

GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.



P. O. Box 7023, Atlanta, Georgia 30357

April, 1980

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 15, No. 4

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.

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

TRIPS FOR APRIL

April 5	Lower Chauga, class II-III	Peter Elkon or Sally Burn, 373-7535
6	Etowah class I-II	Jim Pharr 634-2272
12	Nantahala class II-III	George Neill 294-9736
13	Hiwassee class II (III)	Jimmy Gunter 974-8681
19-20	Helen Races	
19	Upper Tallulah class II	Roger Nott 1-536-6923
20	Chattooga III class III-IV	John Shumaker 874-6716, late aft.
26-27	Hudson-Broad overnight*	Norm Reynolds 455-3498
27	Upper Hooch class II-III	Hugh Stubbs 952-4926

REMEMBER That Jim Atkins (688-6586) is impromptu trip chairman. Give him a call if you're running something not on the schedule, or if you are looking for others who are running something different.

* More on the Hudson-Broad camping trip: The total length of the trip is 20 miles. The Hudson has easy rapids which, with spring water levels, can be readily negotiated by canoes loaded with camping gear. In late April, the banks of the Hudson are lined with wild azaleas, fringe trees and laurel. By mid-afternoon, the group will be on the easy, flat section of the Broad river above hwy 281, and will probably camp on a certain large sandbar where there is plenty of room for any number of tents and lots of dry wood for fires. (But plan to bring all the water you need with you, and also some bug repellent.) On Sunday morning, folks will be packed and re-embarking by about 9:30, in time to paddle down to hwy 281 and meet anyone coming just to run the Broad on Sunday. Most of you are familiar with the 6 mile section of the Broad below hwy 281. The class II rapids are much stronger than those on the Hudson, but it won't matter if your camping gear gets a little wet, since you won't be using it Sunday night. There are safe ways to sneak all the rapids on the Broad, so experienced paddlers can get through without soaking their kids. If you are in doubt about your ability to get your gear and/or family down these sections, check with Norm. You can also call Gary DeBacher, who ran the same trip about three years ago in medium-high water.

If you can't paddle both days, you can still come over and paddle just the Hudson or the Broad. If weather on that weekend is too rotten for camping, Norm will try to arrange day trips on one or both rivers.

EDITOR APPEALS: Because of some extra things I will have to attend to, both at work and for my family, I will have less time than usual to work on the newsletter in the upcoming months. I really need some contributions from other GCA members to help keep up the quality and quantity of our publication. If you've been thinking of submitting something, now is the time to do it.

C-1 PADDLERS. If you need a pool to improve some of your skills, contact John Shumaker at 874-6716, late afternoon.

THIS YEAR'S GCA BEGINNER'S TRAINING SESSION WILL BE THE WEEKEND OF MAY 31. WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS IN NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER.

CARTECAY Sunday, Feb. 24. With sunny weather and decent (2.2) water, everyone had a good time on the trip. Most of the people who went swimming at one or the other of the big ledges were asking for it anyway. I, for example, had no business running the second ledge backwards, nor did Shumaker have any reason to expect to get away with surfing the hole below the first ledge in an open boat. The water temperature was bracing, to say the least. The only negative aspect of the day was the rapid advance of cabin development along this previously unpopulated section.

I'll never remember all the names, but here goes. Bronwyn Fowlkes and Ken McAmis were paddling tandem open; Jack and Bruce Weems were tandem in a C-2. In solo opens were trip leader Stan Landers, John Shumaker, George Neill, and Jack Slade (?). Peter Elkon and Sallie Burn were switching off between their Black Hole and their Sage C-1. I was in my own Sage, Miss Piggy. Also rans, some in K-1's: David Godfrey, Eric Young and Joan Willingham. —Gary DeBacher

WANT ADS. Remember, you have to be a GCA member to run free ads for used equipment. Otherwise the cost is \$5.

For Sale: Blue Hole canoe with flotation and paddle. Color is black, one year old. \$500.

Contact Johnny Mack Tate, 329-7198 8 AM-6 PM.

For Sale: K1 Downriver Boat (Phoenix Match II) Kevlar, Light and Strong. Excellent Boat for Racing or Paddling Long Distances with Little Effort. \$200.

K1 Downriver Paddle (Mitchell) Right Hand Control. \$65. Ken Strickland 374-6506 or 374-5836

EXPLORATION TRIP - YAHOOLA CREEK; Sat., March 8, 1980- With three major ice storms this winter most of the small creeks in the Ga. Mountains have been more clogged than usual with downed trees. Predictably the 6 mile section of the Yahoola that Brenda Hanson, my wife Beth and I canoed this day, from the dam and Water Works on Wimpy Mill Rd. just inside the northern city limits of Dahlonega to the Hwy 60 bridge 1 mi. south of Dahlonega at the Creek's confluence with the Lower Chestatee, contained 3 or 4 spots where we had to step from our boats to traverse logjams. We were prepared for them, however, and had open boats, wet suits, and generous measures of cautiousness and optimism. We also had 3" of rain in the preceding 24 hrs. and the stream was full and muddy. Also there was a good deal of debris on the banks and a mild odor from sewage which is dumped into the Creek at the Water Works and a second spot a mile below Hwy 52 bridge. Egad!"this creek is the pits"you are thinking? Read on. The Yahoola in this section drops a total of 110', or 19'/mi., mostly through class I and easy class II shoals. Immediately below Hwy 52 bridge, at mile 1.1, the river drops 20' in .2 mi. beginning with a powerful class IV-V drop, immediately followed by a rocky and dangerous class III, and afterwards by 300 yds. of fast, class II-III water. These shoals can and should be scouted from an old road on the right bank, which also contains the ruins of what seems to be a mill sluice, and were great fun to run. Soon after Hwy 52 the river, which had flowed mostly through farmland, enters a mature forest which is devoid of occupied structures. Our biggest treat of the day came at mile 5 when we came upon a large, abandoned gold mine with its machinery and stamp mill intact. Brenda found a gold vein in a rock by one of the dilapidated buildings, whose large wooden beams were well weathered but seemed sturdy. On the cliff above the stamp mill we found and explored the mine shaft, which was flooded with cold, knee-deep water, and wished we had brought a light. We learned later that this was the Lockhart Gold Mine, which had been abandoned 40 to 50 years ago. Yahoola Creek can only be easily run in the Spring or after sizeable rains and will never be anyone's favorite run. Nevertheless we thoroughly enjoyed discovering this pleasant stream and the Lockhart Mine. I'd recommend that a trip on the Yahoola be prefaced by one to the Dahlonega Gold Museum in the old Lumpkin Co. Courthouse on the Square. One can thus view a model of a gold mining operation and then see the real thing. (Warning: if you go into the old shaft, don't yell; the crumbling ceiling may cave in!) A trip on the Yahoola can be extended by entering 3.2 mi. upstream of Wimpy Mill Rd. at Hwy 19-60 or by paddling another 6 mi. to Cain Bridge over the Chestatee River just off Hwy 60 4½ mi. south of Dahlonega. Expect mostly class I but good scenery.

- Roger Nott, Exploration Chairman -

ETOWAH - HIGHTOWER SECTION - Sat., Feb. 23, 1980: We had a sunny, 75 degree day to paddle this lovely stretch of the Etowah's headwaters. Unfortunately the river was low after 3½ weeks with no appreciable rain since the Jan. 31st ice storm, which had left many trees down across the river. There has been another ice storm since our trip, so that I'd advise anyone interested in paddling this section to do so after a few good spring rains, which ought to clear all but 3 or 4 of the most stubborn trees. Most of these trees were in the first 2 miles before Simmons (or Hightower) Bridge, and we spent about half our trip in this section due to the trees and the low water which made some of the rapids hard to negotiate. It would have been more sensible for us to run from Simmons Bridge to Highway 52 (9½ mi.). The 8 mile trip lasted 6 instead of the usual 3½ hrs. The extra efforts made the generous portions at the Country Kitchen in Dawsonville, where most of us had supper, particularly savory. All and all, most of our crew seemed to have a good time on my favorite stretch of the Etowah. Participants were: Alan Bailey in a K-1; Richard Lawrence and Jimmy Duncan in C-1's; John Lucas, Karen Duncan, Bud Bland and Karen Dean in solo opens; Mark and Susan Levine and Beth and I in tandem opens. See the May, 1979 Newsletter, p. 6 for more details of and directions on the Hightower section. - Roger Nott

Nantahala Glacier Breaker Races (Feb. 23 & 24, 1980)

Slalom: K1W Frannie Strickland 3rd; K1 Ken Strickland 2nd; C2 Mixed Eager/Eager 3rd;
C2 Mixed Open Benedict/Gardner 2nd

Wildwater: K1 Dave Jones 1st, Ken Strickland 2nd; C1 Fritz Orr 3rd; C1 Open Sam Benedict 3rd

Exploration Trip, Chauga River from Blackwell to Cassidy Bridges, Monday, June 4, 1979:

This beautiful section of the Chauga, which is entirely within the Sumpter National Forrest, has been paddled by Murray Johnson and Jack Weems but has tended to discourage some would-be-explorers due to the cascading 45' waterfall ½ mi. below the put-in. In celebration of Jefferson Davis' Birthday Liph Johnson and I decided to paddle this 5.6 mi. stretch in my Blue Hole.

We had gauge readings of 2.5 at the lower Hwy 76 Chattooga and of 3" above 0 at Cassidy Bridge. This was probably about 2" above a comfortable minimum. This stretch could safely be run much higher and thus could be a good alternate run when the Chattooga is in flood stage. We might have made a longer trip by putting in at Land or Verner Mill Rd. Bridges 2 and 3.2 miles above Blackwell Bridge without having a significantly reduced flow. The river drops at a rate of 80'/mi. just below Verner Mill Rd. Br. The Whetstone topographical map could be helpful in trip planning.

Easy Class II shoals precede the 45' falls: The approach to the falls is not difficult, but the portage, along a rough path on the right for about 50 yds., is somewhat strenuous, as boats must be pulled up a steep incline. This took us about 10 minutes. There is an unusual column of rock at the bottom of the falls carved by the turbulent currents. It extends about 20' above the water and lends to the falls one possible suitable name: "Pillar Falls."

There is a second, sliding falls with a total drop of another 10' just below Pillar Falls. We ran this one taking due care to avoid an overhanging rock on the left at the top. Below the second falls the river drops 70' in the next mile which contains some fun, technical, Class II-III shoals. A good gravel road enters from the west at the 1.5 mi. mark. [It comes from the Chattooga Section III shuttle Rd. 2/3 mi. SW of Whetstone crossroads - where one turns left to go to Earls Ford or right to get to Blackwell Bridge.]. After this point the run quiets down to easy and frequent Class I-II shoals which sometimes, however, require some tight turns. There is one more Class III rapid, which can be scouted on the right and run left and is about 3½ miles through the run. About mile 2 are 2 trees which need to be carefully traversed but which are in calm stretches and can be seen well ahead of time. (The larger should be shunned at high water.)

The scenery is similar to that of the Gorge Section of the river, although not always so spectacular. There is no development other than the field at the take-out, which is the put-in for the Gorge run. The copious mountain laurel was in full bloom this day and was always very close to us, as this stretch of the river is narrow and well shaded with mature, second growth forest.

- Roger Nott, Exploration Chairman (home - 536-6923; office - 532-5410)

Chauga Gorge, Sunday, March 23. This impromptu expedition was attended by Gary DeBacher, Bronwyn Fowlkes, and Ken McAmis in C-1s and, eventually after much driving around and getting lost, by David Garrity in his Mad River Explorer. Dave always likes to forget something when he runs the Gorge. This time he forgot his life jacket. Fortunately for him, I generally wear two. The water level was about 5 1/2", a decent but not yet powerful level. Since there has never been a proper exploration report on this section in the newsletter, I will bore you with some details. Unless there has been a lot of rain and the hwy 76 Chattooga gauge is reading at least 2.8, it is a waste of time to even drive over to look at the Gorge section. Because of its high gradient and small watershed, it takes a lot of water to run without beating your boats to death. There is a gauge painted on the base of the bridge at the put-in. Two inches above zero is the minimum for a decent run. I think that 7" is probably optimal, and if the level is much above that, you'd better not just be advanced, you'd better be downright expert.

For the first part of the run, the river heads SSW, and the major obstacles are two large waterfalls, both portaged on the left. Both can also be run under the right circumstances, but we skipped the first, and there was a tree in the second. We may be crazy, but we ain't stupid! The second falls has a couple of stiff holes on the approach to the portage. Things then ease up until Spider Valley Creek enters on the right. The Chauga then turns ESE and drops into the gorge. The gradient exceeds 150 feet per mile for the next 1 1/2 miles, and virtually every drop must be carefully scouted for trees and related hazards. The opener is a 10' shoal which gave me two opportunities to demonstrate my ineptitude and my roll. Two or three drops later, Ken took a shot across the helmet while setting up to roll and had to wet exit. He was OK, just stunned. One particularly memorable class IV is a long series of drops right against the left bank which accelerates you into a wall reminiscent of the one below Seven Foot Falls. I hit the wall and had to roll. Garrity did something strange and managed to perch on a rock in mid rapid, but did better on his second attempt.

After several more complex rapids with stiff holes, the river gradually eases up, though there are several difficult rapids still to come. One is a sloping falls which has a fascinating hydraulic across almost the entire width of the river. Ken surfed, Garrity surfed and swam, I snuck, and Bronwyn portaged. A couple of miles farther down, the entire river is necked down through a 5 1/2 foot slot on the left side, and is then shot through a hole and against a large rock. The approved way to run this is by balancing on a two foot tongue right next to the rocks on the left bank. Bronwyn knew this, but somehow ended up under the curler next to the tongue and got blotted.

After that the Chauga is generally easy down to Cobbs Bridge, except for an 18' sheer waterfall which must be portaged. We usually take out on a Forest Service road spur about 1/2 mile above the falls. That takeout involves a 400 yard uphill carry, but it saves a lot of time. If you stop by the Ranger station nearby in SC, you can get a Sumter National Forest map which shows the road spur and other details of the shuttle.

How hard is the Gorge section? It is considerably harder than section III, the lower Amicalola, and Little River Canyon. It cannot be directly compared with the Ocoee or Section IV, but in my own opinion, it is roughly comparable in difficulty, and perhaps places greater demands on the technical skills of the paddler, especially one's ability to make rapid eddy turns before washing over disaster. And, unlike the Ocoee and the Chattooga, you can't expect to see other parties or commercial raft trips to help you unstick your boat or your body. Because of the small size of the river and the closeness of the drops, maximum party size is about 8 boats. Owners of "fiberglass" boats should expect boat damage unless the lay up includes a lot of special cloth. Most open boaters and tandem crews have absolutely no business in here. But for the very advanced and expert boaters, this is one of the most beautiful and exciting runs in the area.

Before signing off, I should take note of the outstanding job that Dave Garrity did in herding his enormous open through this difficult and technical section. Someone was heard to remark that he is rather better in an open than he was in a C-1, but to save his back on portages, Dave is thinking of getting a C-boat again. ---Gary DeBacher

YOU THINK WE'VE GOT STRANGE PROBLEMS? How about the following item from the newsletter of the Canoe Cruisers of Washington, D.C.? It pertains to the Potomac River. (By the way, their newsletter reprinted Cold Turkey in its entirety. There's no accounting for taste. --Ed.)

DR. KAYAK ON NOCTURNAL PADDLING

I don't know whether I like it or not. I mean I think it's a good idea and all that, but it's got some bugs in it. Oh, you haven't been out to the river at night? Well, the Park Service took a look at how congested the Difficult Run rapids area was getting (wall-to-wall boats some days) and with the prodding of Bob Bailey's Teaching Service, they decided to light up the whole area with high intensity lamps. It was something about Small Business or Minority Opportunity something or other. Anyway, the river from Angler's Inn to Wet Bottom Chute is now illuminated with a series of bright lamps, casting an eerie yellow light on the Potomac. Come out and see it.

So it's all to the good in that you can now paddle far into the night, only you better have a pocket full of change. You see, the lights are like those on tennis courts; you put some quarters in and they stay lit for a certain time. But they require exact change. That's where the bugs I mentioned come in. Last night I was surfing on that wave at Virginia Chute when my time ran out. There I was in the dark with only some dimes and the meter takes only quarters (not Canadian, note), Jeez!! Have you ever tried paddling a kayak with a lit match in one hand? Believe me, it was some kind of difficult.

Well, we'll just have to see how it all works out. The Park Service has some plan to graduate the charges; you pay less when the river is low. They haven't decided what to charge the fish for the use of the fish ladder yet. Couple of clams, perhaps.

Meyer Rubin

These pictures were taken by John Shumaker

during our trip on the upper Soque.

Dear Mr. Debacher:

I wanted to drop a belated note of thanks for your nicely objective editorial on commercial/private relations on the Chattooga. I recently saw the comment in the November/December G.C.A. Newsletter.

As an outfitter, we try to be sensitive to private boaters' presence on the Chattooga. Our guides frequently paddle the river on their days off and are aware of the frustrations that can arise when a raft trip interrupts the surfing of a wave or occupies a chosen lunch site. They understand from an individuals point of view. There is room for friendly co-existence on the river, however.

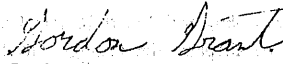
On summer weekends - the heaviest period of private use - each outfitter is limited by the Forest Service to one trip daily on Section Four. This means a total of three trips with six rafts each. The companies start at one hour intervals in the morning and strive to stay separated by one mile for the length of the trip. At major rapids where ropes and scouting are required, each company sets a pre-determined safety system to move the rafts through with a minimum delay. At times, private boaters have benefited from these safety procedures.

What the private boater encounters on a summer Sunday is not an endless chain of commercial rafts, but three separate and distinct, organized trips. Often, the word "raft" is inextricably linked with "commercial." This is far from the case. Many raft groups on the river are from colleges, clubs, or simply are assemblages of individuals. The commercial groups have the company names clearly marked on the sides of the rafts.

Your comment in the newsletter was perceptive: if a private boater does have a complaint with a commercial group, it is wise to seek out the trip leader, the person who can do something about it. If boaters wish to carry a complaint further, they should go to the base of that particular company and ask for the manager, who would be pleased to deal with any misunderstanding.

Finally, the river belongs to everyone, and the companies do not intend to act as if they deserve privileges concerning its use. Thanks for your understanding on this.

Sincerely,



Gordon Grant
Chattooga Outpost Manager
Nantahala Outdoor Center

