



# THE EDDY LINE

VOLUME 58 NO. 1

MARCH 2023

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## Letter from the President

Hello GCA members!

It almost seems as if spring is here, and we have a lot of exciting events planned for this Spring.

In April, we have both our spring membership paddle on the Upper Hooch on April 16th and our Spring Extravaganza. The Extravaganza will be April 28-30 and will be located in the Chattooga area. Please sign up for any of these events on the GCA website at [gapaddle.com](http://gapaddle.com).

As you know, the GCA is a volunteer-run organization, and we need your help! There are lots of volunteer opportunities coming up. First, we need people to help staff our Tallulah release weekend. This is your chance to get a first-hand peek at Tallulah if you haven't run it yet, or if you are nursing an injury and just want to be around awesome people! Please contact Tammy Lea at [eddylineeditor@gmail.com](mailto:eddylineeditor@gmail.com) to volunteer. Next, we would love for someone to volunteer to coordinate our Spring Extravaganza event which will be at the Chattooga this year. We have some trip coordinators who have already volunteered to coordinate trips. If you would be interested in spearheading this event, please contact me, Allyson Davis, at [lessthaneggplant@gmail.com](mailto:lessthaneggplant@gmail.com). Also, for the spring membership paddle, we need two trip coordinators who will coordinate trips on Mossy Creek section of the Hooch and the regular Upper Hooch, as well as someone to purchase, bring, and set up our morning snacks that day.

Finally, we always need people to coordinate trips, so if you have the desire to coordinate a river trip, please contact me at the email address above. You can coordinate a trip on your backyard river if you like. Something that is old hat for you may be new and fun for others! Don't overthink it, just volunteer!

Thank you for being a part of the GCA! I hope to see you soon on the river!

Allyson Davis  
GCA President

## Is Your Boat REALLY Tied Down?

by Allen Hedden

I'm sure many of us have had bad experiences and near bad experiences concerning properly securing boats to a vehicle for transport to or from a paddling destination. I've had my share – mostly innocuous and mostly learning experiences. The one that is the subject of this article was certainly not innocuous, but most certainly was a learning experience.

Some years ago I and my racing partner, who was relatively new to boating, made one of many trips to northern Alabama for a weekend of racing at the Alabama Cup Races. I was driving a full size van for camping / sleeping as well as transporting boats. Loading consisted of tying down two larger canoes separately and securely to the roof racks and the vehicle, with front and rear painters fastened to the vehicle and the belly straps fastened to the racks. Bullet-proof, right? So far, so good. Next we loaded the third canoe, an almost new 11 foot whitewater boat with a lot of rocker that my partner had just obtained, on top of and straddling the two larger boats using the ladder on back of the van to push it into place. Then we secured the belly lines to the racks and the stern painter to a tie down point on back of the van. It was at that point that we realized that the bow painter was not nearly long enough to reach a secure tie down point on the front of the van and it was way too high up to conveniently add a longer rope, so we did a bit of a short-cut, figuring two belly lines and a stern painter were enough security. What could possibly go wrong?

The answer: a short boat and racks that were spaced pretty far apart on the roof, so the belly straps crossed each end of the hull of the top boat right at the point where the rocker of the boat turned into the up-sweep of the bow. Shouldn't be a problem – we had the belly straps pulled down very tight with truckers hitches and pulling on it vigorously did not move the boat at all. To this mix, add the I-20 freeway and a speed of about 65 mph or so. Then add lots of semi's to maneuver around and between, etc.

All went well until we came up behind a semi and another semi was passing us in the left lane. The combination of air turbulence stirred up by the trucks was enough to wiggle the top boat just a wee bit and let the front belly strap slip and loosen up just enough to slip down over the bow of the boat. The wind and turbulence then lifted the bow enough to allow the stern belly strap to slip off the hull and Presto! The boat went airborne but was still attached by the stern painter so it flipped down and smacked the bow on the pavement, severely cracking this lovely and newly outfitted boat. And as quickly as I was able to dive off onto the grass on the shoulder, it still quickly wore through a couple of layers of ABS.

What a mess!

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Hey, it could have been a lot worse! A weaker painter line or a poorly tied knot would have allowed the boat to completely disengage from the van and possibly smack the vehicle behind us, or cause it to swerve to miss the boat and hit something else or go off the road. We were fortunate that we didn't pay a lot higher price for our (mostly my) carelessness.

The aftermath? We were able to re-load and re-secure the boat by the roadside – and we re-secured it RIGHT this time, no short cuts – and we made the rest of the trip with no further incidents. Of course with the paddler's best friend duct tape we were able to patch the bow into good enough shape to use it in the races, but it was a bit of a conversation piece. And of course as the driver of our rig and the more experienced boater, I was responsible for making sure the boats were well secured and bullet-proof. So I ordered and outfitted a replacement boat for my partner and became the proud owner of a very new, very short and very damaged whitewater canoe that I could practice my boat repair skills on and eventually paddle. An expensive lesson, but one learned well.

Cheap lessons are the ones we learn from other people's mistakes. Read about this one and remember: Always ask yourself, is your boat REALLY tied down? - *EL*

### 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.

## **Georgia River Running Gets Real:**

*A look back at Georgia's first paddling guidebooks*

By Suzanne Welander, courtesy of Georgia Backroads ([www.georgiabackroads.com](http://www.georgiabackroads.com))

*On the publication of the third edition of Canoeing & Kayaking Georgia, Suzanne Welander shares reminiscences from co-author Bob Sehlinger on the genesis of the paddling guidebook genre.*



Fifty years ago, river running was riding a wave of popularity fueled by the release of the movie *Deliverance* in 1972. Filmed on northeast Georgia's rivers, Georgians were particularly drawn to recreational paddling. Many went without safety equipment; 17 died on the Chattooga River that year alone.

Guidebooks of that time weren't much help. Most were primitive crowd-sourced compilations of data spiral-bound at AlphaGraphics. Veteran paddlers heavily annotated the margins with their own recordkeeping, including where to find gauges—yard sticks plunged into streambeds or painted on bridge pilings—best water levels, where to start and end trips. Enter writer and outdoor enthusiast Bob Sehlinger. Recently discharged from the Army, Bob was writing for Thomas Press from his home base in Kentucky when the state's Department of Natural Resources made a fateful referral. "A fellow came down from Michigan wanting to work on an outdoor guide to Kentucky," relays Bob. "He ended up in my office."

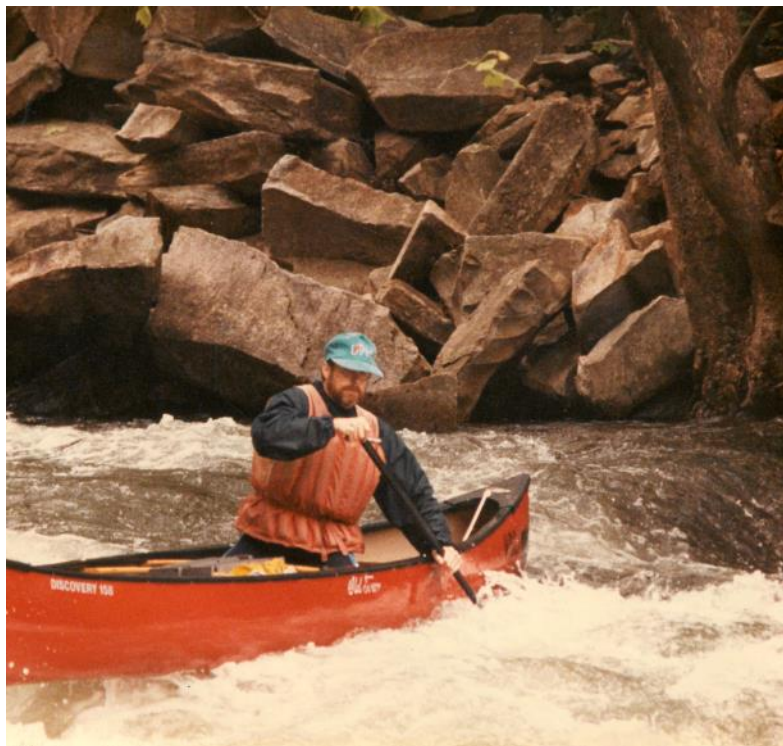
The gentleman's original plan was to cover a collection of different outdoor sports in a single book. Bob convinced him to take a different approach. "The various outdoor recreation suits were not at all interchangeable," he explains, "with lots of resources for each one individually." Bob's recommendation was to publish separate books for climbing, backpacking, and paddling in Kentucky; the latter was Bob's first paddling guidebook.

*Canoeing & Kayaking the Streams of Kentucky* considerably advanced the genre by employing more creativity in presentation, codifying data describing put-ins and take-outs, and integrating maps hand-drawn by Bob's artistic sister. Helpful information on safety and river morphology (reading the river) was included; descriptions of each river's flora and fauna helped paddlers imagine themselves in the picture.

Buoyed by strong sales for the Kentucky book, Bob soon found himself working on a guide  
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for Tennessee rivers. That too was popular, which led the team to Georgia. In Georgia, Bob's home base was a dedicated room at famed outfitter Wildwater's Chattooga River outpost, close to North Georgia's whitewater runs. The Georgia guidebooks were co-authored with Dahlonega outfitter Don Otey, "a guy I liked who did some writing for *Brown's Guide to Georgia* and *Southern Living*," recalls Bob. The burgeoning Georgia Canoe Association also contributed information on steep creek runs gathered by many good paddlers who were exploring and recording information.



The team used an unusual time-saving device to identify the farthest upstream point where rivers became clear of obstructions to paddling – an airplane. "The pilot would fly me to specific places," describes Bob, "and I would note at which bridge the river became navigable." Georgia's varied topography led to a decision to divide the state's many paddling trips into two separate books published in 1980: *The Paddlers Guide to Northern Georgia* (mostly whitewater) and *The Paddlers Guide to Southern Georgia* (mostly calmwater). Twenty-five years later, the original two books—beloved by Georgia's paddlers—were combined into a single volume, *Canoeing & Kayaking Georgia*, now in its third edition.

Though he turned to publishing guidebooks when he founded Birmingham's Menasha Ridge Press, Georgia still holds a dear space in Sehlinger's heart. "I just love the diversity of Georgia. You've got the mountains, the Piedmont, the Coastal Plain." The people Bob met while canoeing Georgia's rivers also left a sweet impression. "They were so interested in what I was doing. Farmers would load me up with watermelons or something else to share."

Today, modern tools – satellite maps, GPS coordinates, kml files, topological programs and the like – have improved the accuracy and timeliness of guidebook data. On-the-water observations continue to be vital, though the paddlers themselves are sadly less of a curiosity to the locals they encounter. After all, who wouldn't love a boatload of watermelons? - EL



## **GCA FLORIDA WINTER PADDLE 2023**

**By Lisa Haskell**

Once again, the GCA ventured south to Florida to paddle over the MLK weekend. The weather on our way down Thursday was very windy and we found out later that a couple of tornados had touched down that afternoon. Our first two days of paddling were still fairly windy. Fortunately, the rivers we had scheduled for those days were both inland and fairly protected from the wind so we were able to paddle as planned. Our first day paddling was Friday and we went to the Weeki Wachee river. Some of the policies had changed since we last paddled this river. Reservations and advance payment and now required to launch because they are limiting the number of people who can launch each hour. Also, they are no longer offering shuttle service to Roger's Park - they are only shuttling within the state park boundaries which is only 2.5 miles of river. We decided to run our own shuttle so that we could paddle all the way to Roger's Park. It was overcast at times and it was very windy but it didn't rain on us. We were lucky that we planned to do this river on this day, since it is inland and protected from wind for most of the run. We did see a few manatees towards the end of the run.

On Saturday, our second day of paddling, we went to the Hillsborough River and paddled from John B. Sargeant Park to Trout Creek Park. In the past we had used Hillsborough Canoe Escape for help with a shuttle but they closed in 2020 and never reopened so we ended up running our own shuttle on Saturday too. Once again we were fortunate in our choice of river. The Hillsborough is inland and protected from the wind except in a couple of places. At the put in one of the rangers told us that they had cleared the river down to Morris Bridge park but that they hadn't gotten below that. The rangers said they hadn't had any reports of problems, but that they didn't know for sure it was clear.



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*(GCA Florida Paddle, continued from page 6)*

We were all on the lookout after our lunch break at Morris Park and as it turns out, we did encounter a couple of issues below Morris Bridge. The first issue we encountered was just an awkward turn with long boats because of a branch that was near the surface of the water. Liz got out of her boat and crawled out on a tree trunk and used her foot to submerge the branch and make it easier for people to make the turn. One or two people opted to portage there but everyone else was able to make the turn ok. A short distance further on we encountered a tree across the entire river. A few people opted to portage on river left and two people turned around and paddled back to Morris Park and called an Uber. Most of us, however, were able to get under the tree on far river right. After that there were no more obstructions and we were able to paddle the rest of the way to the take out. .



On Sunday we paddled somewhere new. We did a section of the Anclote River near Tarpon Springs. This was a more urban paddle which we did as an out and back so no shuttle required. We launched from the Tarpon Springs Splash Park which had restrooms and plenty of parking. We then paddled past the historic sponge docks and around to Spring Bayou. There were actually quite a few manatees in Spring Bayou - the City of Tarpon Springs actually has a live "Manatee Cam" set up on line so that people can watch the manatees in real time. Once we were done watching the manatees we paddled back to the splash park and put the boats up on the cars and changed clothes.

Monday was our last day paddling and we went to the Chassahowitzka River. There was a lot of water over the Seven Sisters that morning so they weren't quite as pretty as usual. There were also people there who were diving and swimming through the holes. We paddled to the right today to check out a potential launch area from the Seven Sisters Campground which is affiliated with the Chassahowitzka Hotel. After turning around we went past the launch area and turned into the first cove on the left. There we found some of the friendliest manatees we've ever seen. There was one female who had recently had a baby and she was

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*(GCA Florida Paddle, continued from page 7)*

very friendly and wanted see everyone. We named her Polly. She kept rolling over to look at us and trying to eat the strings on our kayaks. After watching her for a bit we paddled to The Crack. We had to stop a bit earlier than usual but were able to walk on back to eat lunch there. The water level at the spring was the lowest I've seen it in 16 years of paddling there. After lunch we paddled back out and went to visit Polly one more time. Then we went to the spring on river right just before the boat ramp area.



I think we all had a good time paddling this year and were overall very fortunate with the weather. - 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.



#### 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.



## TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

- April 1—Upper Amicalola—Mark Albitz—Markalbitz@yahoo.com or 404-966-4620
- April 2—Nantahala—Mark Wilson—Mark.GCA@Outlook.com or 770.864.0198
- April 2—Chattooga—David Asbell—david.asbell@outlook.com or 404-803-4223
- April 8—Upper Hooch—Larry Hall—larry.hall@totaleclipseconsultants.com or 404-956-6510
- April 9—Upper Hooch (Sautee Nacoochee section) - Larry Hall:  
larry.hall@totaleclipseconsultants.com or 404-956-6510
- April 16—Spring Membership paddle—Allyson Davis—Allyson@gapaddle.com or 864.364.0524
- April 16—Spring Skills Tune-Up at the Membership paddle—Carol Proctor  
Carol Proctor at crproctor11@gmail.com or 404.597.2128
- April 22—Toccoa River warm-up—Carol Proctor -Carol Proctor at crproctor11@gmail.com or 404.597.2128
- April 23—Upper Nantahala—Michael McDonough
- April 28-30—Spring Extravaganza—see www.gapaddle.com for details
- April 30—Boat-Based Rescue with ERA—see www.gapaddle.com for details.

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).

To volunteer to coordinate trips email Allyson Davis at [lessthaneggplant@gmail.com](mailto:lessthaneggplant@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 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.

Thank you to our sponsors/  
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### 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](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.

**The Eddy Line**, © 2023, 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](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.*