Immediately after crossing the Chattahoochee River, turn left onto Azalea Dr. Go to deadend. Turn left onto Willeo Rd. Go less than a mile to a sign which reads "Chattahoochee Nature Center." Turn right into the nature center driveway and go to the top of the hill. Park around gymnasium and go inside.

SATURDAY- 9 AM- 3 PM at American Adventures.

SUNDAY- To be announced.

Note: If you are coming from out of town and have no place to stay, drop me a line regarding this. —**Mark Warren**

GCA Whitewater Training Clinic for Beginners

NAME _____ TYPE BOAT: K-1, C-1, C-2, C-1 OPEN, C-2 OPEN.

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ PARTNER(?) _____

ENCLOSE FEE: $7/ PERSON GCA; $10/ PERSON NON-GCA.

WHITEWATER EXPERIENCE: _____

BOAT AND PADDLE LENGTH. The GCA guidebook has a section on "Equipment" which includes sections on boat and paddle selection. The guidebook was rather thoroughly re-edited this time around, and what I had written originally has acquired that "written by committee" flavor. Like most editors, I can't stand to have my own stuff edited, so here is my latest unadulterated advice.

Open canoes should not have keels, not for any reason. On lakes and flat rivers, sharp- ended "fast" boats track better with less paddling effort than keeled barges. In whitewater, keels hinder turns and catch on rocks. Canoes chosen primarily for whitewater should have substantial dead rise at the ends and a bit of overall rocker to aid maneuvering. Such boats, when 16 ft. long or so, make excellent solo craft, and if made with higher sides, will run dry enough for tandem crews of moderate weight. But most tandem crews will find a 17 foot boat of similar design to be more satisfactory, because it is much easier to paddle on flatter sections, it runs drier over holes and haystacks, and it handles camping gear and/or extra passengers more easily. For a tandem crew, a 17 foot boat is in some ways more maneuverable than a 16 foot boat of equivalent design, because it is up on the water rather than wallowing down in it. Certainly the longer boat will side-slip more easily. A longer boat will also keep a better fore-and-aft trim under varying combinations of paddler and gear distribution. If an open boat is to be used primarily for tandem paddling, then I strongly advise buying that extra foot of length. You'll still be able to handle it solo when you want to. For primarily solo paddling, 16 ft. is better for handling and maneuverability. (Special exception: if, like me, you are in to canoe poling, you will find a 16 ft. boat too short.)

There is no availability problem here, since our boat-making advertisers, Blue Hole and Perception, both offer good 17 foot boats. The 16 1/2 foot Mad River Explorer might make a more tolerable tandem boat because of its V-bottom and larger beam, but for a solo paddler it will handle like a 17 foot boat. **There is no perfect compromise length.**

Paddle length is an even more complex issue. The most important basic dimension is the length of the shaft, not the total length. During a normal forward stroke, the blade should be just buried up to the shaft. A correct shaft length for you will depend on the height of your torso and the height of the seat in your boat. The easiest way to determine the proper dimension is to get in the boat while it is on the water and try a few strokes with the paddle in question. Efficient forward paddling styles, developed by marathon paddlers, dictate more use of the body and less use of the arms, with the upper hand thrusting away at about shoulder or neck level in the middle of the stroke. Combined with the advent of short, wide blades for river racing, this has led to markedly shorter paddles. Marathon paddlers of ordinary dimensions use paddles ranging around 56"; even a very tall paddler will seldom go beyond 60".

In a whitewater canoe a somewhat more upright paddling style is necessary. The trunk is more extended, since the paddler is kneeling rather than sitting. Proper bracing and leverage require that the upper arm be higher than for straight line marathon paddling. Nevertheless, in a C-1 with its very low seat, paddle lengths (not shaft lengths) range from 55" to 60", with an occasional gawk like me preferring a 61". In a high-seated boat like a Blue Hole or Perception, a longer paddle is necessary just to get it down in the water without bending over. Extra reach and leverage is needed to maneuver these larger boats since they have less rocker than a C-1 and more polar inertia. [Polar inertia refers to the proportion of mass in the ends of the boat, not to one's reluctance to paddle in winter months.] Paddlers will find that they need a somewhat longer paddle for solo than for tandem use, because they must reach way out past the gunwales to turn the boat.

Then we get into the problem of blade length, width, and area. Norse paddles, for all their virtues, are simply too long in the blade. One trims them down near the lower grip, not at the tip, so that it becomes possible to get the whole blade in the water in shallow Georgia shoals. Then one shortens the shaft to get the right shaft length. Whitewater paddlers seem to agree that blade width should be no less than 8", and no more than 9". As for total blade area, that depends. A small blade area allows short, rapid strokes favored by our more high- revving paddlers. It also presents less surface for bracing and rolling. Small paddlers and racers seem to prefer short, light paddles with small blade areas. Presumably these do maneuver more easily, particularly when switching rapidly to a cross brace. Being quite tall, I find that I simply cannot roll up with small bladed paddles like daggers, and I can't get enough purchase from them per single stroke to take proper advantage of my long reach. Which brings me (at last!) to my final point. You may find yourself cutting paddles shorter as you improve, and buying new ones with smaller and lighter blades. Just don't overdo it and violate the shaft length rule. And remember, it is easy to cut a paddle down, and very difficult to lengthen it. ---Ed.

Correction: Apparently a 17 ft. canoe is no longer available from Perception. However, a tandem crew could tie two of Perception's 13 ft. HD-1's nose-to-tail and play crack-the-whip in and out of eddies!

EXPLORATION TRIP: Etowah River, "Section I" - Sunday, April 8, 1979: The Etowah is born in nothwest Lumpkin County at Hightower Gap and was originally called "Hightower River" above the Amicalola confluence. The higher in its headwaters one goes, the more local people will to this day call it "Hightower." Thus the first navigable section of the river might be aptly named "the Hightower Section."

Dr. Tom Brown, my wife Beth and I canoed this section, beginning 14 miles above Hwy 19, on this cold,rainy afternoon. In 4 previous runs I'd encountered only 1 or 2 downed trees; this winter's ice storms have tumbled numerous pines; today about 10 clogged our passage and many others were leaning low and required some care to avoid. Despite the adverse conditions Tom, who was paddling this stretch of river for the first time, agreed with us that it was one of the nicest runs around..

We embarked at the first public vehicle bridge on the river, located just south of Camp Wahsega. Our first 2.2 miles to Simmons Brige had a gradient of 35'/mi. and fairly continuous class I and II shoals which required quick maneuvering but were shallow and safe for Junior Intermediates. The 6 miles from Simmons to Jay Bridges had an 18'/mi. gradient and also many interesting class I and II rapids. The largest, about 4 miles after Simmons Bridge, may require scouting, is rocky at the bottom, and is run through a narrow, obscured chute in the middle of the river. It is just after a left bend in the river.

The entire run is within the National Forest Boundary, although there are a few privately owned fields. However, beautiful, mountain terrain predominates: mature forest, dramatic outcroppings, very good water quality, and copious laurel and rhododendron. There is usually enough water during the rainy months in the Spring.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 9E north from Auraria and take the 1st paved left (the shuttle road on the east side of the river for the usual run); the road ends at Hwy 19, ½ mi. east of its separation from Hwy 52; turn right and immediately left onto Shilome Church Rd.; go 4 miles to the first paved right; turn left onto a gravel road; go .4 mi. and take the 2nd right road 1 mile to the take-out across and below Jay Bridge. To put in: go back to the paved road and turn left; pass Hightower Church as the pavement ends and continue to Simmons Bridge; if the shoals upstream of the bridge aren't adequately covered, put in here; otherwise cross the bridge and bear right twice; continue 2½ miles to the put-in bridge.

- Roger Nott, Exploration Chairman

Blue Ridge Mountain Sports carries the Perception line of canoes and kayaks. Also stop by the shop to see the new ABS Grumman 16 ft. model, and the new Mohawk Ranger.

Cartecay- Sunday, April 8. The weather was bad, but the river was high (2.67). The first unavoidable canyon ledge was made easy by high water for all 13 boats. Many of the class II rapids I had not paid any attention to before were now unforgettable. The speed of the river had increased slightly since February. Many of my adventureres had never run this river before. Robert Wages (C-1 open) usually went first to set up a throw rope beyond the more unavoidable holes. Everyone who attempted the main thrust and swell of all the major rapids either swamped, flipped, or broached their craft at one time or another. Harold Hill (C-1 open) gets the Golden Paddle Award for riding the first big class III in front of his boat, although I ran a close second. Ashley David (k-1), under the influence of her father, gets the award for most impressive handling of the last and biggest class III while praying. As sweep, most paddlers like to play, but not James McCay (k-1); he likes to collect swamped boats and stranded paddlers. In a word, the Cartecay turned from beautiful to challenging.

Riding decked C-1 was Milton Mills. K-1's were Ashley David, Helen Mills, and James McCay. Paddling tandem were Burt Butler and wife; John Coyle and Murray David. C-1 opens were : Robert J. Castellanni, Harold Hill, Bill Laughlin, Ben Maxwell, Allen Simmons, Robert Wages and myself. ---John G. Shumaker, Jr.

[Editor's note: They really needed more C boats on their trip, especially during the Blort breeding season, to cut down on the number of spills. Blort families are savage but not very bright, and while they argue amongst themselves as to whether C-1's are fat kayaks or canoes with excessive tumblehome, it is usually possible for an entire party to pass through a rapid unscathed. The recommended ratio is one C boat for every craft of another type.

I might add that John Shumaker placed third in the solo open cruising division of the NOC Glacier Races held last month. Nice going, John.]

Chattooga-Section III 4/1/79. I do not like to write trip reports. However, the Editor, who is much bigger* than I am, threatened me with dire consequences** if I didn't write this report. Unfortunately, immediately after the trip I was abducted and brainwashed by the Symbionese Liberation Army. During this terrible ordeal I lost my memory and the list of names. As best I can recall the trip went like this:

On April 1, an intimate paddle-in was held on Section III of the Chattooga. In spite of some adverse weather including a snow storm followed by intermittent tornadoes and a driving sleet storm, conditions were nearly perfect since the sun came out at lunch. Even though the water was at 12 feet and rising, 257 boats put in for a very uneventful run--- unless, of course, you count the three boats that flipped at the put-in and were recovered in lake Tugaloo along with two bodies and three life jackets and the eight people who havent't been seen since they went in under in the Narrows†. During lunch, seven trip members were attacked and killed by a berserk Beenie Weenie" can lid. Needless to say, it was a relief to reach the bridge and find the London Symphony conducted by Mick Jagger playing a medley of Pink Floyd hits while 25 local toughs vandalized and burned our cars. Paddling K-1 were Jacqueline Onassis, Idi Amin, King Tut, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. In C-1's were Gerald Ford, Charlton Heston, and the entire casts from the movies "Ben Hur," "The Ten Commandments," and "The Bible." Paddling tandem were the Shah of Iran and the Ayatollah Khomeini, Menachim Begin and Yassar Arafat, Gore Vidal and William Buckley, Truman Capote and Jimmy Breslin, Roman Polanski and an unnamed 13 year old girl, Richard Nixon and Leon Jaworski, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Marvin, Sonny and Cher, Lewis and Martin, and Marlon Brando and eight tribes of American Indians. I paddled my favorite 1957 Chevy. A good time was had by all; especially gratifying was the fellowship shared at the post-trip dinner at Elaine's. Whoever left the diamond-studded tiara and coke spoon in my car can get it back by contacting Dr. Peter Bourne after hours at his White House phone number. ----David Garrity

* Only in height-- Ed.

** I only told him I had connections who could arrange his transfer to a coastal region devoid of whitewater.

† Dave neglected to mention that the Piranhas introduced by accident into Lake Tugaloo last season have already migrated up as far as the pool below Second Ledge. This actually simplifies trip leading, since by this time most trip leaders are glad to get rid of any paddlers who can't run the ledge upright. --Ed.

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[From the Reader's Digest, February 19, 1979] "Pope John Paul II, an avid skier, is equally ardent toward canoeing and kayaking, and was in fact on a kayak trip when he was named bishop in 1958. Officials in the church in Poland could not find him for hours, but finally managed to get him back to Warsaw. 'The Pope has nominated you to become bishop,' they told him. 'Will you accept?' Wojtyla thought for a moment, then said: 'Yes. But it doesn't mean that I can't return to my kayak trip, does it?' It did not, and he was back on the lakes in a matter of hours. While camping, he takes along a portable altar for mass and fashions a cross by lashing two paddles together."

First the President of the U.S., then the Pope, and, if we are to believe Dave Garrity, any number of other world leaders and celebrities are taking to the water. What does it all mean, readers?

**FOR SALE**: 17' shoekeel Grumman aluminum canoe with floatation block. Excellent condition. $300. Call Helen or Milton Mills after 5:00. 404-549-2399.

**WANT TO TRADE** a 15'9" blocked Blue Hole canoe in good condition for a 17' with the same description. Bill Jones, 101 Echo Circle, Easely, SC 29640.

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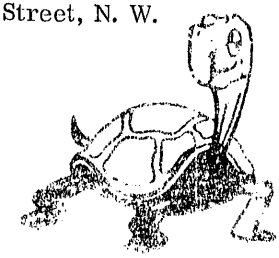
SPECIAL RATES FOR GCA MEMBERS..
ON ANY CANOE OR KAYAK CLINIC - WRITE FOR DETAILS

Reproduced from:

Meeting: January 30, 1979
District Red Cross Building
2025 E Street, N. W.

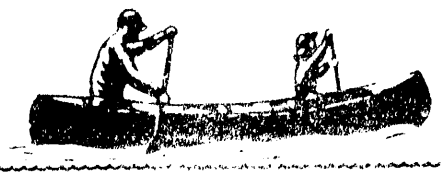


# CRUISER

Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, D.C., Inc.

January 1979

Chairman : Sandra Hixson
Secretary : Kay Fulcomer
Treasurer : Jim Finucane
Membership : Rachel Woodall, Roger Easton, Jr.
Editors : Betty Riedel, Mary Ollry



From time to time we will reproduce descriptions of river injuries or deaths in the GCA Newsletter, as these have lessons for us which may prevent further tragedies. On March 24, with the Nolichucky running 7'5", essentially at flood stage, a party of four young men put on in a very small raft, not heeding the advice of experienced boaters there to watch the maelstrom. The Nolichucky starts hard, and they were all blown out of the raft before they had gotten out of sight of the onlookers. They soon lost their hold on the raft in a rapid. Three swam to shore, one with the help of a kayak. The fourth, who was the only one without a wetsuit, kept washing downstream and soon was evidently too cold to swim. The kayaker and folks running along the railroad tracks were not able to catch up, and the body was recovered 10 miles downstream. The PFD was still on, but onlookers had seen the victim kept under water for long periods by turbulence, and there was also a large bruise on his head. This one-raft party broke most of the rules in the book. Still it may be pertinent to add that with a good helmet and a wet suit, the victim might have lived.

The account reproduced below is from the CRUISER, the newsletter of the Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, D.C. It is quite a different sort of accident, in that one can't easily see what could have been done to avoid the entrapment described. Possibly if the new system of river signals had been in use [have you bothered to learn them, members?], the first kayaker would have held his paddle high and horizontal, and the second might have eddied out before hitting the log. Maybe the k-1's deck was not supported by an Ethafoam wall, and if it had been, the paddler might have escaped. Maybe. But there are no obvious specific mistakes. All of us who fancy ourselves to have reached the "advanced" stage are running constricted streams of high gradient at high, pushy water levels. We don't stop and scout every place where a log might have lodged. When one reviews the circumstances of the deaths of experienced whitewater paddlers in the past 10 years, submerged trees are far and away the number one cause, with entrapment by rocks second. I am afraid that unless we slow to a more deliberate pace on the rivers and resume scouting, we are exposing ourselves to an unavoidable risk of entrapment and death. Consider Second Ledge on Section III as an example. When we run the river nowadays, the lead boater just tumbles over the ledge blind, without scouting. I've never seen a tree lodge in the pool, but how do we know that one will not some day? —Ed.

## BALTIMORE PADDLER DIES ON STONY RIVER

Paul J. Bryan, 29, steelworker and member of the Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, died December 9, 1978 while trapped in his kayak against a downed tree in West Virginia's Stony River.

Bryan was accompanied by three other kayakers when he embarked at 9:30 a.m. at the bottom of Virginia Electric Power Company's Mount Storm dam for a trip that includes some of the most difficult water in the Potomac River watershed. Targeted were both sections usually paddled on the Stony plus the bigger part of the Gormania - Kitzmiller run on the Potomac's North Branch. Total run: 23 miles.

The four boats had covered 13 miles of the Stony, with a mile to go to the confluence with the North Branch, when the entrapment occurred at 2 p.m. The U.S. Geological Survey's tape from the Stony gauge near the U.S. 50 bridge showed just under 5 ft., which is 1 ft. above paddling zero with a flow of 750 cfs. River gradient over the half mile bracketing the entrapment is just under 100 fpm.

Maximum temperature during the day in the general area was 20 degrees.

Most of the following information was provided by Mike Fetchero, a member of the foursome and the Greater Baltimore Club:

Hoyt Reel, of Dumfries, Va. was first around a sharp bend; he hit something in a curler after sliding over a river-wide pillow perhaps 12 inches high. Bryan, close behind, stayed on course in spite of Reel's signalling. Bryan weighed about 210 lbs., was paddling an off-the-shelf high-volume glass design.

Bryan's kayak collided with the unseen obstacle and ultimately halted aimed in the original direction but with the cockpit submerged 2 to 2-1/2 ft. in the water. It remained upright; the paddler's head was above the surface but little else. The stern emerged from the water 2 ft. behind the paddler; it slanted up at a 45-degree angle.

Fetchero and the fourth member of the party, Ed Little, also of Greater Baltimore, saw Bryan's predicament in time to avoid the same spot.

The three soon discovered that underneath the curler was a hotizontal tree trunk of 12 to 18 inches diameter. Approximately 12 inches of water flowed over it.

The paddler was trapped by his upper legs inside the partially flattened boat, which in turn was prevented from sliding from under the trunk by a limb fork later discovered. His torso appeared to be free from the waist up, for he attempted to establish a stable head-up position by twisting and grabbing for the stern section behind him. This failed.

Each of the other paddlers was able repeatedly to make his way from the right bank out along the tree trunk and attempt various rescue tactics, but none was able to maintain position for long before the current tore him loose. One did pass a rope through the stern loop, but a strong pull did no more than tear the loop intact free of the stern structure.

After a number of minutes, the trapped paddler could no longer help himself. The others became increasingly exhausted and finally unable to render significant assistance. Reel collected enough strength for a last careful check of what had become inevitable fact.

An hour after the initial entrapment, the three survivors returned to their kayaks, ran the last mile including the lower Stony's 6-ft. drop, and entered the 9-mile run on the North Branch to Kitzmiller. They arrived there somewhat after dark.

They were back at the site next morning with state troopers and volunteer firemen. VEPCO had closed its dam gates, so water flow was considerably reduced. The tree trunk was half out of water and the fork was shortly discovered. The tree appeared to have been pushed over years earlier by strip-mine tailings which still form the right bank. Clearance between the trunk and rocks on the bottom was in the neighborhood of 2 ft.

Bending marks on the recovered kayak began about 3 ft. from the bow and worsened progressively to a maximum in the cockpit area, Fetchero said. There was some "interesting-looking clean breaks" in the cockpit area, as contrasted with bending marks and cracks, but he considered them of no consequence. Even if the stern had broken completely off at the cockpit, he felt that the paddler would have remained clamped in place in the front half, which was prevented from washing out by the tree fork.

The Grant County medical examiner (a dentist, according to W.V. Trooper Terry Shrader) found the cause of death to be exposure plus chest injuries. Fetchero was puzzled by the chest-injury finding, by virtue of his awareness of the paddler's movements from the waist up.

All four paddlers had several years' experience on pushy water. They were acquainted with and had paddled with each other before. All were considered in good physical condition. Bryan and Little were much stronger than average because of size, youth, and conditioning. All wore full wetsuits of 3/16-inch diver's configuration. They had throwlines and basic survival gear including matches and collapsible saw.

None of the survivors was able to distinguish the tree visually until the water flow was reduced.

Reel hiked back in with wetsuit and large saw during the New Year's weekend and removed it completely.

Sam Chambliss
1/4/79

(The collection of facts and their presentation in the foregoing report of the kayaker's death was the result of two factors:

First, Charles Walbridge, chairman of the safety committee of the American Canoe Association, requested the action,

Second, Sam Chambliss, the report writer, is a member of the same club as the deceased, has had the aim of running the Stony himself someday, and wanted to know as many facts as available about the accident.

The report is being distributed to whitewater organizations in the area to increase appreciation of lethal aspects of yet another river in our sport, and to lay at rest the exaggerations and misconceptions which often emerge from unreported catastrophe. Walbridge reports that within a week or so of the accident he had already picked up the rumor that three persons, not one, had perished in the Stony that day.

One member of the group of paddlers felt strongly that names of the survivors served no purpose in the report and should not be used there. This opinion was resisted on the grounds that all four members of the party are known in the area, either individually or as part of a group of experienced heavy-water paddlers; mention of their names immediately precludes the idea that the accident resulted from a bunch of neophytes trying something over their heads. Instead, in the actual case, the group that paddled the Stony that day was doing nothing unusual; its members paddle this kind of thing almost as a matter of routine, winter as well as summer.) S.C.

## REGENERATION

A smile
On your face
A feather
In your hat
A paddle
In your hand
A river
And boon companions
Who
Could ask for more

(From SMOKE SIGNAL, December 1978)

## —CAMPING AND PARKING ALONG THE NANTAHALA ——BY PAYSON KENNEDY-

Have you noticed how beautiful the rhododendron is in June along the Nantahala? For the many years that I have been paddling on the Nantahala , I've always thought how remarkably beautiful much of it is to be so close to a highway. There are some spots along the river that are easy to get to from the highway, where people can camp without having to carry their gear far, and where they can enjoy the beauty and coolness of the river. More and more people are learning these spots.

But what is this doing to the beauty of the river? On many weekends in the summer when I have paddled the Nantahala I haven't noticed the foliage as much as the number of campsites with large tents, coolers, lawn chairs, fireplaces, lines full of drying clothes and gear, and sometimes people bathing or washing dishes in the river. Even when the sites are vacant, rather than seeing a rhododendron thicket one sees an area worn bare of vegetation and beginning to erode, with fire scars and litter. So regularly are some of these sites used that one hardly dares walk in the surrounding areas which are used repeatedly as latrines.

Camping along a wilderness river can be a great experience and with a little care does no significant damage since each site is used infrequently. But camping along a river as popular and as close to the highway as the Nantahala can destroy that which makes the river attractive, and it is rapidly occurring. If we could stop the camping now it would probably require three or four years for the most visible scars to be concealed again by new vegetation.

I know that many of the campers will never see this newsletter. But I wonder if we could stop the deterioration if our readers don't camp along the river themselves and try very gently pointing out to other campers what is occurring. A suggestion that a campsite out of sight of both the river and the highway would help to keep the area attractive as well as providing them some privacy, might be well taken. I'm not overly optimistic that it will work without government regulation and enforcement, as on the Chattooga, but I think it is worth a try. I'll bet most of you would also like to paddle the Nantahala again without seeing any clotheslines!

A second local problem, while not really a conservation matter, does relate to the very heavy summertime weekend use. Traffic congestion in the Nantahala Falls area and even more in the present put-in area has become a serious problem. We hear reports that it has taken people as long as one-half hour to travel a half mile through the congested area at the put-in. This is annoying to everyone, but especially to non-boating residents who must use this road regularly. Resentment became so intense that a petition signed by 600 persons was presented to the County Commissioners asking them to stop river users from blocking the roadways. Less responsible persons have scattered roofing nails at the put-in and Falls parking areas.

If river users continue to show a lack of consideration for others by blocking the roads we will be inviting resentment that may result in restrictive local ordinances, vandalism to vehicles and equipment, or blocking off of the access and parking areas by the Power Company. The U. S. Forest Service is currently planning parking, restroom, and launching facilities near the Power House.

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# Gingrich Leaning Toward Bill to Kill Spewrell Dam

By JOHN REETZ
Journal Staff Writer

Sixth District U.S. Rep. Newt Gingrich is "leaning" toward co-sponsoring a bill that would kill the controversial Spewrell Bluff dam project on the Flint River.

A final decision on Gingrich's co-sponsorship probably won't be made for several months, but an aide said the Georgia congressman generally favors the bill drawn by Rep. Bob Michel, R-Ill.

Michel's bill would "de-authorize" 12 incomplete dam projects, including the Spewrell Bluff dam on the Flint River about 60 miles south of Atlanta.

The Spewrell Bluff project was blocked five years ago by then-Gov. Jimmy Carter, who maintained the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had exaggerated the worth of the dam and lake.

Some business interests in the area have recently suggested that the dam plan be revived.

Although Carter stopped the dam and no funds have been appropriated for construction, the project has never been officially scrapped.

"It's very hard to 'de-authorize' anything in the federal government," said Carlyle Gregory, a Gingrich aide. "That's why they (bill authors) picked dams that were relatively non-controversial" for inclusion in Michel's bill.

The 12 dams in Michel's bill are located in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Florida and the Spewrell Bluff project in Georgia.

Perhaps the most controversial, Gregory said, is the Cross Florida Barge Canal.

Gregory said the estimated cost of the 12 dams — "and you know how those estimated costs are" — is $2.1 billion.

Approximately $116 million has been spent for planning and a small amount of land acquisition for the 12 projects.

Gregory said the bill will be taken up by the water resources subcommittee of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee. Because of other matters, Gregory said he doesn't expect any discussion until the fall.

Between now and then, Gingrich will set up a water resources committee in the 6th District to study the area's water needs and advise on the Spewrell Bluff project.

Gingrich has been an outspoken critic of the Spewrell Bluff dam in the past, saying that "as a fiscal conservative, the project simply doesn't make sense."

When Carter killed the project, he also demanded an investigation of the Corps of Engineers because he claimed they twisted figures to try to justify the dam.

Based on 1973 dollars, the dam and lake, covering 13,000 acres, would cost $175 million.

Environmentalists have opposed the project because they say it would destroy a scenic free-flowing river and there are already eight lakes within 60 miles of Spewrell Bluff.

Corps of Engineers officials have acknowledged the controversy stirred up by the project and said they "don't want to be making waves," so have no desire to build Spewrell Bluff.

When completed, this will be a major step toward solving the problem. Some specific suggestions for helping alleviate the problem follow:

1) Write to the Forest Supervisor urging that every effort be made to complete the planned parking facilities as soon as possible. The address is: Forest Supervisor, National Forests in North Carolina, P.O. Box 2750, Asheville, NC 28802.

2) Do not stop in the roadway to load or unload rafts or canoes.

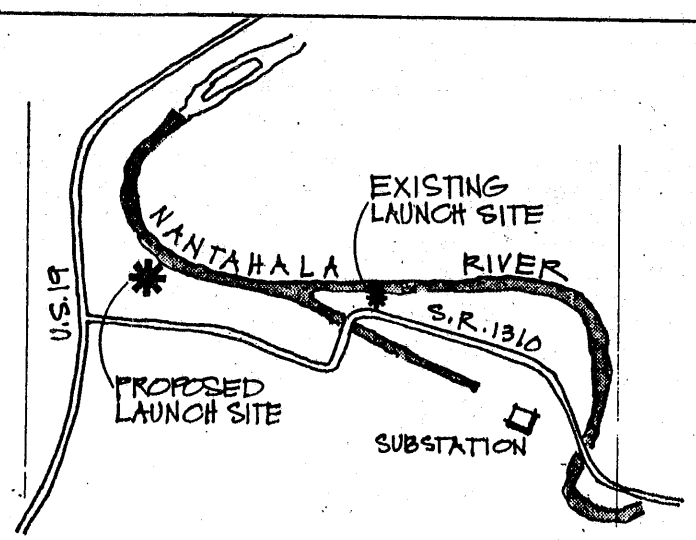
3) Insofar as possible, avoid walking and especially carrying boats or rafts on the highway. Stay on the shoulder.

4) Be considerate of others in parking your vehicle. Never park with tires on the pavement. Do not park in the point area at the put-in but leave this area open for unloading equipment. Try to leave a pathway for pedestrians carrying boats in the Falls area.

## NEW PUT-IN ON THE NANTAHALA

The best news we've heard in a long time comes from the U.S. Forest Service, which now has firm plans to construct new put-in facilities at the top of the Nantahala. On land purchased from the Nantahala Power and Light Company late last year, the Forest Service plans to begin construction in March on an access drive, a large parking lot, sanitary facilities and a launching pond. This will be several hundred yards downstream of the existing put-in point, on the river left bank. Plans call for completion of construction in May 1979.

This will be a major boon to the enjoyment of all users of the Nantahala, and will provide welcome relief for the heroic traffic problems of the past years. Our friends in the Nantahala Community have long since tired of fighting long delays as paddlers unloading and carrying boats and parking cars have caused aggravating congestion. Combined with some thoughtfulness on the part of all us paddlers and visitors to the Gorge area, the completion of the new put-in area should provide major relief to a big headache.




U.S. FOREST SERVICE MAP INDICATING SITE OF PROPOSED LAUNCH AREA.

Nantahala residents, increasingly bitter over the abuse of the Nantahala River, Highway 19, and the land along the road and river by canoeists and campers, appealed Monday to the county commissioners to help in fighitng their problem. Over 600 residents signed a petition requesting help from the commission in dealing with conditions which their spokesman termed "just a mess, a big aggravating mess."

John Wagner, presenting the community's grievances to the county board, said that despite appeals to Nantahala Power Company, "the only progress we've seen is more and more people."

According to community residents, visitors to the Gorge park on the shoulder and even on the road, hold up traffic while they walk down the middle of the road carrying canoes, and camp on any available strip of land, even on the shoulder of the road. Because of insolent behavior on the part of some male canoeists, residents are now afraid for women who must drive on US 19. One resident reported that his wife had encountered young men who stood in the middle of the road and tried to make her stop, and others who had made smart comments to her while she was driving home from work by herself.

"It's like a campers' village," Wagner told the commission, but there are no sanitary facilities. The result is a potential health hazard. Wagner said you find trash and toilet paper on the trails because of the carelessness of many of the visitors, even though the outdoor center sends out regular clean-up crews.

"I'm not against them using the river," Wagner said, but insisted that something must done about the problem. Nantahala residents were unanimous in wanting something done about it, he told the board.

According to the Nantahala spokesman, the power company has informed them that they cannot ban camping on their property (most of the