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I Broke My Paddle—Now What? By Lisa Haskell

We had a great turn out for this year's hand paddling clinic: I Broke My Paddle - Now What? We had seven participants: Joy Moses, Karen Heath, Debbie Weir, Allyson Davis, Lynn McKeel, Laura Garcia and Kelly Harbac, plus three instructors: Lisa Haskell, Keith Raker and Lara Christy. Due to the current Coronavirus Pandemic situation we checked everyone's temperature



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when we did our initial paperwork on Saturday and we all wore masks on land and when shuttling.

We started out Saturday at the Tsali Recreation Area where we let everyone practice wet exits, strokes and rolls if they wanted. Everyone wanted to give it a try and almost everyone was able to pull off a few rolls! Once everyone had time to practice we relocated for the second part of the day. We ran a short section of the Town Tuck which included Devil's Dip - this allowed everyone to get a feel for using hand paddles on moving water. Everyone was working on their skills to get ready for the Tuck Gorge the next day.

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(Hand Paddling Clinic, continued from page 1)



On Sunday we went ahead with our plan to run the Tuck Gorge. We had a very enthusiastic group this year, and everyone was ferrying, catching eddies and surfing. We had a bit of excitement just above Trestle Rapid when we encountered a group of three people in two lake/rec boats who had never been on moving water before. They had managed to get both boats pinned and filled with water. Fortunately, they were wearing PFDs. Our group stopped long enough to help them with their boats and get them safely to a location where they could stop and take out. After that we



continued with our own adventures. Everyone looked like pros coming through Prudential and Double Drop. We had a great weekend and might even get a convert out of the bunch!
- EL

Ocoee Moves Clinic By Kerrie Barloga

Four souls tried new stuff on the Ocoee on May 30, 2020. The objective was to explore new lines on the Middle Ocoee and visit favorite lines. David and Nathan Baggett, Ryan Sager, Deborah Webb and Instructor Kerrie Barloga put in at the rails and started off with a ferry across the river through the chaos to reach the river left bank. Some succeeded. Some did not. From there we visited surf waves, punched holes, slipped in behind rocks to reach cool waves, boofed into eddies, used waves to ferry across the river – in short, focused on using ferries and eddies to explore the river and check out fun features. Kudos to the students. David brought his new Party Braaap and, by the end of the day, was hitting the ferries and surfing. Nathan brought his mixmaster and essentially skipped down the left side of Tablesaw. Ryan had some awesome moves out there. I wish you could have seen his move into the right eddy below Diamond Splitter. But he refused to follow me on the left line at Power House. Maybe next time. Deborah Webb reacquainted herself with the Ocoee – her backyard river – and had nice sweet moves across the river. We actually found something new for her to try! All in all, it was a nice day with only minor carnage. - EL



Fear and Kayaking By Mettie Tousignant

Two things I enjoy doing are writing and kayaking, so I'm going to try writing about kayaking...

Because kayaking about writing doesn't make sense.

A big part of kayaking for me involves fear: fear of the unknown – what's beyond all those horizon lines before me where the sounds of all that rushing water are coming from? Do the people I'm with *really* know the lines? Do I trust my own skills? Is my current energy level going to be enough to power through whatever is over that ledge? The funny thing is, I don't like being afraid. So if I don't like to be afraid,

And kayaking involves fear,

Then why do I enjoy kayaking?

It's because I've gotten a little bit better at dealing with this kind of fear with each experience on the river, and kayaking involves so much more than fear, which I'm about to explain.

It used to be a lot worse; at the top of a rapid, as soon as I put those nose plugs on, I'd begin to gag.

It still happens at times for no good reason; when it happens, I just try to calm myself by taking some deep breaths and focusing on

something other than the sound of all that rushing water that I'm about to dance with. Sometimes I say a quick little prayer of gratitude to say thanks for my life, what I'm able to do, and the people I get to enjoy it with in this beautiful place.

It's not like I'm terrified the whole time, every time I paddle. And I'm not the only kayaker who's afraid out there sometimes – we all go through that. It's a survival mechanism. If you tried whitewater kayaking and had to stop because of a bad experience that really terrified you (maybe you took a nasty swim), your confidence is definitely not where it needs to be now in order to safely try again, likely because your skills and/or crew were not where they needed to be on the river that day. My advice? Go back to square one. Watch instructional videos. Go to an indoor community pool that has roll practice and learn to roll. Go weekly until you have your roll down pat, and can roll up on either side. Continue to go to roll practice weekly (usually only offered during the fall/winter months) even after you learn to roll; it will help keep your skills sharp and is a great opportunity to socialize with other whitewater enthusiasts in your community. Take a swift water rescue course with at least one other person who you can trust and plan to go kayaking with regularly. They say you should take a SWR course every year. Getting really comfortable with your roll and gaining trust in your



crew does wonders for confidence and makes you a much happier and safer paddler.

Imagination is far worse than reality. That's why, sometimes, the hardest part of being courageous about kayaking is trying to get a grip on all the "what if" scenarios that are going through my head on the way to the river, before I even put on! I have also found that when my anxiety is running at its highest, it's because we're on our way to a river I've never been to and/or a section I'm not very familiar with. On these days, I find it easier to get behind the wheel and drive rather than be a passenger on the way there; something about that control relaxes me.

Once I'm on the river and fearfulness rears its ugly head, I either fight through it – because I'm 100% certain that this feeling is natural and I know I can handle what's ahead because I do have the skill set, and I am confident that my crew does, too – or I make the call that I'm just not feeling it, something is off, and I'm going to get out and walk this rapid today. I rarely feel the need to prove myself to anyone; that's the beauty of it – I'm doing this for me, because it's fun – even if I portage every class whatever+ rapid. At the end of the day, I still got out there and had a damn good time. Whitewater kayaking gives me a feeling of invigoration quite unlike anything else. Once I get control of my fear and run a rapid, it happens almost every time – I look back with amazement and joy and real-

ize that, although my fear was natural and necessary, it wasn't quite as bad as I feared it would be.

It's not just that I faced and dealt with my fear, one way or another. Also, fresh air. Gentle breezes. Sunlight. Butterflies. Birds. Moss. Flowers. Trees. Mountains. Boulders. Rocks. Pebbles. Sand. Water. Just Nature. No traffic. No sirens. No car horns. No phones. No computers. No blue light.

As in literature, there are conflicts in kayaking involving two opposing forces.

I would have to say that, for me, conflict is firstly often with myself.

If I can win that struggle with my own self-doubt, then I'm ready to take on Mother Nature – of course with the utmost respect, always.

There is no man vs. man conflicts in my kayaking, and there shouldn't be for anyone unless it's racing.

Some paddlers are competitive with each other, and like to talk trash about their counterpart not running something smoothly and that's fine for them, but that's not my jam. All boaters that I know personally believe in safety first and are very responsible. We live by a code to join forces and work together when another boater is in trouble on the river. That seems to



thankfully be the same off the river, like when someone needs a lift back to their car, or someone accidentally leaves their new paddle in the parking lot – we’re good to each other. It’s karma.

Man vs. technology– my back strap snapped once and my previous spray skirt imploded a couple times.

One of the first things I realized immediately after my first day on the river was something else about it that’s essential to my mental health and wellbeing – it gets my mind off my worries for a while. That was such a blessing back then, and it continues to be today. Focusing too long on what’s wrong doesn’t make it better, especially when it’s something you can’t control, so it’s best to find a way to forget about it – at least for a little while – and whitewater is a healthy way to do that.

After a victorious day on the river, I have this wonderful yet temporary attitude on my way back to work like, *“Come on life - whatcha gonna throw at me!? Whatever it is, I can handle it!”* - EL

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

GCA Fall Gala

The GCA Fall Gala is STILL ON and almost here. This year it will be Friday, September 18th through Sunday, September 20th. Please note that we will be monitoring the COVID-19 situation in Swain county and will follow their guidelines and policies on group size (see event page for GCA’s full Statement on COVID-19 and participant responsibility for risk). Trip Coordinators are wanted for all levels !!! With Covid we must have small groups and we need You! Just tell us what class trip you will coordinate. You can decide on the river the night before. At this time, we have one Class II trip guaranteed each day. Bring hand sanitizer and your mask for the shuttle and a snack bag to keep it dry. Bring a large garbage bag to put your wet clothes in. We will self shuttle within our own groups as much as possible. We will converge upon Smoky Mountain Meadows campground at 755 E Alarka Road in Bryson City, NC, 28713. You are responsible for making your own reservation. Contact Susan Seay – (828) 488-3672 – GCA Members get 10% off.

www.smokymtnmeadows.com smokymtnmeadows@gmail.com. We will not have the traditional group dinner on Saturday evening. However, the Pavilion is still reserved for us. We can prepare our own meals and sit at the picnic tables. We will have an awesome time even with social distancing! Contact information and RSVP at <https://www.gapaddle.com/events/2020/09/gca-fall-gala-3/> - EL



The Quest for the Lost Blade of Pumphrey By Tom Pumphrey

Deep in the wilderness, there lies the birthplace of rivers. The Eastern Continental Divide spawns the Chattooga heading South to the Atlantic, when mere miles away, rainfall joins the West Fork of the Tuckasegee, which works its way to the Tennessee and the Gulf of Mexico. Tumbling down from the mountain tops, the West Fork of the Tuck drops a severe gradient on its way. Normally dewatered from the dam, it harbors wood and other hazards...

Last Saturday, on my first journey down the WFT, I sought to avoid a river-wide strainer, only to fall into the clutches of Old Man Rhododendron, guarding the eddy above the strainer. Old Man Rhody wrenched my paddle from my hands, and cast the blade beneath the strainer. I scrambled to paddle with my hands to the shore, but the blade was lost. My trusty breakdown paddle took me home, but we never saw the Lost Blade. A Surge it is, spanning 200 centimeters, its shaft wrought of carbon and twisted with bends, its blades of fiberglass fiery red and yellow (but with plastic thingies to guard its edge). It was inscribed with spells for calling its master, but no calls came.

So I set out on a quest to avenge myself against Old Man Rhody and recover the Lost Blade. But first: a guide. I engaged the help of

the Wizard Biologist with wide brimmed hat (some call him "Jon"). Though his specialty is frog whispering, he also is trained in the paddling arts, and he agreed to meet me and trek with me into the wild.

Consulting the map in the magic glass, and uttering the magic word ("satellite"), we were able to find the island near which I lost the blade. We also saw a road that bent near to the island, and what appeared to be a path to gain access. So the Wizard and I met at the road entrance. But there we were met with a gate through which none could pass. Thankfully, we were met by a friendly troll, who cast the spell to open the gate, and he led us into the forbidden forest, taking us through the inner gate as well. We found the turn of hairpin, where we thought the trail would be. But alas, a chasm lay between us and the river.

The Wizard said "the road descends; let us follow it further." So we went further as the road dropped closer to the river, both in proximity and elevation. Soon, by the side of the road, we could catch glimpses of rock and glimmers of water. We parked, put on our armor against the evil poison ivy, packed our weapons and supplies and set out. We plunged into the forest thick with poison ivy, kudzu and creeper, and soon came to the riverside.

The mighty dam had tamed the beast, and its boulderous bones lay bare, through which pools collected and a trickle of the river wended. We waded and hiked downstream and soon saw the island. We took
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(Lost Blade of Pumphrey, continued from page 6)

the right hand channel, noting strainers along the way, until we came upon the same river-wide strainer that stopped us last Saturday. There was Old Man Rhody in the shadows of the riverbank. The strainer was a 12-inch diameter trunk, bridging the river and now standing above its remnant. There was plenty of room for the paddle to have flushed under it, and we found no sign of the blade.

We looked further downstream. While paddling last weekend, we didn't spy it from the river, so as we hiked, we looked ahead and behind, in the trees and rocks and strainers. Soon we could see the next near-river-wide strainer collecting a pile of wood in the distance. That would likely be the furthest the blade could have traveled. But before we reached it, there, along the left bank, under the shadows of Old Man Rhody's tentacles, lay the blade! If it were there last weekend, we wouldn't have seen it under the greenery. But with low water, we could see its fiery blade on the dry bank, one blade still clutched by Rhody's roots. It had gathered a slight patina from its rocky journey, but was otherwise whole and sound.



With our prize in hand, and grateful for God's blessing on our quest, we set out to

open the way for future travelers. We went further downstream to the woodpile, unsheathed our weapons and began to clear the river right side from the logs and branches that blocked nearly all of the way. Some of what we cut, we added to the pile, others we dragged to the riverbank. We lowered another log downstream, took a break, and headed back upstream to the strainer where the blade was lost. There we set to the beast. Some evil otter-demon had cast a curse upon it: a foul urine stench to ward away enemies, no doubt. But we pressed on about our work. Eventually, we had the log in pieces, opening up the center channel for passage. Surely, the river has more wood than we could free that day, but the worst of the barriers were now passable.

We made our way back upstream, and admiring the river's beauty, climbed our way back up to the road. Through the magic gates we went, and back to our castles, the treasure recovered and a tale to tell. So when next you delve deep into the forest and brave the waters of the WFT, beware the strainers and Old Man Rhody, lurking in the shadows and guarding the eddies.—EL





TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

Please see the GCA Calendar for details, updates, and to sign up at www.gapaddle.com. For any questions or class suggestions, e-mail eddylineeditor@gmail.com.

Thinking of joining a paddling trip?

When deciding to join a GCA trip, whether an “official” trip posted on the website, or a pop-up trip posted on the Facebook page, please keep the following bit of river etiquette in mind: **Always** check with the trip coordinator before inviting a guest to come along on the trip with you, especially if your guest is an inexperienced paddler. This is to insure the skill level of your guest matches the targeted skill level of the group. Many pop-up trips will not have safety boaters., and it’s considered rude to expect the other paddlers in the group to be responsible for an unexpected paddler. Please don’t put the trip coordinator in the uncomfortable position of having to turn someone away because their experience level doesn’t match that of the group.

Your Trip Could Be Listed in This Space — email Cruisemaster James Wright at jwrightnmaul@hotmail.com

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS

Flat Water - no current will be encountered; safe for new paddlers.

Beginner - mild current, occasional Class I ripples; new paddlers can learn basic river techniques.

Trained Beginner - moving water with Class 1-2 rapids; basic strokes and bracing skills needed.

Intermediate - rapids up to Class 3; eddying and ferrying skills needed; kayakers need solid roll.

Advanced - rapids up to Class 4; excellent boat control and self-rescue skills required.

Signing Up: Call the trip coordinator listed to sign up for trips. Most trip coordinators will move a trip to an alternate venue if the water levels and conditions for a particular trip are not favorable. Call early in the week to ensure you get a spot on the trip, and in consideration for the coordinators, PLEASE avoid calling late in the evening.

Training Trips are a combination of recreation and training designed for those boaters who have completed a formal training clinic and would like some on-the-river time with instructors practicing what was learned in the clinic and expanding skill levels.

Canoe Camping Trips are multi-day trips, generally on flat or mild water, with at least one night of camping. For details on a scheduled trip, call the trip coordinator. To arrange a trip, call Vincent Payne at 770.834.8263.

To Volunteer To Lead Trips: Email Cruisemaster James Wright at jwrightnmaul@hotmail.com or Berry Walker at bcwalker55@gmail.com. As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flatwater to Class 5 whitewater. Our excellent trip schedule depends on the efforts of volunteers, so get involved and sign up to coordinate a trip on your favorite river today! The GCA needs YOU!

Chattooga Trips are limited to 12 boats on ANY section on ANY trip, club trip or private (USFS regulation). Boating is prohibited above the Highway 28 bridge. Your cooperation in protecting this National Wild and Scenic River is appreciated.

Roll Practice: see gapaddle.com for information.



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Nomadic Flow Outfitters is Atlanta's premier paddlesports retailer conveniently located just north of Atlanta in Canton, Ga along the beautiful river banks of the Etowah River. We offer a full service retail shop carrying all the best brands in the industry, rental/demo programs, paddling schools and guided trips. Our friendly and knowledgeable team is dedicated to serving our amazing paddling community and making paddling adventures more easily accessible for all. So whether you're looking for those relaxing float trips, fishing your local spot or chasing after the rush of whitewater our team at NFO is here to help you!

Keeping In Touch

To contact the GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

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

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

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

ALL ABOUT THE EDDY LINE

The Eddy Line, the official GCA newsletter, is available in pdf format. To subscribe, contact Vincent Payne at 678-343-5292 or vincent.payne9354@gmail.com, or mail your request to P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

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



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**[WE'RE ON THE WEB:
www.gapaddle.com]**

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

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