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## The Adventures of Chica—Outstanding Teen Paddler By Mike Hurndon

Once upon a time, not too long ago, a little girl wanted to paddle her kayak down this enormous river through a very magical place. So, she got the chance & she did! Micayla "Chica" Hurndon was the little girl, Colorado was the river's name, & the magical place was the bottom of the Grand Canyon. At 2:04 AM on the shooting-starlit morning of July 8th, this 11-yr. old paddled her Pyranha Machno up onto the steel ramp of Pearce Ferry takeout after a not-soon-forgotten 54-mile last day, which went well into the night. She climbed out of her cockpit, looked up at the clearly illuminated Big Dipper, & promptly laid down upon the rough riverbank; using a baby-head sized rock as a makeshift pillow, Chica eventually went to sleep in between her concert of damp shivers, having merely a thin fleece blanket for warmth against the cooling desert air. Chica had just paddled the entire 280-miles of the Grand Canyon from

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Lee's Ferry over 16-days; she ran some of the tougher lines, to include an occasional unplanned rodeo session (like at Zoroaster Rapid), that would have made any cowboy or girl proud, & stayed in her boat the entire journey. She was heard to have said, "This was the hardest & best day of my life!"



Chica started kayaking when she was five years old on the Metro Hooch & the Cartecay, following in her brother Max's footsteps; he also started kayaking when he was five on the exact same rivers. Max has always been a huge motivating influence in Chica's life, as she loves her brother. When Max was 12, he kayaked the Grand Canyon twice in both 2017 & 18; his second trip in 2018 was a kayak self-support expedition over ten  
*(continued, page 2)*



*(The Adventures of Chica, continued from page 1)*

days. As a result of this, Chica was enormously inspired to also run the Grand Canyon, once she gained the necessary skills and confidence to "Be Like Max!" So, she went to work & learned to roll her kayak when she was 9, also running the Middle Ocoee for the first time that same year in her beloved Jackson Sidekick that Santa had delivered the prior Christmas. In 2019, when she was ten, Chica learned the delight of slicey riverplay in her Wavesport Siren that was passed down from Max; that season she became a Middle Ocoee regular, with both her skill & confidence progressing quickly, spending 3-4 hours working the river.

When 2020 approached, talk of running the Grand Canyon that summer became frequent. Chica's skills were solid, but she was



Chica on the Upper Ocoee

lacking Big Water experience that might somewhat replicate that to be encountered on the Colorado River within the Grand

Canyon. With that in mind, she hiked into the Upper Ocoee early that Spring on a natural flow event prior to the scheduled releases with Max, her father, & Mike Williford; she shouldered & used tow straps to drag her small Pyranha Machno to the river over what seemed to be a mile, but she persevered. She ran the Upper Ocoee clean, without issue, and actually ran it several additional times prior to the Grand Canyon launch later in the summer. Ironically, the Machno that Chica paddled was the same boat Max used to traverse the Grand Canyon on his first trip in 2017. With this, Chica was truly



ready for the Big Trip and her training & prior hard work truly made the trip both a successful & incredibly enjoyable expedition.

Chica first ran & cleaned Nantahala Falls in her Sidekick when she was 7 yrs. old. She also ran the Gates of Lodore of the Green River in CO & UT w/ her family when she was nine, paddling her Sidekick on most all the biggest rapids, while riding in the raft on the flatwater sections. She's also attended the NOC Kids Kayak Camp several times,

*(continued, page 3)*



*(The Adventures of Chica, continued from page 2)*

including the Kids Advanced Camp, & she is an active volunteer supporter of the Atlanta



Chapter of Team River Runner. Chica plays goalie on her competitive soccer team, she is in her third year of wrestling (has to wrestle boys in almost all matches), and she is an experienced snow skier. She enjoys running, working out at the gym, spending time with her family, & loving on her dog Loki!

"You may not know it now, but in the future, years from now, you could be doing something amazing, but you have to put in the work beforehand!" Micayla "Chica" Hurndon, circa 2020—EL



Nathan Baggett, Outstanding Teen Paddler  
By David Baggett

Back in 2004 or 2005. I went to CHOTA paddle school and it was a disaster. I swam at Three Chutes on the Hiwassee River and got sun burned. I went home Sunday morning. I was paddling without my prostheses. I had no desire to try whitewater paddle ever again.

I started flatwater kayaking in July, 2016. This picture was taken in October 2016. This was Nathan's first time in a kayak.



Around March 2017 a guy at church gave me a Dagger Animas, AKA "the Dagger death boat". When Jeremy gave me that boat I had the bright idea to try whitewater paddling again. I got on TVCC's waitlist and got into paddle school.

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*(Nathan Baggett, continued from page 3)*

It was another disastrous experience. I left on Sunday wet and miserable, after another swim and having to "raft" with the instructor from stair steps down. I swore off white-water again.

The next week at work I thought about it and decided if I had the right gear I believe I could paddle whitewater. A well-intentioned instructor suggested the Jackson Karma, which not a good boat for me. I fooled around on the Hiwassee and Nantahala a few times that summer. On one of those Nantahala trips, I learned about Team River Runner.

In November 2017 I went to TRR roll practice in Chattanooga. I managed to get Nathan to go with me. He was skeptical because of the few flatwater trips he had been on. He told me later the only reason he went that first time was because he knew he would get snacks and fast food. He could immediately tell this was different from flatwater paddling. On the way to truck he whispered to me "can we come back next week?" That winter he learned how to roll and paddle the boat etc.

The following summer, Nathan went to TVCC paddle school. We went on almost all the TVCC training trips that summer. He got his first combat roll at Double Reactionary on the Pigeon in august. He did Ocoee Light that month and full Ocoee, Rails down in September.

That fall, I bought dry suits and we kept pad-

dling. He did Middle Tellico and Town Creek that winter and some other class 3 stuff in Alabama. He has swam fewer than 12 times in three years and only once in the last two years. The last time was this summer when he got under a raft at Broken Nose.



He got on the Tellico Ledges this past March. He's had an offer to show him down the Cheoah

but Nathan is being very conservative about his skills and hasn't done it yet. We also did Upper Ocoee four times together this summer, and he went another time without me. Many people have told me what a great paddler he is. They have also said that he had a great personality and is able to fit in well with paddlers who are old enough to be his parents and grandparents.

Nathan could have easily missed out on paddling but it is his "thing". He is gifted and I'm anxious to see where he takes his paddling. -

EL





Caleb Eyl—Outstanding Teen Paddler  
By Tony Eyl

Caleb learned to roll in less than 20 minutes last summer (2019), but due to a football injury at school, he didn't really start paddling until May of 2020. Since then, he has run Class IV creeks, learned to slicey boat in his Jackson Mixmaster, and freestyle tricks in his Pyranha Jed. He can do a backdeck roll, flatwater loops, kick flips, cartwheels until he's too dizzy to do any more, stern stalls, bow stalls, etc. And, he is a creeking machine. He has accomplished more in six-months than many paddlers accomplish in many, many years of paddling.

Some of Caleb's notable runs this summer were Columbus at 16,900 CFS in his playboat, Upper Ocoee, Tellico Ledges (and Mid-



dle Tellico), Holly Creek, Upper Nantahala, Section 3.5, and all summer slicey boating on the Middle Ocoee a couple of times a week with me. He has shown a tremendous and genuine love for whitewater kayaking and an inherent "whitewater IQ" based on a natu-

ral instinct that has served him well and is remarkable to watch on the water. I've watched him get beatdowns in holes that many would swim out of. However, except for one swim on one of his very first slicey boat Cartecay trips, he has never swam out of his boat and always comes up smiling for more. He loves sharing the sport with others, loves learning new tricks, and really loves teaching others every chance he gets. He is looking forward to winter creeking and he hopes to get involved soon with competition freestyle events. I (his dad) am super proud of him and he is by far the best and most amazing paddle partner I could hope for. Each day on the river with him is an absolute joy and blessing to me. The one-on-one time together is invaluable and seeing the joy on his face running the river is a gift to experience for both of us. Pretty much anyone who has paddled with Caleb has witnessed his skill and abilities. - EL





Roger Nott—Lifetime Contributor  
Award  
By Terri Abbott

The GCA is proud to present to Roger Nott the distinguished Lifetime Contributor Award. If you have been a GCA member for any length of time you may have noticed a man skillfully paddling a weathered, green, 16-foot Royale Buffalo Canoe. He is known to be able to paddle, “a blade of grass and the morning dew”. This love and lifestyle of paddling began at summer camp in 1953 with a wood and canvas open canoe. His contributions and accolades include:

- Being a GCA member for over four decades, joining in 1974.
- Coordinating hundreds of trips and documenting them in great detail since 1976, including GCA clean-up trips every year.
- Recognized numerous times as GCA Top Coordinator.
- Vanguarding as Exploration Chairman from 1978-81 and 1987– present. Documenting in the GCA Eddy Line many stream descriptions not published in any guidebook or the AW national database.
- Training GCA members in Open Canoe 1981-1983,
- Serving as GCA President from 1981-1983 and an active board member since 1978.
- A promotor of the Southeastern US Slalom and Wildwater Championships. Volunteering and competing in Slalom since 1980 in his Canadian Open Canoe. Soon after, he began competing in the Wildwa-

ter category. Presided as Race Master for seven of those years.

- Capturing titles of The National ACA Slalom Champion and Medium Masters Champion (Cruising Class).
- Dedicating time to river preservation and access (e.g., GCA representative in Chattooga Headwaters Suit since 1995, producing access to sections 00, 0 and 1)
- Thirty years of introducing and training Boy Scouts from Gainesville, GA to paddle and love our rivers. Head canoe instructor for Troop 16 since 1991.
- GCA Club Historian since 2000.
- Diligently pursuing excellence as a Slalom and Whitewater judge beginning in 1975. Became a National ACA Judge and International Canoe Federation Judge: traveling all over the country in that role at numerous events, including World Cups, US Team and Olympic Trials, National Championships and 2014 Championships. He was the prime Slalom Judge in the 1996 Olympics on the Ocoee River.
- Founding member and former instructor of Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club.
- Life Membership in ACA and American Whitewater and home to 14 OC's and C-1's.
- A walking encyclopedia of 383 named Southeastern rivers and creeks, many of which he has paddled a number of times as a regular river runner in the area since 1971.

Thank you, sir!! - EL



LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTION  
AWARD

This award is for one of our club members who can best be described as a force of nature. In recent years she has coordinated the most trips, especially on rivers that are seldom done any more. If you haven't been on one of her exploratory trips, you haven't really lived!

I first saw Lisa Haskell on the Hiwassee River about 8 years ago using hand paddles, which I thought were fascinating. She can do more with those things than most of us can do with our "death sticks" as she calls them. As I got to know her better, I have become a fan of her energy, organizational ("cat herding") skills, paddling knowledge and skill, adventurous spirit, and her generosity, especially with new paddlers.

- Immediate past president and vice-president of the GCA; member since 2004
- Most elaborate club trip, the MLK Weekend Florida Paddle
- L4 Instructor
- Paddles any craft you can imagine – her answer to the question, "How many boats should you have?" is always "N+1"

The recipient of the Longtime Contribution Award is Lisa Haskell. Congratulations and thank you, Lisa! - EL

Terri Abbott: Go-Getter Award and  
"Show-Off" Award

We had to find a new category for the winner of this award. She was nominated in several categories and she had already won Volunteer of the Year last year. So this year we are awarding the "Go Getter" award to Terri Abbott. Terri is the Energizer Bunny of paddling, having paddled well over 50 trips in 2020 alone. She has progressed from just getting comfortable on Class I to running the Nantahala and Chattooga 2.5 with style in a little over a year and a half. In addition to getting out there herself, she has been recruiting new paddlers to the club regularly. She is truly a champion for the GCA.

- Starting volunteering with the club two years before she ever actually paddled with us. She very carefully planned what boat, vehicle and gear she would acquire to be ready to pursue her new passion.
- Social chair this year which was difficult during the pandemic as she has never met a stranger. The Holiday Paddle was her idea so we wouldn't have to huddle in a cold pavilion somewhere wishing we were paddling. The decorations you see are her contributions.
- Terri became Cruisemaster in October of this year and has successfully booked about a dozen trips for this year and next.

We also have another award for Terri. Terri had paddled the Nantahala River  
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(Terri Abbott, continued from page 7)

several times before she decided she was going to run the Falls for the first time and she certainly did it with style! She carefully scouted it and decided on the traditional left to right line. She made it look easy as she came down past Billboard and Truck Stop, setting up her angle to catch the edge of Top Hole and scoot across to the tongue. She knew she had to give it some gas to make it across to the tongue and gave a powerful stroke on the left which spun her around and led to... Running the Falls backwards with incredible style. There's video to prove it! (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/georgiacanoe/permalink/10159015031732280>)

Congratulations and Great Job, Terri!!! - EL

Kerrie Barloga: Instructor of the Year



Instructor Kerrie Barloga has been paddling for over 30 years. After obtaining her instructor certification, she jumped into teaching clinics for GCA with both feet. She has taught kids

clinics, Work the Falls clinics and Advanced Ocoee Clinics, as well and stepping in to teach a combat roll clinic on the Ocoee when the scheduled instructor had to cancel.

In addition to group clinics, Kerrie has spend numerous hours one-on-one with paddlers eager to step up and improve upon their skills. She has guided paddlers down the West Fork of the Tuckasegee, the Cheoah, Chattooga Section IV, the Upper Ocoee and the Upper Nantahala, just to name a few. She has the energy to outlast teenage boys, and the ability to get paddlers to do things they never thought they could do. She is also a very patient instructor, and the ability to break down rapids step-by-step so they are less intimidating.

Kerrie has a sunny disposition and is always smiling on the river. She can find play waves on a class I run, and is badass enough to surf large wave holes on the Gauley and tackle most of the Green Narrows.

Congratulations, Kerrie! - EL





John Pinyerd—  
Honorary Lifetime Member

From my perspective...I was blessed to be able to set the course record for C-1 at Southeastern's back in 1997. Since I was a long time GCA member, I declined the \$100 bounty for setting the new record, and gave the club President (Stuart) the option of considering giving me a life time membership. It was a win-win and a good investment for GCA. I've stayed active in the club over the years.

If GCA was ever going to consider bumping my membership up to an "Honorary Lifetime" membership, now might be a great time. I know that was Stuart's intention. It just did not happen that way. I've been blessed to have an amazing longevity in the sport that I love ....starting back all the way in the early 80's when I was a product of the GCA club trips, and rolling classes, and you name it..... and along the way I've been blessed to have won the Charlie Patton Award 20+ times, Won USA Wildwater Nationals (overall) 14 times (and more than double that if you factor in single day wins, or Masters classes), and have won a half dozen national titles in Open Canoe Downriver racing.

At the international level, my achievements include winning a bronze medal in C-2 team (with Martin Bay), having scores of top 20 finishes, and twice winning the Worlds at the Masters level. (and that's one of the obvious

reasons I know I've been blessed with longevity in the sport that I love). I'm a product of this club. It might be neat thing thing to recognize that (while I've still got some gas in the tank). :-)

John Pinyerd

- EL

Membership Dues  
Reduction

2020 has been a terribly challenging year in so many ways and has greatly curtailed the events, classes and trips GCA has been able to offer to our members. In light of this fact the GCA Board has decided to reduce our annual dues to \$20 per year beginning January 1, 2021. If you are on auto-renewal there's nothing you have to do. The reduction will occur automatically.—EL



Canoe Art  
Photo By Rick Thompson



## SAVE THE SWAMP

By: Dan MacIntyre

The Okefenokee Swamp is one of the truly special places in the world. I have seen a goodly amount of the world in my travels with Uncle Sam's Navy and in private travels for business and pleasure. Nothing I have seen tops the Okefenokee.

I am distressed to report that Twin Pines Minerals, LLC ("Twin Pines") proposes to develop a heavy minerals mine located on Trail Ridge in Charlton County, Georgia, east of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and west of the community of Saint George. I am even more distressed to report that the Corps of Engineers, which historically has overseen such developments, has concluded that it does not have jurisdiction over this mine because of the newly effective "Water of the United States" Regulation.

Trail Ridge is a low, saturated sand ridge that plays a significant role in the hydrogeology of this area of Georgia, acting as a sill for the eastern side of the vast Okefenokee Swamp. Trail Ridge is also a critical fixture/component within Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), as it provides a vital ecological link northward from Florida to the Altamaha River. One-third of the mining site drains to streams in the Okefenokee basin.

Twin Pines proposes a plan to excavate an average of 50 feet below the land surface, sort the material with a wet

mill, and backfill in a 24-hour per day operation. The process exposes approximately 25-40 acres of ground per month. Much of the area near Trail Ridge possesses groundwater within two feet of the ground surface, and the site is no exception. Potential Impacts on Streams, Wetlands, Wildlife, and Local Economies could be devastating.

GCA stands with other environmental groups and lovers of the swamp in opposition to this proposed mine. A comprehensive study evaluating the environmental and economic impacts of mining on Trail Ridge should be conducted before state mining permits are issued in this area. I will be forwarding suggested communications to be made to the State of Georgia. Most will be in the form of prepared alerts that you only need to click on and identify yourself to send. GCA will be communicating as an organization, but individual comments from hundreds of members would have an even bigger impact.—EL

GCA welcomes paddlers from all races, genders, and sexual orientations. We will continue to strive to promote diversity among the paddling community and work to create a safe space for all to enjoy

### 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.



Highlights from GCA's "Work the Falls—From New Heights" clinic taught by Tony Eyl, Kyle Christiansen and Kerrie Barloga.  
Photos by Ryan Nesbitt

Kerrie Barloga on Bald Creek Falls



Tony Eyl, ready to teach





## TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

- Nantahala Icebreaker Paddle - January 2nd, 2021
- Board Meeting - January 7, 2021 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
- GCA Florida Winter Paddle - January 14th -19th, 2021
- Peachtree City Roll Practice - January 10, 2021 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Peachtree City Roll Practice - January 24, 2021 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Please see the GCA Calendar for details, updates, and to sign up at [www.gapaddle.com](http://www.gapaddle.com). For any questions or class suggestions, e-mail [eddylineeditor@gmail.com](mailto: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 Terri Abbott at [Abbott.Terri@gmail.com](mailto:Abbott.Terri@gmail.com)

### KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS

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

**Beginner** - mild current, occasional Class 1 riffles; 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 Coordinate Trips:** Email Cruisemaster James Wright at [jwrightnmaul@hotmail.com](mailto:jwrightnmaul@hotmail.com) or Berry Walker at [bcwalker55@gmail.com](mailto: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). Your cooperation in protecting this National Wild and Scenic River is appreciated.



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### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:EddyLineEditor@gmail.com).



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**GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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