

Inside this Issue:

- **What a Crooked Run - page 2**
- **Chattooga Clean Up - page 7**
- **Looking Back at the Nantahala - page 8**

VOLUME 57 NO. 3

APRIL 2022



Art Show of Interest to Paddlers—by Allen Hedden

A while back I posted to the GCA email list about a lady who was making and marketing canoe & kayak art in the form of stickers. As you all are probably aware, several windows on my vans are dedicated to stickers of all types, so I ordered a few. I was not disappointed. This same lady, Misty Ogle Semanco, a local artist in the Chattanooga area, is doing an art show of her river art.

On any given sunny day, paddlers flock to the river seeking cool water, camaraderie, and the challenges of whitewater that criss-cross through the wide swath of the Tennessee River Valley. Misty Ogle Semanco captures these feelings and the beauty of our area's pristine waters in her work "River Days." This piece epitomizes the moments of companionship the paddlers rely on to tackle the next big challenge around the bend of a fickle river. Misty knows firsthand the gifts of paddling the paths of the area's rivers, streams, and creeks. She realizes on canvas the places typically only viewed by paddlers as they course through the veins of water that traverse Appalachia.

This particular series is about Misty's journey to the river. After beating cancer a few years ago, she wanted to replace being in the infusion room with something fulfilling, inspiring, and exciting – and that is how she got into whitewater kayaking. You can see more of Misty's work at her upcoming show, "Currents" on May 14th from 5:30 - 9:00pm at Wavelength Space, 854 McCallie Ave, Chattanooga, 37403, or at mistyogle.com. She will have more than twenty paintings telling stories of days on the river. All of the paintings are of kayaking and mostly from her photos on the river, but all of the people in the paintings are recognizable and most are even in GCA. There will be free wine and hors d'oeuvres. - EL

What a Crooked Run! - by Don Ellis

As described in *The Obed / Emory Watershed* by Monte Smith, the first “published” account of a trip on Crooked Fork Creek that he knew of was in a 1979 TSRA newsletter and was titled: “MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY”. Well, 20 years later, three of us, all GCA members who were also members of Central Georgia River Runners participating in the CGRR Whitewater Camp still agreed . . . OUR EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY! Monte Smith’s guidebook, fairly new back then and well before the days of our many present day internet accessed river level information, said that the recommended minimum CFS level is 3,500 on the Emory at Oakdale gauge. We had somewhere in the neighborhood of 8,000 when we put on, but we didn’t know that, and furthermore, other than the description in the guidebook, we didn’t know what to expect, as none of the three of us had ever run Crooked Fork Creek before. OK, that is twice that I’ve spelled it “Crooked” and in the title I spelled it “Crooked”. I know what some of you may be thinking. Ole Dub (that would be me) is stupid for jumping on a river that he has never been on that has at least twice as much water as is recommended for a minimum. Not only that, he can’t spell and doesn’t know how to run a spell check on his computer either!

Neither is a valid point from my perspective. You see, it was not long after that published trip report in 1979 that I started paddling pretty seriously. Much of the paddling I’ve done has been with Mr. Monte Smith. In his first edition of *The Obed / Emory Watershed* published in 1980, there is a picture of two expert paddlers of that era by the name of Danny Baggett and Alan Davis standing by a sign that is spelled “Crooked Fork Creek”. What you don’t know is that this river sign is just down the road from a town that used to be named Stupidville. That’s right, and they had the city limits sign right there by the road that read “Welcome to Stupidville”. They finally wised up and took down the town sign and changed the river name to what is seen today on US Highway 27. Thus rests the notion that I can’t spell.

Now, over the years, I’ve paddled enough with Monte Smith to know that he was notorious for running dry riverbeds. So, I figured that 3,500 CFS was probably just about enough water to float a matchbox down. I despise runs with too low a level. Not only that, I had been highly impressed with my two companions, Mr. Steve “Snuffy” Smith (no relation to the aforementioned Mr. Monte Smith although they both float open boats) and Mr. David Lloyd who paddled KI in masterful fashion. That’s not to say that I had not been highly impressed by others at the CGRR Whitewater Camp, it is just that these two guys were the only ones along on this trip.

(continued, page 3)

(What a Crooked Run, continued from page 2)

So how does that get me out of the fact that we put on with so much water? Because as a group, we had planned to run the Piney and had set the cutoff at 3.5 feet on the Piney take-out bridge. We got to the Piney and guess what the hand painted bridge gauge read? That's right, 3.5 feet. Now the group as a whole decided that the best thing to do was go to plan B. Plan B was for Crooked Fork Creek. So, I submit that I'm not so stupid after all since I strive to work well with a group decision!

Just for future information and a bit of statistical data, Crooked Fork Creek now has a gauge at the US Highway 27 Bridge just upstream of the water treatment plant. It certainly would have been convenient to have had it back when The Obed / Emory Watershed was published in 1980!! When we put in, the gauge was reading 6.3 feet. When we took off and ran shuttle 4 ½ hours later, it was reading 5.4 feet. The next morning, only 24 hours after we put on, it was reading 4.3 feet. It had dropped 2 feet in one day! And the heck of it is, it was still plenty runnable!

So what happened on the trip? Well, just as we rounded the bend containing the first set of rapids, there was a tree completely across the river with no obvious route through. While attempting to hit the last eddy before said pulpwood stockpile, one of us pinned our boat between a tree and an offset partially submerged stump. (Did I mention that this creek was flooded to the fair-the-well and in many places the river was in the trees?) Fortunately, this did not turn into a real problem, as another of us got to the situation and helped the swimmer and boat immediately to the safety of the eddy only 3 feet away.

All having run through and around the pulpwood stockpile safely, we continued on downstream. A half mile later we round the bend of an obvious aqueous declivity. Lamance Falls was staring us in the face! A last chance eddy on river left provided us the safety we needed to portage this 20+ foot waterfall. Onward and downward we float for another ¼ mile and around the bend is another pulpwood stockpile conveniently situated in the main flow of what would be a grand rapid. Portages on river left and right put us downstream of this toothpick factory. But not without mishap. Ole Dub (that would be me) got back to the river after completing the portage only to find that I had punctured an airbag while portaging. Oh well, if Smith and those guys ran this stuff with truck tire inner tubes and Styrofoam block flotation back in the '80s, there should be no reason I couldn't make the rest of the run with at least one of my two air bags still intact.

Another ½ mile downstream the lead boater paddled through an horrendous rock garden that terminated in an immense hydraulic. Let's go surfing now, everybody's learning how,

(continued, page 4)

(A Crooked Run, continued from page 3)

come on a safari with . . . well, you get the picture. One in the drink, one in hot pursuit of the swimmer and boat and one in an eddy that proved nearly impossible to get out of. We all get to the bottom safely via swimming, surfing or the grace of God, or the combination of all three. It turned out that the “bottom” was the last chance eddy right at the bridge just before committing to run Upper Potter’s Falls! We lined / paddled back upstream and across the river to a well-defined river right path to look at / portage this piece of free fall gravity. While it looked completely runnable, we all elected to portage due to the size of the backwash at the base of the falls and the relatively short pool and eminent washout into Lower Potter’s Falls which in our minds, was not safely runnable.

Whew! So far we had run 1 ½ miles while making three portages! We decided that since the worst was supposedly behind us, we would press on. With only 6 ½ miles to go, we put back in below Lower Potter’s Falls. A mile downstream the lead boater is sitting way down at the bottom of a complex class IV signaling for the rest of the group to run left. The next two boaters now understand why. The second boater came screaming down the last of the drop a little too far right and WHAM! Stopped dead still due to the log spanning the entire width of the river. He was able to get over it since it was only three or four inches out of the water. The last boater though saw the log in time to get far enough to the left. Too far. He pinned his boat between a couple of offset trees on river left. Fortunately, he was right at the bank so to speak and not flushing downstream. Now, held firm due to being wedged between the two trees and the log spanning the river with the gunwales upstream, we practiced what one might call swift water rescue. Once the canoe was unpinned, the only remaining sign of a mishap was a new crease in the boat and some missing bark off the tree.

The last place we stopped to scout was a simple, straightforward, 8 foot ledge that was reminiscent of a combination of Woodall Shoals at 2 feet, with an undercut rock on river right that you could probably put all of Reeder’s Rock under! Fortunately, the flooded stream had provided us with relatively clean entrance to a “sneak” route on far left that proved successful for all. With the Emory River in sight at the confluence, there remained one last class IV to negotiate. The two open boats took on a lot of water but made it safely through the last rapid on Crooked Fork, after which we flushed out into the Emory.

Mr. Allen Hedden wrote outstanding articles in the January and February 2022 issues of THE EDDY LINE discussing lessons learned from the U of HK. The above tale, very similar in many ways to his articles, provides many opportunities that I want to reflect upon. All are important and are not by any means listed in any order of importance.

Group size is a very important consideration. Our group of three was dangerously small. If
(continued, page 5)

(A Crooked Run, continued from page 4)

any one of us had so much as twisted an ankle or lost equipment, such as paddles or a boat, well, it could have been disastrous. Further, there were a couple of pins on the trip that took all three of us to undo. Thankfully, the Lord provided us with a competent group of paddlers that worked very well together.

Know your companions. In this case, we knew each other and had confidence in each other's abilities. While it may not seem so, we were all safety conscious regarding keeping each other in sight as best we could, and we all had throw ropes and actually used them on the trip. We all worked together and made legitimate decisions as a group of three rather than a leader of one.

Have at least some idea of the river topography, length of trip and potential conditions to expect. In our case, we knew of the three major waterfalls and about where they were in the run. Lamance Falls, Upper Potter's Falls and Lower Potter's Falls. Guide books, while perceived differently by most everyone regarding specific details, can usually give a good indication of what to expect. Having a knowledgeable person on the trip that has made the run and knows the run is a plus. That said, only if that person is in tune with the other members of the group and the level of information the rest of the group needs to successfully negotiate the river. That is, a knowledgeable person that paddles off ahead and does not share with the group or does not at least stop and set or be ready for safety help can be a false sense of security at the most important of times if needed!

Be aware of the water level and the potential for changing water levels. In our case, we made a high water run safely. In today's readily available river level information, such as the River Level Data provided by American Whitewater and others, a level of 6.3 on the gauge at Hwy 27 would be listed as "Above Recommended". I'm just thankful that we survived what was a less than ideal decision on our parts.

High water promotes the dislodging of trees and other wood into the stream. Be particularly aware of strainers when the water level is high or immediately following a high water level event. Heck – be particular of strainers all the time. Just this week a new release came out regarding a death on the Oconaluftee River due in part to a strainer.

As Allen Hedden suggested in his January article, make Eddy your best whitewater friend. If you don't know Eddy, be deliberate to have one of your trusted paddling buddies introduce you to Eddy. Had it not been for Eddy on our above described trip, we would have been in

(continued, page 6)

(A Crooked Run, continued from page 5)

serious trouble and probably not have survived the trip. You know how you are always seeking that trusted friend that you can count on? That would be Eddy.

There are probably many more safety highlights that could be made from the above account of our run.

All in all it was a marvelous trip. What a Crooked Run! - *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 our paddling adventures.



29th Annual Chattooga River Cleanup 2022 - by Roger Nott

We need your help at GCA's 29th Annual Chattooga River Cleanup, Saturday, June 4, 2022. This is a fun trip that we will take at a leisurely pace. The mountain laurel should be still in gorgeous bloom. We will meet at 9:45 a.m. at the US Forest Service Chattooga River parking lot at the northeast corner of the US Hwy. 76 Chattooga River bridge. We will first clean the access area there and at Thrift's Ferry Landing on foot. We will then clean by boat the 3 miles of GCA's adopted section of the Chattooga, from Thrift's Ferry down to the Hwy. 76 bridge. If we have enough volunteers we could also clean other sections of this beautiful Wild and Scenic River along the Georgia and South Carolina state line between Hwy. 28 and Lake Tugaloo. Volunteers who will not be boating may help by cleaning at the access areas in the morning. The afternoon will be spent on the water, and volunteers must provide their own river craft and equipment, though they may call ahead to reserve possible spaces in rafts or canoes provided by others.

This river section contains class II and easy class III whitewater and one class IV rapid, Bull Sluice, which can easily be portaged. Prior whitewater experience is necessary if you plan to boat the river.

There will be an optional additional 2 mile class III recreational paddle from Hwy. 76 to Woodall Shoals following the clean-up and liquid refreshments and dinner together nearby that evening. Paddlers in kayaks, open and decked Canadian canoes, or rafts are all very welcome.

Prior registration is requested, but unexpected arrivals will also be welcome, including qualified paddlers and land cleaners who are not GCA members who obtain prior approval. This clean-up is co-sponsored by American Rivers, which supplies our trash bags.

Call, text or email trip coordinator Roger Nott, 678-316-4935, rogernott@att.net.—
EL



Looking Back at the Nantahala and the NOC by Fred Couch

My whitewater experiences began in a canoe on some Class One streams in northeast Alabama, with several married, (14 years) younger couples while I was still single. We gradually tried harder stuff and I tried kayaking, but had no roll ability, or knew anyone who could teach me. I was unaware of any clubs, or organizations that taught about paddling nor gear needed other than a paddle, helmet, nose squeezer and lifejacket. That was when Saturday Night Live began, to give you a time period. Bill, the 'ringleader' of this group (mostly graduate ATO's from a nearby college) had heard of a challenging waterway in North Carolina he thought we men should all try before we took the women. He started cutting up a plastic shower curtain, using it to patch an old raft six of them were to float down in.

It was the Nantahala in NOC's second year of outdoor operation. We found the put-in on a spit of land below a dam, dropped the raft, kayak, paddles etc., then two of us drove the vehicles to the bottom and thumbed back up to the top. With no knowledge other than what I saw from the road, we embarked on towards Patton's Run, which was a cold wake-up call to us, making us wonder what we might further experience. It got a bit easier after those monster rocks. We got through, but found out it was damn cold and real challenging.

I skirted just about anything all day that looked ominous - which made me miss a lot of fun. When I got to where the Quarry Rapid was, then made that second turn and big drop, I looked upstream proud of what I did, with a huge Cheshire Grin at my raft buds, and suddenly the whole sky turned dark brown. It took me a few seconds more to realize that in dragging my paddle the river had flipped me, and I was UPSIDE DOWN. So I pulled my skirt to get out, floating/bobbing all the way down that long chute to the gravel bar at the end, not then knowing to keep my feet downstream. Everybody else got a good laugh - I sure was glad it was a sunny Summer day.

On we go - Bill, in the back of the raft, had five guys in with him paddling. Actually, the guy in front (Jim) had never been in a raft, or on a paddling trip, so those guys kind of 'fibbed to him' telling him he was the steerer at the very front. The whole way down he was continually poking that paddle out straight, thinking he was totally in charge while they put it into and over many waves. When we got to the big last rapid we noticed people were pulling their canoes, rafts, and kayaks onto the right side shore, walking downstream and looking at what was ahead. When I saw it (Lesser Wesser) I was totally afraid to try it, and did not.

The guys were thrilled and got going past what I later learned was Billboard Rock. When they hit the first big standing wave, it ejected 3 of them like being shot out of a cannon. Jim was oblivious, concentrating on his front steering. The second standing wave ejected two
(continued, page 9)

(Looking Back, continued from page 8)

more, making that group look like Keystone Kops swimming in all directions, leaving just Jim in the raft. He went through the whole scene without a hitch, then turned around to proudly smile at a totally empty raft behind him, his skin instantly turning ivory white in shock. How I wish I had a picture on film of how he looked. Somehow he got it over to the shore but quite a ways downstream, as he suddenly realized he had no clue of how to steer. We all caught up with him, loading everything into the two cars, and went to look for a campsite.

Every place we tried was full, then someone told us about Old Mine up near a road top. It, too was full, but we were all wet, and obviously dragging, it was getting close to dark, so the lady owner took pity on us, letting us camp in her front yard. One of our men was a college history professor and a metal table she let us use had a map of the USA on it. After showers, dry clothes and some food, he started a beer game for people guessing state capitols. I had other ideas as I wanted to run that rapid and safely. So, in the dark, with no flashlight I started going to other campsites, seeking someone who could help me. After what seemed like 50 campsites, I came to what I learned was the overflow site for large groups. I saw something immediately that I had never seen - kayak trailers - wow! This in my mind just had to be the folks who could help me. Walking up to their roaring fire ringed with people, I introduced myself, talked a little about paddling and their obvious knowledge, then asked the question.

How do I safely run Lesser Wesser in a kayak? You would have thought by their warmth, demeanor, genuine hospitality and serious replies, that they had known me for years. The basic answer was to skirt the first waves, then go straight over the large last standing wave and drag my paddle in a calm place just past it - which they told me was called an 'Eddy.' They said it will be so quick that I need to be ready to brace from being flipped on over... then calm down and paddle out into the current lightly dragging my left side paddle which would put me in the main current and on downstream on what they called a 'Line.'

The next day, I ran the river again, practicing in the Eddies I was brave enough to try, and becoming more proficient in water reading. Running the last big rapids, the turn into Truck Stop (I later learned that Eddy is named) was lightening fast, much more than I expected, but, it worked. Who were the people sitting on either side of me at that campfire - the Editor of Canoe and Kayak magazine, and a top officer in ACA.

We took the women several times after that, wrapping canoes on Patton's rocks and having some epic swims and other fun trips. My prowess led me to even more challenges the couples decided not to follow. After an almost disaster life ending bad run at Chattooga Bull

(continued, page 10)

(Looking Back, continued from page 9)

Sluice, I quit kayaking. I had been one of the first to canoe the Ocoee - a river guide did his best to talk me out of it! I did not learn to roll a kayak for over 10 years, when I was normally running Class 4s and 5s - an NOC course at that. Over the years I took the first Rescue Course NOC taught, and a variety of advanced canoe courses, eventually becoming an instructor in my area of beginner canoe and kayak for 25 years.

For those of you reading this who are instructors, let me share my egg challenge that helped us (buds of mine would often help) learn who had learned best / who needed more instruction. Prior to the students arriving, we put hard boiled eggs in the rushes downstream, in protruding roots, rocks and on the banks, which someone could reach without getting out of their canoe or kayak. It would normally take about 3-4 hours to teach the (average class of 30) students forward, reverse, sweep, eddy, ferry in the Class one stream area (about 100' x 50' pool). Then, after lunch, graduation consisted of a 15 foot slide which dropped 6 feet and had a strong left Eddy and a half mile of eggs to pick up.

To a beginner that slide sounded like Niagara Falls. From the Eddy, a 76 foot ferry that raised you 2 feet by the end was possible. Only two girls in one canoe ever made the whole distance - years later one became a CNN reporter. The folks who came to us after that half mile with the fewest eggs needed more work. We also taught how to negotiate strainers, rescue rope throw, and how to float if you were out of your boat.

My last on-water class was November 1995 teaching a Rescue Squad whitewater rescue techniques on an 18 degree day. Since then I've taught 100's of kids on Earth Day in two counties how to paddle (a land exposure exercise) and throw rescue ropes. I'm proud to say that none of my students has ever had an accident. - *EL*

Fred Couch, Jr.
Founder and Operations Manager
Alabama Scenic River Trail, Inc.
www.ASRT.me
Chocolocco, AL 36254
256-591-0437
www.AlabamaScenicRiverTrail.com

TRIP AND CLINIC SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 7th - Toccoa / Class II

Saturday, May 7th - Boat-Based Rescue with ERA

Friday, May 13th - Upper Hooch / Class II+

Saturday, May 14th - West Fork Chattooga / Class I-II

Saturday, May 14th - Roger's Wildcard / Class II-III

Saturday, May 14th - Chattooga Section 3.5 / Class II-III+ (IV)

Saturday, May 14th - Chattooga Section IV / Class II-IV+

Saturday, May 15th - Extravaganza Wildcards

Saturday, May 21st - Cartecay to DNR / Class I-II+ (III)

Saturday, May 28th - Hiwassee / Powerhouse to Reliance / Class II

Sunday, May 29th - Hiwassee / Powerhouse to Reliance / Class II

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.

To Volunteer To Coordinate Trips email Cruisemaster Terri Abbott: abbott.terri@gmail.com.

As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flatwater to Class 5 white-water. 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!

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS

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

Beginner - mild current, occasional Class I 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.

Address: 141 Railroad St
 Canton, Ga 30114
 Phone: (470) 292-6706
 Website: www.nomadicflowoutfitters.com
 Email: info@nomadicflowoutfitters.com
 Hours
 Monday-Wednesday: Closed
 Thursday: 11am-7pm
 Friday: 11am-7pm
 Saturday: 10am-7pm
 Sunday: 12pm-7pm



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.



The Eddy Line, © 2022, is published monthly as the official newsletter of the Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., publication address: 9354 Grapevine Drive, Winston, GA 30187.



GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.

Post Office Box 611
Winston, Georgia 30187

[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.