

GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.



P. O. Box 7023, Atlanta, Georgia 30309

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NEWSLETTER

Vol. XIV, No. 11

Deadline for material for the next newsletter is the 15th. Submit material to Gary DeBacher, 1191 Conway Rd., Decatur, GA 30030. PLEASE TYPE BORDER TO BORDER (ZERO MARGINS) WITH INDENTED PARAGRAPHS AND NO VERTICAL SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS. This format makes it much easier for me to lay out the newsletter. Good, high contrast photos are also welcome, as well as pertinent conservation clippings from other publications.

DUES INCREASE. At the general membership meeting, the members present voted unanimously to increase GCA dues to \$10.00 per year. It was clear from financial analysis that this would be necessary to meet increased publication costs for the newsletter and guidebook, and to maintain other programs as well.

DUES ARE \$10 FOR 1980. Remember to forward these to the GCA P.O. box number or directly to Nancy Wylie. Don't send them to the editor! If you have already forwarded a smaller amount, please forward an additional \$2.50. THE DEADLINE FOR DUES IS JANUARY 31. After that date, you'll start missing newsletters and your name will not be listed in the guidebook.

My personal thanks to those who sent early dues or even personal contributions to help us over the financial hump. I may return the personal contributions; or perhaps I'll use them to fund some really special newsletter feature. ---Ed.

NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING WILL BE THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF DEC., 7:30 PM IN FERNBANK SCIENCE CENTER. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.

TRIPS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

I have lost her announcement, but Nancy Wylie is organizing an overnight camping trip on the Ogeechee River for the weekend of December 15. The Ogeechee is a very beautiful and fairly unspoiled river which is being considered for status as a national wild and scenic river. The sections to be run are down on the coastal plain near Savannah. Because of limited camping space, there will be a 10 boat limit. For more information, call Nancy at 256-1172 or Russ Koester at 233-4093. -Ed.

"Due to uncertain weather and water conditions at this time of year, no advance trip schedule is offered. However, Jimmy Gunter and I are hoping to get out and enjoy the solitude of winter paddling. Easier rivers will be emphasized to reduce the risk of long swims and hypothermia. Also, trip leaders and participants will be screened more carefully. We know of some folks who are scouting south Georgia for scenic flatwater and a warmer air temperature. Whether you want to lead a trip or to find one, you are welcome to call Jimmy or me during the week preceding." --John Shumaker, Jr. GCA Cruisemaster

THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING was not too heavily attended. Too bad--- you missed some good films. I brought a videotape of the World Championships so we could all watch the US C-1's and K-1w's mop up the competition. Ken McAmis had films of western rivers, including some of the ferocious North Fork of the Payette in Idaho. And Hank Klausman showed films of his trip in the Grand Canyon and of some runs on Overflow Creek.

ELECTION RESULTS at the meeting were as follows: President, Norm Reynolds; VP, Curt Holmes; Treasurer, Nancy Wylie; Newsletter, Gary DeBacher; Cruisemasters, John Shumaker and Jimmy Gunter; Training, Mark Warren; and Directors at Large, George Neill and Bruce McGregor.

DEATH AT JAWBONE ON SECTION IV, CHATTOOGA. It is my sad duty to report that a Nantahala Outdoor Center guide, running safety boat for a raft trip in his kayak, was pinned and drowned in his boat. He had entered an eddy on the right side of the strong runout in Jawbone, when something went awry and he got sucked back against a large rock called "Decapitation Rock" which sits just below the eddy. Although another guide got to him very quickly, he could not pull the victim loose; and in fact it took more than an hour to do so.

There are probably not any fancy lessons to be learned from this tragedy. Many of the rapids on the Chattooga contain large undercut rocks and waterlogged timbers which can entrap paddlers. Many of the raft guides are expert kayakers who are good enough to get into and out of such an eddy with very high reliability, but the penalty for a single mistake in such rapids can be very severe. ---Ed.

Upper Chattahoochee Marathon Float September 23, Smith's Bridge (on the Nacoochee section) to Belton Bridge (down on Lake Lanier), approximately 35 kilometers. Excellent water level, 2.6 at Mrs. Wyche's store. Light overcast, temperature in the 70's. Paddling time with one first timer and 2 junior paddlers, 5 hours and 40 minutes including a lunch break. Since many paddlers have not run the Hooch above 255 and most have not run below Duncan Bridge, this report will serve to call you to a new experience. Lunch below Duncan bridge about 1.5 miles, listening to the roar as the Hooch breaks into 3 channels of class 2 and 3 rapids. Running over twisting drops and following red tailed hawks as the river nears the lake.

Well anyway, no blisters and everyone was off the river in time to drive home in daylight. Because of a borrowed canoe trailer and the help of Sandy Oscar, shuttle runner extraordinaire, take out and take off were one and the same. We had five canoes on the trailer and could have carried three more. That trailer sure makes for less time driving and more fun paddling.

Thanks to Russ Koester, C1 open, Norm Bishop and Mavis Morrision (1st trip), Robby and Peter Oscar (C2 junior) and Sandy Oscar, shuttle runner.

Talking Rock, Saturday, October 20. This was the first genuine low water trip I've had this fantastic season. Talking Rock at 1.35 was still shockingly negotiable. The two tandems---the Coles and the Koesters--- did get stuck a few times, but I managed to thread the whole maze in my little Mad River without once having to step out and get my big feet wet. So I still haven't established an absolute minimum level for this stream. The weather and the leaves were beautiful. When you get around to making this run (the biggest and best dose of class 2 river scenery in the state), don't miss a chance to climb up to the top of Cave Bluff. Just walk downstream along the ledges to the two little streams and you'll find a trail which goes right to the top, permitting spectacular views. There is a spur which gets near the cave, but I didn't have the rock-climbing ability to reach the cave itself. All in all, seven tiring but worthwhile hours on the water. --G. DeBacher

SORRY the newsletter is kind of late this month. Actually it is lucky that everything waited to go wrong until a relatively non-essential paddling month. Anyway, I have regained access to the word processor, my wife gets the cast off her foot tomorrow, and the January newsletter will be BIGGER AND BETTER. ---Ed.

Chattooga IV- Oct. 14, 1979. Well, we finally got to do it! After several tries in August and September when the water was too high (what?!), we finally caught section IV running cold and clear at 1.8 feet on the gauge. Can you believe a problem with too much water in September? Anyway, for a change the river was just right and the day was beautiful.

We put in at the 76 bridge and had to battle about a million rafts for the first half of the trip. Not only are the rafts taking over the river, they are getting downright hostile. It is a bit disconcerting to have a raft, or sometimes several rafts, pull out in front of you as you are in the approach to a big rapid. We may have to arm ourselves with special raft darts or perhaps ice picks to punch our way through the rapids.

Our trip was punctuated by a couple of swims at seven foot falls; and at Corkscrew, we had George Neill's now famous "Jump in the River" rescue trick. George was enjoying his first trip on this section and had a good day. Both he and Stan Landers in solo opens had good runs at Seven Foot and at Jawbone. And whatever happened to John Shumaker? (Overslept again....Ed.)

A couple of the more sensible paddlers in our group chose to walk around Jawbone and Sock-'em-Dog, and to save them a portage, Ken "Maddog" McAmis ran 3 CI's through Jawbone (all at once? -Ed.), and then tried to emulate Ken "Windmill" Strickland at Sock. No way, but he did make it upright.

Our group consisted of Ken McAmis, Bronwyn Fowlkes, and me in CI; and George Neill and Stan Landers in Blue Holes. ---Jack Weems

P.S. Ken and Fran Strickland had a guest in their party who looked a lot like David Jones, but in a Tupperware kayak. who could it have been?

COMMERCIAL RAFTS VERSUS PRIVATE BOATERS? Actually if there's one thing I don't want to do, it's foster any ill feeling between our boaters and commercial raft guides. Some of our most important present and previous members have worked on commercial raft operations on local rivers. In addition, the presence of the commercial outfits confers a tremendous benefit in added safety, since they are much better equipped for rescue, first aid and evacuation than most of us. To my knowledge, they have never failed to help when someone was in serious trouble.

We should also remember that the presence of large numbers of loosely organized private boaters, at least half of them not really qualified to be on rivers like the Chattooga or Ocoee, sometimes causes serious problems for raft guides, who are trying to get completely inexperienced people down these difficult rivers in a safe and enjoyable fashion. For all I know, rafts were pulling out in front of Jack's group because they had already waited for 38 private boats in a row and just weren't willing to wait any longer.

That would be a reason of sorts, but not a justification. The rule on right-of-way is quite clear. The boat in an eddy or playing in the midst of a rapid should in all cases yield the right of way to any boats proceeding downstream along the usual and accepted routes. Often the boat coming down the rapid is simply unable to avoid other craft peeling suddenly out of eddies.

However, there is an important qualification. If you near the approach to a rapid like Seven Foot Falls or the sneak at the right bank at Woodall, and you see other rafts and boaters waiting in the approach eddies, obviously taking their turn at emerging for the final run, it may be rotten manners to lead your whole group through ahead of them. Find your own eddy and assess the situation first. If we all remember to do this, the raft guides won't get so aggravated that they pull out in front when our turn comes.

If you have problems with a particular raft, don't holler at the guide. See if you can spot the guide in charge of the whole party, or talk to one of their safety boats. These are usually the more senior and experienced people in the party. Explain your side of the story, but be prepared to consider the possibility that you were partly at fault. If you consider the incident(s) really serious, consider calling me or Norm Reynolds so we can discuss it with the Executive Board. Finally, please don't get hostile and paranoid. That won't help anything. ---Ed.

WANT ADS

For Sale: Lettman Mk IV kayak- used twice in easy water- asking \$200. Also selling float bags, nylon spray skirt, and 205 cm. Azali paddle. Call 373-7535 after 5 pm or on weekends, Peter Elkon & Sallie Burn.

For sale: Whitewater vest, small \$20. Small paddling jacket, \$6. K-1 neoprene spray skirt, \$18. Neoprene vest for fall paddling, medium, \$10. Darah Strickland H. 688-8502, W. 491-9200.

AD POLICY FOR COMING YEAR. We are still open for commercial advertizers in the newsletter, although the rates will have to be somewhat higher. Half of the ad income for '79 was consumed in extra printing costs. Contact the editor if you are interested in running ad copy.

EYESTRAIN? By compressing the pitch and using oversize paper, I have been able to cram about 15% more words on a page, which seems a necessary economy. This, I promise, is absolutely as far as I will go, and I hope you don't get a headache reading it.

Khomeini times Ayatollah you already, YOU GOT TO USE LESS GAS !?!