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

THE EDDY LINE

VOLUME 44, NO. 7 JULY/AUGUST, 2009

Special Points of Interest:

- ***Board of Directors nominations open - page 6***
- ***GCA Fall Gala Canoeing Affair Scheduled - page 7***

FROM THE (NEW) EDITOR

It has been raining again as I write this, a welcome change from the drought conditions of the last few years. My non-paddling friends do not understand my jubilant mood and lack of focus following a day or two of rain. While they are canceling weekend plans for outdoor activities, I am checking stream gauges for those on the upswing and possible trips posting to the GCA Web site and List. I suspect that Eddy Line readers understand and perhaps exhibit similar bizarre rainy day behavior.

And, as long as I'm discussing bizarre behavior, you may be wondering what prompted me to volunteer as editor of the Eddy Line. As I am struggling to learn the newsletter publishing process, I too am questioning my decision. However, as I noted above, I enjoy paddling and I especially enjoy the GCA paddling community. The Eddy Line is our GCA community in print. Many of us paddle solo boats; however, as we all know, paddling is not a solo activity. The Eddy Line allows us to share our experience on the river with GCA as a whole.

There has been much discussion regarding the fate of the Eddy Line following the Board of Directors decision to publish bi-monthly. After the resignation of Rick Bellows as Eddy Line editor, I volunteered to fill that position in hopes of doing all I can to continue the high quality publication that we have all enjoyed, albeit now on a bi-monthly basis. As Tom Bishop explained in his letter published in the May 2009 Eddy Line, the bi-monthly publication ensures both the economic viability of GCA and survival of the print version of the Eddy Line that many of us enjoy. In the words of Samuel Clements/Mark Twain, "The rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated." I am convinced that the rumors of the Eddy Line's death have also been greatly exaggerated. As you read the July/August edition, I hope you agree.

In an attempt to breathe new life into the Eddy Line, I have changed the look of the Eddy Line. I know I should be careful what I ask for, but please let me know what you think. I am convinced that change is good, and I am willing to change what the majority of you do not like. E-mail your comments to holmberg.mark@gmail.com or, if you must, call me at 678-234-5681.

Finally, I am convinced that the job of editing the Eddy Line is not a one-person task. Therefore, I am asking volunteers for help. In fact, I will ask those of you that respond with the best suggestions to join an editorial board. Editorial board members will develop and edit articles for Eddy Line publication. Don't be shy, we all have stories to share about paddling. By working together, the Eddy Line will not just survive—it will thrive.

Mark Holmberg, Editor

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TROUBLE ON THE COOSAWATTEE

By Howard Hall

My kayak became pinned in a class II rapid on the Coosawattee River against a huge mossy rock in what impressed me as the most violent rush of water that day . I sat there quite awhile wondering what to do -- intensely alarmed at first. I'd heard so many bad things about this type of situation. (One thing that I experienced as I drifted off to sleep that night was the deafening noise from the roar of the river; I actually heard it and had a flashback of possibly going for a swim.)

Still pinned sideways by the never ending torrent, at one point the boat shockingly snap rolled up stream threatening to fill with water. Who knows what would be next for me. Like a terrified actor in the grip of Godzilla, I squirmed up to the high side and some how kept her on the rock and from windmilling into the river, keeping it precariously on it's side. What a mess, and it seemed to keep getting worse!

It's amazing how calm I became after the initial pinning . . . I had been talking with God the whole day. I just asked Him what I needed to do to help me out of this. River mates, Kelly and, I think, Richard (sporting a beard and in the black kayak) were on the shore attempting to throw me a rescue rope, but no one came close. Tilted, I attempted to scoot forward off the rock using body English (was I crazy?) which got me wedged into another rock which wasn't visible before (maybe I was crazy). I asked, "Give me a break and help me out again, God."

I paddled into the eddy to wait for my fellow river mates to get back in their boats so I could thank them.!

I thought if I was freed at that point into the chute of water that I'd be "swimming" -- violently bumping and dragging upside down on the granite bottom. Not a motivating prospect.

Then something happened. I had nothing to do with it, trust me. My dangerously heeled and pinned 14.5 foot sea kayak righted itself, but was still pinned from the non-stoppable river. Whew. I thought I was headed into the drink. Now I saw my chance to get out of this mess. I scooted forward to see what my new situation was. I was free to scoot. God was giving me a break.

Scoot I did, right into the wild chute. The rock I was stuck on helped me pivot into the rush and I was able to somehow get through. I'll never know how God did it, but thanks, Sir. You are the Master of my life.

I paddled into the eddy to wait for my fellow river mates to get back in their boats so I could thank them. Geeze . . . they each indicated nonchalantly 'no problem. 'I was not the only paddler in the group to go for a swim that Saturday, but somebody was always there to help them out.

I am eternally grateful for the assistance I received from those people dedicated and devoted to each other on the river -- the paddlers of the Georgia Canoeing Association. They are a noble and decent clan. And they enjoy every minute of the rivers and of their friends. I am proud to be among them.

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WHITEWATER WARRIERS WEEKEND

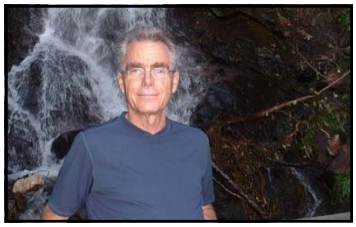
by Jack Taylor (a.k.a Chief Silver Fish)

This is a signal for the first "Whitewater Warriors" weekend, August 21-23—Same Weekend as the Chick Paddle. GCA Braves (i.e., "Whitewater Warriors) will camp as a War Party at the Smokey Mountain Meadows Campground (http://www.smokymtnmeadows.com/) on Friday and Saturday nights. Please make your own reservations, and for campsites 44-53. A Scouting Party will dine in Bryson City both nights. A Powwow will be held at Smoky Mt. Meadows for those braves who prefer to have dinner there. Evening campfires will start up at sundown (please bring firewood).

On Saturday and Sunday mornings we will hold a full War Party Council to plan the paddling attacks for the day. We will paddle Class1-2 and up rivers. There will be Attack Party and Battle Party expeditions on the Nantahala. If warriors prefer not to paddle the river, we will have a "Tenderfoot Party." Warriors who want to paddle different rivers will organize individual "Raiding Parties" to paddle those rivers.

Let's make this first GCA "Whitewater Warriors" weekend a success. Please email me at xl13jdt2@bellsouth.net or call 770.998.0350 with questions and suggestions and to create a list of those GCA "Braves" who expect to attend.

GOOD JOB BOB!!!



June Volunteer of the Month
Presented by Kokatat
Reprinted from:
www.americanwhitewater.org

posted June 8, 2009

by Jeffrey Paine—American Whitewater

American Whitewater would like to recognize Bob Focht as our June volunteer of the month. Bob was the lead volunteer this year at the Tallulah Releases in Georgia. He led a team that oversaw parking at the put-in, the signing and collecting of waivers to access the gorge plus lots more.

Bob is a GCA member and a perfect example of the valuable role that volunteers play at American Whitewater.

Thanks Bob!

AW SEEKS TO END CHATTOOGA DELAYS

Reprinted from: www.americanwhitewater.org Posted by Kevin Colburn

This April marked four years since American Whitewater successfully appealed the US Forest Service decision to reinstitute a ban on paddling the Upper Chattooga River. The highest office of the USFS found that the ban violated the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as well as USFS policy. They gave the Sumter National Forest two years to conduct a user capacity analysis and issue a new decision. Last year the Sumter National Forest released an analysis of paddling on the river (though not a user capacity analysis) and recommended a continued ban on most of the river, new bans on tributaries, and allowing a miniscule amount of use on a portion of the river which will result in no use at all in many years. A final decision was scheduled to be released in December of 2008, at which point the Forest Service announced the decision would come "next year."

Since December, American Whitewater and our attorneys have been in contact with USFS officials at the local, regional, and National level. We have consistently asked for prompt resolution of this issue that includes an equitable and nationally consistent recreation plan based on a user capacity analysis, as is required by law. Thus far, the USFS has not produced a user capacity analysis or proposed a recreation plan that is legal, equitable, or adequately protective of the river.

Agency representatives have not shared with us a predicted decision date, or the cause of the delays within their agency. While we expect improving the management of the Chattooga to be a long term project, like many paddlers we are frustrated by the failure of the USFS to allow boating and protect the river in a timely and appropriate manner. We will continue to pressure the agency to do the right thing and do it soon, and will keep paddlers posted on opportunities to get involved.

GREAT RIVER RUMBLE!

Come and join your friends as we paddle down the majestic Mississippi River! from aCrosse, Wisconsin to Dubuque, Iowa, July 26th through August 1st, 2009. This paddling trip will take us about 120 miles, through four locks, past some of the most beautiful scenery that you will see while on the Great Mississippi River.

SANCTIONS

The Great River Rumble has the approval of the United States Coast Guard. This event is also sanctioned by the United States Canoe Association and the American Canoe Association.

TRIP DESCRIPTION

This trip will be a strenuous and physical challenge. This is not a trip for the beginner canoeist or kayaker who has never paddled long distances. Be prepared for any weather conditions including the possibility of strong winds and rough water.

HOW TO GET THERE

A shuttle bus will be available to take you from Dubuque, IA, to LaCrosse, WI, on Saturday, July 25th. The fee is $25 for each person and $25 for each canoe or kayak. After July 15th, there will be no refunds for shuttle bus or canoe/kayak transport, since these are reserved in advance. You will receive a detailed map and directions approximately two weeks before the trip. This shuttle will leave at noon SHARP on Saturday, July 25th.

To insure the shuttle service, all fees must be paid by July 15, 2009. Free parking for the week will be available in Dubuque. If you do not use the shuttle bus service, you will be responsible for getting back to your vehicle. Great River Rumble does not and will not arrange a daily shuttle service to get you back to your car!

CAMPING

We will be tent camping each evening in towns along the River. Plan to participate in group activities if you would like. Volleyball, horseshoes, water fights and social gatherings are all possible during this trip.

Your baggage will be transported on land in a rental truck moved from camp to camp by our cargo crew. Please limit the size and weight of your baggage to around 50 pounds. Don't forget that you may have to carry your bags for some distance to get to your tent site. Normal sized rectangular containers of hard plastic that stack easily are okay, but "garbage cans" will NOT be permitted! Please do not bring bicycles!

Showers (sometimes cold) are provided. No pets are allowed in camp or on the water (in the flotilla) and all children must be supervised at all times. Great River Rumble land crew is not responsible for childcare.

MINIMUM AGE

We recommend no more than two people per tandem canoe. The minimum age for paddlers is 14 years old. There must be at least one responsible adult and/or experienced paddler in each canoe or kayak.

THE SCHEDULE

July 25 Dubuque, IA to LaCrosse, WI - Shuttle
July 26 LaCrosse, WI to Genoa, WI 21 Mi.
July 27 Genoa, WI to Lansing, IA 17 Mi.
July 28 Lansing, IA to Harpers Ferry, IA 17 Mi,
July 29 Harpers Ferry to McGregor, IA 12 Mi
July 30 McGregor, IA to Guttenberg, IA 19 Mi
July 31 Guttenberg to Finley' s Landing, IA 19 Mi
Aug. 1 Finley's Landing to Dubuque, IA 15 Mi

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please call, write or visit our Web page.

Write to:
Great River Rumble
P.O. Box 3408
Dubuque, Iowa 52004-3408
or Call:
Rex Klein
(708) 747-1969
or visit our Web Site:
http://www.riverrumble.org

TRIP SCHEDULE

July				
4	Hiwassee	Trained Beginner	Brannen Proctor	770.664.7384
5	Hiwassee	Trained Beginner	Jack Taylor	770.998.0350
5	Lwr Hiwassee (1)	Beginner	William Gatling	770.312.2270
11	Tuckaseigee	Trained Beginner	Marvine Cole	828.488.4969
12				
17	Ocoee	Advanced	Allen Hedden	770.426.4318
18	Chattooga Sec IV	Advanced	Roger Nott	678.316.4935
18	Nantahala	Intermediate	Brannen Proctor	770-664.7384
19	Nantahala (2)	Intermediate	Brannen Proctor	770.664.7384
20	Chattooga	Clean-up, Intermediate	Haynes Johnson	706.579.1048
25	Upper Hooch	Intermediate	Mark Holmberg	770.428.6898
26	Broad	Trained Beginner	Connie Venuso	404.633.8038
August				
8	Broad	Trained Beginner	Connie Venuso	404.633.8038
15	Chattooga Sec IV	Advanced	Roger Nott	678.316.4935
22	Nantahala	Intermediate	Debbie Dargis	770.449.9421

Notes:

1) Late start due to waiting for water and celebrating the 2nd Amendment nearby.
2) Starting at Ferebee

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

Your Trip Could Be Listed in This Space — Call Cruisemaster William Gatling at 770.529.7103!

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.
For more about "class" ratings of rapids, see **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitewater**.

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 William Gatling at 770.529.7103. 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: Wednesday evenings, May through October, 6:00PM to dark at the Stone Mountain Park. For more information, see Page 6.

SUMMER ROLL PRACTICE

GCA Summer Roll Practice is held at Stone Mountain Park at 6:00 p.m. (or earlier) on Wednesday from May through October. Roll Practice is free, but you'll have to pay to enter the park. A season pass is recommended if you plan to attend multiple sessions.

DIRECTIONS: Enter the park from Stone Mountain Freeway (East Entrance); take the first left; continue about a mile until you cross the dam; take the first right into the parking lot. The boat ramp is on the right.

EXECUTIVE BOARD NOMINATIONS

A Nominating Committee has been formed to nominate officers upcoming 209-2010 term. Nominating Committee members are Allen Hedden, Roger Nott, Lamar Phillips, and Jay Manalo. Make your choices known for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. In addition, if you have suggestions for Recreation Chair, Member Services Chair, Resource Development Chair, Training Chair, and River Protection Chair we would like to hear these, as well. The President will make the Chair appointments with input from the Nominating Committee and the Membership. These are key leadership roles and require commitment and energy.

Keeping In Touch

To contact GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 7023, Atlanta, GA 30357, leave a message at 770.421.9729 or call/email one of the folks listed above.

Groupmail: GCA maintains a group email list to help members share information of general interest. To sign up, go 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.

These members have recently joined GCA. New members are the life blood and future of the club — call one near you and arrange to paddle together.

Bulriss, Mark
497 Calloway Cove
Hiawassee GA 30546
H: 706-896-8971
O: 317-670-5100
Email: mark_bulriss@yahoo.com

Carroll, Matt & Mary
100 Essex Circle
Fayetteville GA 30215
H: 678-817-7573
O: 678-644-7870
O: 404-431-7962
Email: daroncarroll@bellsouth.net
Email: maryoder@yahoo.com

Davis, Jay & Felicity
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Carrollton GA 30116
H: 404-713-7586
Email: jaystorm@bellsouth.net

Edmondson, Eric
47 LaRue Place
Atlanta GA 30327
H: 404-351-0631
O: 404-405-0611
Email: edmondsoneric@aol.com

Elewa, Hazem & Elgebaly, Mostafa
2183 Bridgeton Road
Augusta GA 30909
H: 706-294-9771
Email: helewa@mcg.edu

Gavrilovic, Dejana
6229 Johnson Road
Riverdale GA 30274
H: 770-996-6588
O: 678-431-4669
Email: dejanag@yahoo.com

George, Richard "Sky"
4480 Rierside Drive #4
Macon GA 31210
H: 478-747-9132
O: 478-474-6114
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Email: skygeorge@att.net

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O: 678-488-0979
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Email: jagriesser@yahoo.com

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O: 410-302-6211
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H: 404-524-5937
O: 404-421-5057
O: 404-933-1516
Email: travelelly@yahoo.com

Rettig, Dr. Terry & Bill
5005 Kimball Bridge Road
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H: 770-363-2526
O: 404-374-9306
O: 770-664-5883
Email: terryrettig@comcast.net
Email: billrettig@comcast.net

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1165 Tony Valley Drive
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O: 678-232-4382
Email: nnitewolf@yahoo.com

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PO Box 1188
Gainesville GA 30503
H: 770-718-9310

Schneider. Katie & Carroll, Justin
2630 Beverly Drive
Birmingham AL 35223
H: 334-559-5589
O: 205-542-4587
Email: ktluus_au@hotmail.com

Shepherd, Dean & Diane
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St. Petersburg FL 33713
H: 727-430-9900
Email: deanthecrab-man@yahoo.com
Email: shepherdd@allkids.org

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Stockbridge GA 30281
H: 770-506-2666
Email: sds0427@bellsouth.net

Stout, Mark
4689 Gold Dust Trail
Sugar Hill GA 30518
H: 678-333-8394
Email: mstout30@gmail.com

Thompson, Jon
794 A Piedmont Rd.
Atlanta GA 30308
H: 906-250-5180Email: jthomp-son@care.org

GCA FALL GALA CANOEING AFFAIR SCHEDULED

The Fall Gala is scheduled for August 28-30 at Peace Valley Campground located in Marble, North Carolina—just outside Murphy. Visit the Peace Valley Web site at http://www.peacevalleycampground.com and call 828-937-6223 to make reservations. The Campground has reserved a block of sites for GCA; however, each person is responsible for making their reservations. Make sure to let Dee know that you are with GCA when reserving a campsite. The campground is located near the Nantahala, Tuckasegee, Hiawassee, Little Tennessee, and Ocoee Rivers.

All About The Eddy Line

The Eddy Line, the official GCA newsletter, is available in print or pdf format. To subscribe, contact Ed Scultz 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 5th of the previous month (e.g. August 5 for the September/October issue).

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 constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

August 21-23 at Eagle Ranch

Chick Paddle 2009

by Karen Saunders, Chief Chick in Charge

This year's Chick Paddle will be held at Eagle Ranch. They have a cabin that sleeps 20 with a full kitchen, 2 full bathrooms, a hot tub! (whoooo hooooo), AC, 2 queen beds and the rest are twin bunks. (2 have already agreed to share a queen and 2 others will need to share also.)

Eagle Ranch is about 30-45 minutes from the Hiwassee and about the same to the Ocoee. The Nantahala and Toccoa rivers are close as well, so there ought to be plenty of choices to paddle.

Cost is $50 per person for the two nights together whether you are in the cabin or in a tent. Sorry, there will be no refunds. Send $50 Check to Karen Saunders, P.O. Box 1449, Temple, GA 30179.

We still have room for 3 in the house and we can take a few more on the porch and you can also pitch a tent behind the cabin. I will probably cut off the number attending at 25-26 women.

Breakfast and lunches are on your own and dinners are pot luck. Bring a dish to share and BYOB.

We have a lot of fun every year paddling, cooking and hanging out together and just being.....well, crazy! More details to follow. Looking forward to another great year with all the Chicks!

For more info contact Karen Saunders, 678 372-2849. Directions to Eagle Ranch are at http://www.eagleadventures.com/directions.htm and a map is at http://www.eagleadventures.com/map2.htm.

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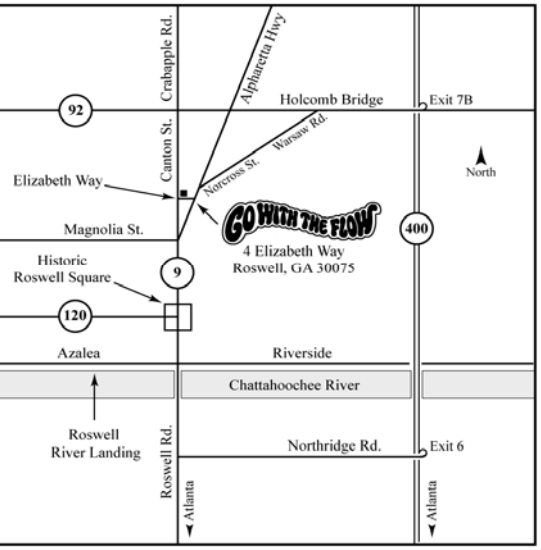

TRAINING WEEKENDS

Gina Johnson has organized three GCA training weekends this year. The first weekend was held on May 1 & 2 and the second weekend was held on June 13 & 14. Recreational kayak, beginner, trained beginner, and intermediate kayak and canoe classes were taught by a great crew of qualified instructors—Haynes Johnson, Gina Johnson, Tom Bishop, Jay Manalo, Jim Albert, Brannen Proctor, Marvine Cole, Knox Worde, and Steve Cramer.

The third training weekend is scheduled for August 15 & 16 and will include recreational kayak, WW kayak, and intermediate WW and beginner WW canoe.

Please contact Brannen Proctor for recreational kayak, 770-664-7384 bproctor@mindspring.com; Tom Bishop for kayak, 404-542-1118 bishop.t@comcast.net; and Gina Johnson for canoe, 706-579-1048 haynesandgina@windstream.net .

Cost is $65 for GCA members and $90 for non-members (the non-member cost includes GCA membership plus the cost of the course).

June Beginner Canoe Class after a great day on the in-town Tuckasegee River

OUTSIDE WORLD
DAWSONVILLE, GA

KAYAKS AND CANOES FROM
LIQUID LOGIC, PYRANHA, P&H, OLD TOWN, WENONAH, ESQUIF, HOBIE, DAGGER, OCEAN KAYAK, NECKY, WAVESPORT, WILDERNESS SYSTEMS, MAD RIVER, RIOT & OTHERS

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Non-business ads are free to dues-paid GCA members. Business and non-member ads are $5 for up to 50 words, $10 for larger. **Ads must be received by the fifth of the month to be published in the following month's issue**. Mail ads to *The Eddy Line*, 458 Windsor Drive Marietta, GA 30064 or email to **the_eddyline@yahoo.com**. Please, no phone-in or hand-written ads.

For Sale:
Dagger Impulse in great condition. Excellent beginner to intermediate whitewater canoe. Teal color, fully outfitted with airbags, pedestal seat. $500
Would like a used Ocoee, if anyone has one for sale.
Contact Pam @pams11@tds.net or 706-374-5281

For Sale:
Whitesell Piranha (14'), Perception Saddle, new air bags—$300 Mark Holmberg 678-234-5681, m_holmberg@comcast.net

PADDLING COMPETITION—FREESTYLE SLALOM and WILDWATER

Submitted by Roger Nott

I enjoyed and will thus share the following article by Eric Jackson about his experiences at the first T'Ville Triple Crown Competition at the Tarriffville section of the Farmington River in Connecticut on April 25 and 26, 2009:

Jamie McEwan is New England Whitewater Kayaking's White Knight. He and his wife Sandra Boyton, have been supporting slalom and wildwater racing in New England for the past 20 years, as well as the USA Teams. Jamie purchased the "River House" in CT as a place that aspiring athletes could live rent free, or super cheap while making a full time paddling commitment. This year he brings the "T'Ville Triple Crown" to New England in his push to increase the level of competition there. New England was once the epicenter of competitive kayaking in the USA. Top slalom and wildwater racers came from Dartmouth, Ledyard Canoe Club, Amherst College, and more New England hotspots. With coaches like the "Wipper" and Events like the Mascoma, T'Ville, Rattlesnake, West, etc. etc. there was a lot of activity there. In the past 20 years the influx of new events and athletes from New England has been less than the rate of decrease of them. With so many great rivers and programs, the resurgence of New England whitewater prowess is imminent. Add Jamie McEwan and groups like World Kayak, ZOAR, Still River, and others and you have a recipe for success.

This story is about the big event, bringing Freestyle, Slalom, and Wildwater (downriver racing) together into one event.

The concept was simple. There were three competitions and your results in each event are added together for a final placing. The winner of each event got 30 points, second got 28, third got 27, and then each placing got 30 points minus your finish place. On Saturday we had prelims. This means that we did a wildwater race, a slalom race, and a freestyle competition, all in one day! The top 15 men would make the finals and the top 5 women for Sunday.

The wildwater race was done two people at a time, head to head over a 4 minute course. I was paired up with Isaac from DC, a slalom racer who I didn't have much experience with. I didn't want to have to chase him down the river in a boat I have little experience in. (a wildwater racing boat I borrowed from John Flatley). I charged out of the start full steam ahead and pulled an early lead over the first 30 seconds and shook him off my side. I was racing down a section of river that I didn't have experience with and never raced, reading and running, while Isaac kept trying to pass me. I was sprinting to prevent the pass, and getting lactic early in the 4 minute race. I warded off the final pass attempt above the big drop at the finish line and entered that drop with right hand angle, as I was told I should do to prevent hitting a big chunk of dam that was down below the drop. when I went over the big wave my bow dropped and caught the eddy and I got eddied out 10 feet above the finish line. Isaac hit my stern and passed me as my stern was about to cross the line. He got a 4:03.00 and my time was a 4:03.10, a close race and very exciting. Walking back up to the RV to get my slalom boat for race #2 I was sure I was going to throw up. Jure', my old slalom coach's son, from DC, won that event with a 3:55. I didn't throw up, but I didn't fully recover before my first slalom run. I focused on a clean run and got one good enough for first place after first runs. Jure missed gate 10 due to forgetting it. Isaac came back from 2nd place to win on second runs. There were some Canadians there too: Katrina Van Wick, and Sara Bodin (2008 Olympian for slalom) and her brother, also a strong slalom and wildwater racer.

It was very cool watching the freestyle paddlers doing slalom, and seeing the two groups mixing. Normally, slalom racers only watch freestyle, and vice versa, and often have a lack of respect for the other group as athletes. This event eliminated that kind of watching from a distance as all of us were required to compete in all three events, and if we wanted a shot at the $1,000 Triple Crown prize, we would have to do well in all events, making each event an important part of the weekend.

(Continued from page 10)

During the Freestyle prelims, it was apparent who had playboats in their quiver at home and who didn't. Not unlike the slalom races too, I got first in the men's prelims, followed by Dane, who had some great rides. Jessie Stone won prelims, and was really looking good at it.

The day of competing ended up with awards at the Cracker Barrel Pub. Some river rocks were attached to upside down ashtrays and were very cool appropriate awards.

The next day I woke up and got a note that told me I forgot to deliver some All-Water and Riviera boats for the Collinsville Canoe and Kayak show. I loaded them on the Mini Cooper at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday morning and got Kristine to take them over because I had a competitors meeting to go to at 8:00 a.m. in a next town. The day was already getting a ready start.

We all met up at the start of the Wildwater race- at T'Ville Park. I was last to go this time and watched the top 14 men and 5 women go off the start. Most of the racers took off with a sprint and had the hammer down around the corner as far as I could see. I got ready to go and in the water 3 minutes before my start for a warm-up. Jamie McEwan was overseeing the start and got to see his son, Devin, take off down the course.

This was the first race I was doing for the big day, finals, which meant it really mattered for the triple crown ranking. I was actually a little nervous, because the boat I was paddling was super tippy, didn't turn unless you lean it to the outside of the turn. If the bow hits an eddy line you can get railtroaded into the shore instantly and it takes 10 seconds to turn it around again. I already heard that the Canadian guy did just that, and I did that on my prelims run that cost me second place.

I got a sprinting start and then backed off to my 4 minute race pace. I did the first two rapids better than yesterday and was able to focus on my forward stroke instead of preventing a pass. We did finals individually instead of head to head. The next rapid has a bunch of bridge pilings in it,and i went down the right of them but forgot about the nasty rock at the very end of that rapid. My bow got to the left of the rock and my body to the right. I had to hit the brakes and try to swing my bow back to the right. I dont' know how much time it cost me, but it got me to hit the gas and go into overdrive and try to make it up. The rest of the race was reasonable and went fine. I made it across the finish line without eddying out. I was not as dizzy as the prelims but felt like I was faster. When we got the results in I was 8 seconds faster and got a 4:55. I was happy to have improved that much. I found out that Jure got a 4:55 and Isaac got a 4:53, so I was third in finals of the wildwater race as well as the prelims. Meanwhile, Katrina won for women, followed by Sara.

The slalom race was next and started right away. I went immediately after Jure, and we were kidding with each other,

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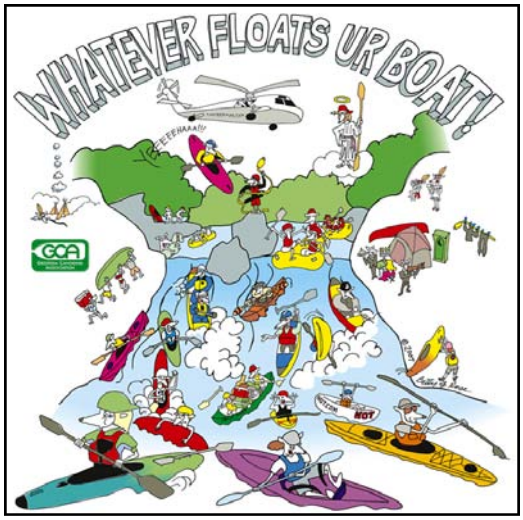

(Continued from page 11)

knowing that he needed to win the slalom event, if he wanted a shot at the Triple Crown. He already told me he wanted Dane to beat me in freestyle, so that I would lose the 2 point win bonus and make it so he wouldn't have to get as good of a freestyle result (his weak event) to do well. Jure looked great on his first run from what I could see. I took that cue and hit the gas right out of the start, focused on clean and fast. Other than missing the top wave from 16-17 and having to ferry a little on that move, I had a good run. I got a 118.03. Jure got a 115, and Isaac was 119 +2, and the Canadian was 118.69. I was in second so far. Jure was joking about my boat, and I decided to try his for fun on the second run. That was dumb, as I was all over the place and didn't even bother to check my second run score.

Isaac got a 113+2 on his second run, an awesome job and a close 2nd to Jure. That pushed me back to 3rd again. I was now in 3rd place after the first two events with 54 points. Jure had a perfect 60 points, and Isaac was second with 56 points.

In the women's class, Katrina also had a perfect 60 points after the wildwater and slalom. Sara had 56 points, Jessie had 52 5th and a 3rd, and Elaine had 51 and Hannah Farrar had 50. They set up the freestyle finals in reverse seed based on the points for the first two events.

Jessie got a 130 point ride on her first ride and that was way ahead of the rest who all only got one move for 10 points. On second rides, Jessie secured her first place position in that event, with Elaine in second, then Katrina, Hanna, and Sara. After the points were tallied, Katrina won with 87 points, Sara in second, and Jessie in third.

In the men's class there were three heats of 5 men in finals. Jure had to get 6th place or better in Freestyle to win the overall to win, assuming that I won. By the time our heat was up, there were two solid rides on the board by Dane and another guy in an All-Star (I forget his name, but he was awesome). The scores were 340 and 320 for the first two heats top scores. I needed to be at least at those scores to win the freestyle event. I was the only trained freestyle boater in the final heat, because the slalom and wildwater racing trained athletes had their events first and had pushed the other freestyle boaters down the ranks in the Slalom and Wildwater races. Both Isaac and Jure had more points than I did going into the freestyle event. Jure needed a 6th or better and Isaac needed a 2nd or better. I needed a win.

Devin, and Ted Devoe had good first rides, but not better than 340. My first ride was right at 300 points with two flushes, not good enough for a win. Jure didn't have a good first ride, but Isaac had a reasonable one, but not 2nd place.

On second runs, I got past 340 points and hadn't flushed yet, allowing me to try anything I wanted. I secured the win as neither Jure or Isaac would likely get the moves needed to beat that score in the next ride. It was now up to Isaac and Jure to perform their best and hope for better than 2nd or 6 place.

Once the results came out, I had won, Jure was 7th, and Isaac was in the top 10 too but not 2nd. The first Triple Crown ended up being won by a primarily freestyle boater for men, and primarily slalom boater for women. What a great concept! Who will win next year? Will the slalom racers train more freestyle? Will the freestyle racers train more slalom or wildwater? Will primarily wildwater racers train both?

I missed the awards ceremony to paddle the new All-Waters down the Satan's Kingdom section of the Farmington with some local paddlers. I took a Dynamic Duo down with Doug, who had never been in whitewater. He did great. Dinner at Margaritas with 10 people, including Andy, who is Jamie's right hand man, and the powerhouse behind the event, made for a great wrap up. We are now headed to Reno!

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SAFETY—MY STUPID PADDLING COMPANION

by Russ L'HommeDieu - Cutchogue, NY
Reprinted from: http://www.paddling.net

Every morning I get up at 5am, suit up, and jump in my kayak. I wear my life jacket, carry a whistle and always bring a cell phone encased in plastic. As you might imagine, it is difficult to find paddling partners at 5 in the morning but, in the interest of safety, I rarely go out alone.

One morning in early May, I recruited my life-long companion "stupidity." Stupidity and I were almost inseparable when I was young and we were especially close when I was in college. But, that's another story. On this particular morning, in May, the wind was blowing about force 5 (19 - 24 knots), the skies were threatening and the water was cold. I thought about staying in that morning but stupidity was excited about the adventure and who was I to disappoint. So I put on my .5mm wetsuit and off we went.

When we got to the beach, we were blown back by the shear force of the Southeast wind. I looked north into the protected creeks; stupidity looked out into the open bay. I was soon outvoted by stupidity's sense of adventure. Stupidity argued that it would be a valuable experience to battle the heavy weather and I bought it. Dead into the weather we went.

As we headed out, the bow crashed into the waves as we skillfully powered our way to weather. As the sea crashed over the deck and onto the spray skirt - we were impressed with our kayaking skill. We continued on for the next 2 nautical miles without incident.

When we arrived at the cove of Robbin's Island, it was time to turn around. I thought it might be best to head directly to the lee shore and then hug the coast to home. Stupidity thought we should hang a 90 degree turn to port and head to the closer shore of the peninsula. Of course, this would put the wind directly at our beam. Why do I listen?

As I turned the boat, my stability worsened and the ride became precarious. I decided to head-up into the wind for a few strokes and then fall off the wind to ride the crests of the waves toward the homeward shore. Stupidity thought that would be a great idea. As I carried myself further and further into the wind, the sea took me. What I mean to say is that the waves flipped me like the coin at the start of a football game.

Now upside down, I discovered that stupidity had thrown our paddle away. After a few attempts at a paddle-less roll, I performed a wet exit. Did I mention that it was about now that the skies opened up to the worst downpour that I had seen all year? Through the blinding rain I noticed my paddle floating about 30 feet windward of me and the gap was widening. Stupidity told me to swim for it and get the paddle. For the first time all morning, I told stupidity to piss off. I was going to stay with my boat. Since a paddle self rescue was out of the question, I was down to plan "B" - Call for help.

I reached for my phone which was sealed into a plastic bag with a simple knot (stupidity's idea) and cleverly tethered to my PFD. The problem, as it turned out, was that the knot in the bag was not exactly water-proof. For those of you that may not have experienced this, cell phones and salt water do not mix. The phone was dead. Time for Plan C.

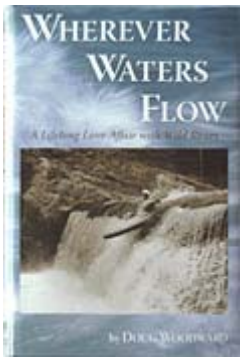
Luckily, stupidity had a plan C. Plan C: let's try cowboy jumping this puppy from the stern, slip into the cockpit, reseal the skirt and pump out. This plan may actually have worked if it weren't for the 4 foot seas. So much for plan C. Time for plan D.

No plan D. Tired, cold and paddle-less it was time to formulate a plan D. I had nothing left. I just wanted to be home. I was a mile and a half from the lee shore and all I could think of was to start swimming. I clutched the kayak as tightly as I could, presented as much hull to the wind as was possible and made for shore.

After just 2 hours in the water, I was tossed ashore in heavy surf. I dragged my boat up the beach and pumped it out. I began walking the quiet streets of New Suffolk looking for an early riser to make the "call of humiliation" to my wife. I now tether my paddle, seal my phone in two bags with a heat sealer, choose my days more carefully, give considerable thought to the routes I take and am more selective with my kayak partners.

BOOK REVIEW—*WHEREVER THE WATER FLOWS*

by "River Jack"



I was unaware that this book was even in the works, much less its publication, so you can image my pleasant surprise when I saw a number of books graced with a cover photo that I was familiar with stacked upon a small display table at the NOC.

I first saw this photograph in the publication U.S. Whitewater '74, the annual program of the US International Slalom Canoe Association. Its caption read: "Doug Woodward of Georgia running a high unnamed waterfall on the Tellico River in Tennessee. Photo by Rodger Losier." The date of the photo was April 1972 and we now know that high unnamed waterfall as Baby Falls.

From a friend I once heard a first-hand account of that memorable day: There was much wailing and gnashing of teeth by loved ones and friends as Doug took the plunge! However, that was neither the first nor the last "first descent" by Doug, and I, for one, am glad that he took at least one more formidable leap — that of writing it all down and sharing the stories with other kindred spirits!

Wherever Waters Flow is a captivating whitewater autobiography as well as an historical account of the vernal days of paddling in the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic regions of the USA. For me, the stories of the "Chattooga tribe" from the early and mid-seventies are the most enjoyable. Names of people that I've not heard or thought about in decades jump from the pages and bring back fond remembrances of a delightful time in my life when paddling rivers was all bright and shiny-new and a bunch of smiling faces were all shouting, "Come on in, the water's fine!"

The eighteen chapters in the book include such noteworthy happenings as the beginnings of the Nantahala Outdoor Center, taking (then Georgia Governor) Jimmy Carter down the Chattooga, interesting behind the scenes accounts from the filming of *Deliverance* (Doug was the canoeing double for Ned Beatty), getting to know James and Christopher Dickey, and paddling with Walt Blackadar (both out West as well as on the Chattooga).

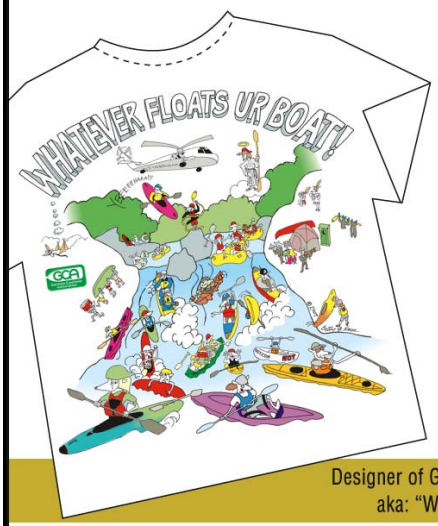
Also, the early days of Explorer Post 49 are well chronicled, including one western road trip in an old school bus where "self-reliance" took on a whole new meaning for a band of river gypsies from Atlanta! Interesting archival photographs are also spread throughout the book.

The book is a fascinating read, often in the form of first-hand dialogue, sometimes purely narrative or even journal-like, and all the while bestrewn with eloquent musings by one of the true pioneers of Southeastern whitewater.

In the final chapter Doug waxes poetic and brings forth the river as metaphor when he looks back upon where his own life's journey has taken him - but then again I see that perhaps there's no metaphor here at all, since that for some, the two — one's life and the river — can be so interwoven as to be one.

So, come on in, the water's fine, and Doug has this great trip all lined up!

Betty G Rose Design



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TRIP REPORT—ETOWAH RIVER

by Lamar Philips

On Saturday May 6, a group of twenty one paddlers, consisting of new GCA members, loyal members of up to 20 years, and a couple of future members met for a trip on the Etowah.

We could not have picked a more beautiful day. The river level was perfect with good current and lots of shade to make a cool, comfortable paddle. The mountain laurel was beautiful and plentiful, although nearing the end of the bloom season. We look forward to a paddle in a couple of weeks with the rhododendrons in bloom.

There were a couple of strainers that we had to work our way through and one large river wide strainer that three of our paddlers climbed on to helped the rest of us out of our boats and back into our boats om the other side. Of course, there is always one paddler who thinks he can get enough speed to jump the strainer. Most paddlers were not surprised when I hung up causing them to strain and fuss at me for creating so much extra work. I expected strainers and the first one down usually has to do the heavy work of getting everyone over them; therefore, I asked David Robinson to lead the group. He agreed and helped pull 20 of us over the log. I am not sure he will ever agree to any of my suggestions in the future.

At the end of the day, all agreed that it had been a great day on the river and no one got wet!

NOSTALGIA—RAFTERS RELIVE ATTACK

The Eddy Line 20 Years Ago

From the July 1989 Issue

Rafters Relive Attack: "We couldn't believe it was happening"

By Susan Warren

Houston Chronicle

It was their second day rafting the river, and the weather couldn't have been better. Sunny, 80 degrees, with a cool breeze lightly blowing. By late afternoon, the three young Texas professionals had drifted into a rugged, isolated part of the Rio Grande River in Big Bend National Park -- an area surrounded by mountains, desert and cliffs. It was about 4 p.m. Wednesday, time to begin scouting for a place to camp before heading their raft into the San Vicente canyon Thursday morning.

Within minutes, the men's peaceful sojourn down the Rio Grande was to turn into a desperate race from death. The three friends -- an accountant, a teacher and a chemist -- would become the innocent prey of two gunmen determined to chase them down and kill them.

The ordeal began with an uneasy feeling about a man waving to them from the Mexican bank. Ben Saage, 29, of Alpine, his cousin Jim Gentry, 29, of Houston, and Russ Alexander, 30, of Waco, had rafted the Rio Grande before. The sight of men, even armed men, wandering the Mexican bank was not uncommon. But this man, who had first whistled at them, then returned their wave, was behaving suspiciously.

They first glimpsed him as they rounded a sharp horseshoe bend, then noticed him again when he began following them along the bank. It looked as if the young Mexican, perhaps in his mid-20s, was holding a rifle alongside his leg, as if he were trying to hide it.

"We still weren't really worried," Saage said, but Alexander urged his friends to paddle more quickly and outdistance the stranger. Within a few minutes they thought they'd left him behind.

Then they heard a shot. Alexander remembers the feel of the bullet passing next to his chest. "I felt it go by my shirt," he said. "I fell off the raft backward and looked down into the water to see if I was bleeding. I wasn't. There was just a hole in my shirt pocket." The three men bailed out of the boat at the same instant, huddling behind it in the water so that the rubber raft shielded them from the rifleman.

"At this point we figured, well, this is sort of serious." Saage said. A second shot splashed into the water inches in front of them, and the friends began discussing their options.

Their first thought was of the guns they had carried in their packs for protection in the remote wilderness. Alexander had brought along a Colt .45, and Saage had a Walther 9mm. Carefully reaching into the raft, they dragged out the packs.

"We couldn't believe it was happening,' Saage said. All three knew that snipers had shot and killed a man and wounded two other people rafting the Rio Grande last November, but they felt it was an isolated incident.

Feeling vulnerable in the water, Alexander, Saage and Gentry decided to make for the American side river bank at a bend where they thought they would be out of the gunman's sight. The landing they chose was a slippery slope leading to a rock terrace about 30 feet up. It was a long climb with a rifleman at their backs.

"It was real hard, muddy and sandy and real slick. We slipped down it a couple of times. We were deathly afraid we were

(Continued from page 16)

going to get shot," Saage said.

Alexander said he felt sure they would be safe when they reached the shore. "I didn't think he'd come across the river and hunt us. But he did."

The three lay in the tall grass behind a slight mound. Behind them, a cliff wall rose about 75 feet. After a few minutes, Gentry made his way about 20 yards down river to hide behind a boulder. Soon Alexander joined him.

"He kind of crawled on his stomach toward Jim, and then he jumped up and started running real fast," Saage said. Another shot shattered the rock Gentry was hiding behind. A fragment ricocheted off Gentry's back, and for a moment, he thought he'd been shot. Unnerved by the knowledge they were well within the gunman's sight, Saage stayed where he was. But Gentry heard a noise somewhere above them.

"I started thinking, if it was me, I may try to cross the river and try to get above us," Gentry said. He took Alexander's Colt .45 and crept up the slope toward the top of the cliff. Halfway there, he saw the rifleman stick his head over the ledge directly over where Saage still hid. Gentry froze, knowing he was an open target if spotted.

"But he didn't see me. He saw Ben," Gentry said. He watched in horror as the rifleman stood and took aim at Saage, who was unaware of what was happening.

"I wasn't even really thinking," Gentry said. "I took the gun and I took a real quick aim and I fired." The gunman jerked back from the cliff. Saage made a dash for the boulder where Alexander was still hiding. The three friends regrouped there, staggered by the knowledge that the Mexican had chased them across the river.

"I knew he was going to kill us if he could," Alexander said.

"Speaking for myself," Gentry said, "I was at the point where I kind of felt I could easily slip off into panic and lose control. There's just a real fine line between panic and maintaining control when you know that at any minute you can be shot and you'd be dead."

The three friends decided to work their way toward the top of the mountain that bordered the river, staying above and in front of the gunman. They began a pattern of 20- and 30-yard rushes, dashing across open spaces from boulder to gully to rock pile. Before they moved, Gentry said, they fired off a couple of shots toward where they believed the gunman hid to force him into cover. Then they ran, sometimes together, sometimes alone. They dove for cover across cactus and rocks and shrubbery.

Many times bullets ricocheted past them, shattering rocks. They soon figured that two gunmen were after them. Some of the shots sounded different and seemed to come from farther away.

By 6 p.m., they had traveled about 250 yards up the mountain and about 300 yards downriver, Saage estimated. The men thought that when night fell, they could escape over the mountain under cover of darkness.

Their plan worked. Before the full moon rose, they made their way to the top of the mountain, then descended and followed an animal trail through the desert. With a map from Saage's pack, the men determined that a creek bed would take them to a dirt road, then to a paved road leading to Rio Grande Village. Temperatures fell rapidly. Exhaustion made them consider stopping several times, but the cold -- and fear they might still be followed -- kept them going.

Saage estimates they walked about 15 miles before they hit the paved road. Within 20 minutes, they'd caught a ride to Rio Grande Village and reported their ordeal to park rangers.

The trio spent Thursday and Friday with Border Patrol agents reviewing the scene of the shooting. Trackers discovered that, just as the three friends feared, they had been followed by two horsemen during part of their trek through the desert.

Cut, bruised, scratched and sore, the three men said they plan to drive home Sunday after filing a complaint in Mexico today.

Alexander said he figures three things saved their lives: "The good Lord, sheer luck, and the Mexican was a bad shot."

THE HOBBIT KNOWS

If you have a question, and no one else can help, and if you can find him, maybe you can ask The Hobbit.
- From "River Rumors" -- newsletter of the Foothills Paddling Club of Greenville, SC.

Dear Mr. Hobbit:

I'm bored and ready to step it up & hit some creeks. Now we're finally getting rain! How do I know when it's safe to get on a trip with someone I've never paddled with? When I ask, I get varying opinions as to whether or not they can be trusted to lead me down a run. How can you tell?

Dear Waiting to Become a Statistic,

Here are a couple of things you should do to improve your odds of becoming a GOOD statistic:

(1)Turn easy rivers into hard ones. When you can get that pushy class II eddy in the middle of the rapid consistently, it's a safe bet to start trying it on the IIIs, etc.

(2) Learn to read water -- can't stress this one enough. If you're on an ELF run getting stuck & groaning about how scrapey it is while your buddy floats downstream effortlessly, let this be a hint.

NOW -- having gotten that out of the way -- watch your prospective trip leader in action before trusting them with your life. Wait until you can paddle something you know with them & watch. Do they go over safety with the trip participants before putting on? On the river, do they look back to make sure you're there & upright? Do they eddy-hop or just blow down the river? Do they encourage you to scout something you've not seen, and if so, do they ask you what route you'd want to take before telling you what their line is? Do they set safety at the bottom of a rapid for those in the group who may swim?

When you contact them about the trip, do they ask you about your roll, what you've run & at what water level, or request a reference before telling you it was okay to come? These are good signs -- if your prospective leader wants to evaluate your skill, that's a sign they care about your safety & the safety of the group. In the end, YOU are responsible for your safety. With few exceptions, those creeks are going to run next year, or the year after that. If you must err, do so on the side of living to run another creek another day.

Paddlefu!
- The Hobbit ;-)

SAFETY—MY STUPID BUFFALO STORY

Safety

by Alien Ritman (From "The Arkansas Paddler" -- newsletter of the Arkansas Canoe Club, reprinted from the ACC Message Board and edited for brevity)

I left Conway on Friday May 1st for a relaxing float on the Buffalo River. I took all the comfy gear and my old trusty dog, which has been on many river trips and off we went! I took the raft so I could just relax and not have to worry about getting wet. I launched about 2:30 PM and man, it was awesome! It was what I call a G oldie Lox day. Not too hot, not too cold, not too sunny, not too cloudy but just right and no wind!!

I had put in at Pruitt and had floated down to Gray Bluff about a mile and a half or so above Hasty. I set up camp, cooked, ate a great steak, green beans and potatoes, and got ready for the storm. I had cell service, could watch the radar from my phone, and had a NOAA weather radio. So keep in mind it's not like I was blind. I knew how much rain had fallen in the upper Wilderness area. I had placed a few rocks at the water's edge to monitor any rise in the river. I had placed my tent about 4 foot above the water line, pulled the raft about 30 ft up the bank and tied it to the tent on the down river side with about 10 foot of rope, just in case! This was a decision that would become invaluable in just a few short hours! I do not recommend this due to the hazards it could pose as you will see, but it did work out really well this time.

The storms were killer, there is nothing like being in a tent in the Ozarks during a thunderstorm. I was in a Sierra Designs, Bedouin 4 man tent. It is like 8x8, with a cot, sleeping pad small table and yes a DVD player. I know that ruins it for some of you and for that I am sorry! So I was very comfortable to say the least. So with my dry bags in the tent before I went to sleep I kind of packed everything up just in case! Nature called about 2:30 AM and while I was standing down beside my rocks at the water line I noticed the first few had gone under so I knew the river was on the rise, but just a little. So I went back to bed

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thinking everything was fine it will be daylight in a few hours and I'll be able to better access things.

Here is where the fun starts. I woke up about 5:30 AM and there was about a foot of water running under my tent. This is big shock to your system when just a moment before you were dreaming about dry, moon filled nights, only to find out you and your trusted friend are about to float away with 2K worth of gear. I had set my boots and dry pants fireman style by the door again, just in case!

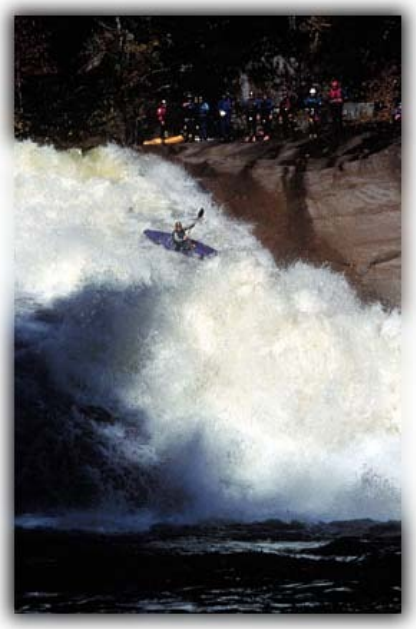
I slipped my boots and pants on, zipped up the dry bags and unzipped the tent hoping to find my raft still tied up outside. What I saw next I was not prepared for. The river was all around my tent about a foot deep and muddy. During the fury to get my boots on I accidentally knocked my head lamp into the water and it was still dark and raining. So I had to hold my small flash light in my mouth while I ran around in the water like a mad man! Thank God the raft was still there floating peacefully in the running water as if to say "I have been waiting for YOU!" I threw from the tent into the raft. The cot was still setup, sleeping pad blown up, and of course I did not forget Coochie!! She kept looking at me like "what the hell are you doing" as she stood on the dry gravel bar just a few feet away. I started pulling the tent stakes that were now about 14 to 16 inches under water. Water had also started to wash into the open door of the tent. I unhooked the raft and pulled it to the gravel bar and started trying to work the tent out of the water and onto dry ground. I would pull on the tent and with the water raising the raft would start to float away and I would have to pull it further up on shore. I finally got the tent out of the water and into its dry bag and by that time I only had about 5 foot of rock shore left before the water reached the sand embankment. I threw the tent into the raft and off we went. This was the first time I had had the chance to take the flash light out from between my teeth. It was the weirdest feeling drifting away from a place that just ten minutes before I was sleeping in that now was more than a foot under water. In real time I'm going to say from the time I woke Buffalo, up until pushed off the rock bar, maybe 10 minutes had elapsed. It seemed like MUCH LONGER!!!!

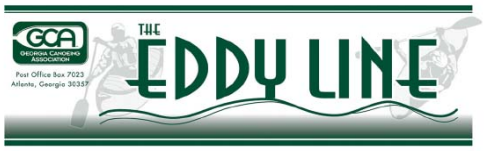
I came across a rock bar about a half a mile downstream and pulled over to get some dry clothes on and regroup. All I lost was my cool $50 headlamp and a towel. The tent poles were warped a little but now the tent has a little character.

I have always lived by the Boy Scott Motto, "Be prepared". If I had really listened to myself earlier that day I would have been high and dry. I already knew the place I was in could be compromised, that's why I made all the preparations with the raft and the boots and packing. Had I not done these things I most defiantly would have lost more gear and maybe the raft.

Never under estimate mother nature, especially when it comes to running water! I was very lucky to get out of this situation without further incident. Had I made the choice to set my tent up higher off the water none of this would have happened. After floating on down to Carver and seeing the debris going down the river I realized how easy it would have been for something to snag the raft and pull it the tent and ME down the river and into the strainer of trees below. That would have been a story in which I would not have wanted to star.

"Live for those moments of clarity, when you were totally committed to the line. All those days of friendship and worry and concentration and smiles melted together into the best feeling..." D.Ammons





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

GCA is a member-operated paddling club with over 800 family and corporate memberships comprising more than 2000 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.