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WATERFOWL WHITEWATER

By David Suitts

Seeing herons, kingfishers, hawks, mallards, mergansers, and geese fishing on the Chattooga river is a frequent occurrence. Running rapids? Not so much.

Thus, I was surprised to see four Canadian geese as I spun into an eddy above Corkscrew rapid on the Five Falls section of the Chattooga midafternoon on a dry summer day. Slightly perturbed by my sudden appearance, they proceeded to hasten their descent down the low-flow river right side of the rapid.

My curiosity piqued about this fowl crew, I watched as the four ferried across the river in front of Right, Middle, and Left Crack-in-the-Rock and then back again. Do geese always scout for logs? Was this their first time on this particular stretch of river? Were they assessing the flow or just curious? Whatever the answers, like many sensible humans, they chose to waddle around this rapid.

Next, a quick snack break preceded a creative line around Jawbone to the left of “Hydroelectric Rock” and a textbook flying boof down the “Puppy Chute” of Soc-‘em-Dog, where each goose, in turn, flapped their wings after sailing off the six-foot drop: not a bad move to have in one’s river-running repertoire! And completing the Five Falls of the Chattooga, perhaps they got ... loosey-goosey? Or maybe it was time to learn what’s good for the gander isn’t always good for the goose? Either way, as the geese floated in tandem into Shoulderbone rapid, the third encountered a bit of a surprise, one that many canoeists, kayakers, and rafters have felt before — that of being recirculated in a hydraulic! Thankfully, after a brief underwater experience, the goose resurfaced and swam to rejoin the group.

Please give regards if you encounter this particular Canadian crew on the river; it was a pleasure paddling with them! - EL



Two Runs per Rapid

by Fred Couch

My middle brother decided he wanted to try kayaking, so my main paddle bud, Rodney, and I taught him to roll and took him on some trips that were class two to low level three's. Eventually there came a day he asked to go with us to Little River Canyon, that we thought he could manage. The weather was kind of cool - I had loaned him my dry suit and I wore a dry top in my canoe, over some dry pants.

He was doing pretty well as we led him and complimented him, then we stopped for lunch. He made a cardinal mistake - he loosened his helmet strap but did not remove the helmet. Lesson - if you undo your strap, remove your helmet. Otherwise, don't loosen it.

After lunch, the first rapid we got to was a bit of a challenge and it flipped my brother. He hit his head twice on the rocky bottom, the first time with the helmet, the second time without the helmet, which made him bail and get hurt, requiring some bandages. In addition he pierced the dry suit in a few places and it filled with lots of water. Now he was disoriented, water logged and getting very cold - he had to remove the suit to get in the sun and get warmer than he was in that wet dry suit. I had some dry clothes which he put on. He adamantly refused to paddle anymore, preferring instead to walk along the bank. There were two places he had no choice, but we shadowed him closely through those. In hindsight, with his new fear, the walking was a good choice. On the other hand, I had a blast, because I got to run each rapid twice - once in my canoe and a second time with the kayak.

My middle brother never kayaked or canoed again, but he became a world class fisherman in motorboats. My other brother, with no desire to do my sport, is still at the top worldwide in swimming in US Masters Competition in breaststroke and freestyle competitions, swimming over three miles in practice every week. - 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 signup, 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.

Common Sense Rescue with H2O Dreams

By Carol Proctor

If you paddle regularly, you find yourself helping other people to safety and wrangling their boat and gear after a swim. Or maybe you catch an eddy and watch, wishing you knew how to help or you fear an incident in which you might have to help but don't know what to do. You may think swiftwater rescue training isn't for you because you're a relative beginner. Or you've already had some training in the past. Regardless of your skill level and past training, you'll learn a lot in the Common Sense Rescue course offered by H2O Dreams.



Whitewater paddling is a safe sport when you approach it responsibly – wear a PFD and helmet and other recommended safety gear, paddle with a group of people who know and follow safe practices on the water, and work up to more difficult runs by practicing boat control and reading water on lower-level runs. Regardless of the precautions you take, rescues of varying degrees of difficulty will sometimes be necessary and learning to respond to them quickly and effectively is an essential part of your river running skills.

Georgia Canoeing Association recently partnered with H2O Dreams in Saluda, NC, for their Common Sense Rescue (CSR) class held on May 19-21, 2023. This CSR class is directed towards recreational whitewater paddlers who travel in smaller groups and carry less equipment than professionals. H2O Dreams' approach is to take the simplest and quickest route to rescuing the victim while keeping yourself and others safe. There were twelve participants and two instructors. The course took place at Fishtop access on the Green River. This location offers the ideal setting with calm eddies, a couple of rapids and plenty of opportunities to practice swimming rapids, wading out to rescue swimmers and boats, throwing ropes, and wrangling boats and gear to shore.

The course began Friday evening at H2O Dreams for a land-based discussion of rescue situations:

1. How did the situation happen and could we have prevented it?
2. What's the simplest and fastest way to deal with the situation?
3. How do we prevent it from getting worse?
4. What did we learn in order to be better prepared for next time?

Among the skills we learned and practiced in the class are the ones that pop up on almost every trip on moving water as well as those we hope we'll never need:

- Know before you go – safety training, pre-paddle safety talks and communication, group organization, equipment review, river knowledge and water reading.
- Assessing a situation for everyone's safety and choosing the most appropriate action to take.
- Wrangling an over-turned boat and getting it dumped and ready to go as quickly as possible.
- Unconscious swimmer rescue (aka Hand of God).
- Transporting a swimmer on the front or back of your boat.

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- Towing an unconscious swimmer.
- Throwing a rope, including quickly recoiling it without tangling to make a second throw.
- Avoiding being grabbed by someone that's panicking while still guiding and encouraging them to swim to safety.
- Hands on rescue techniques including wading and/or swimming out, with or without a tether.
- Knot tying and mechanical advantage techniques using ropes, prussics, carabiners, pulleys, webbing and features of the landscape.

Here are some of the personal takeaways from the participants of the class:

Carol Reiser Proctor – Practice Releasing Your Tow Tether

I had never practiced releasing the tow tether on my rescue vest. It shocked me that I couldn't even find it at first because my skirt had floated up over it. When I did find it, I pulled it back towards myself and it wouldn't release. My instructor showed me I needed to pull it out away from me.

Karen Heath – Emptying a Boat Full of Water
Mine is how to empty someone else's boat full of water while I am still in my boat. I had to do that a couple weeks ago on the Upper Hooch. It's way easier than I thought it would be! I never would have tried it if it hadn't been for the SWR class.



Lotem Kol – Keep Practicing Skills & Stay Calm

My takeaway is to keep practicing the skills we learned in hopes to never need them but in case we do need them, we can be prepared. Another one would be to stay calm during the rescue situation because stress and anxiety will only induce panic and make the rescue that much harder to complete successfully.

Mary Ann Pruitt – Figure 8 Throw Rope Coil

The Figure 8 method of collecting the throw rope was neat!

Figure 8 is one of the ways to gather a throw rope after the first toss. Other methods include dividing the rope into two sections using your fingers or making a loop in the rope.

Tammy Lea – Everyone Can Contribute to a Rescue

Even injured paddlers can assist with rescue.

Tammy had an injury that prevented her from assisting in a boat-based rescue. She was able to get a big picture view of what was needed and help direct those on the scene.

The consensus among the participants is that this was one of the best SWR classes we've taken and we would highly recommend it. The course is designed to benefit paddlers from trained beginner to advanced.
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The material was clearly presented and followed by hands-on training where everyone got to practice the skills we'd just discussed. Brian and Ben, our two instructors, clearly knew their stuff and how to convey it to others.

Their course material is free to share – please follow the link below:

<https://www.gapaddle.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/H2o-Dreams-Common-Sense-Rescue-Student-Manual.pdf>



GCA plans to partner with H2O Dreams in offering Common Sense Rescue again in the future, as well as other courses such as a beginning creeking class. Be on the lookout for details! - EL



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.

Who Are These People?

A Series of Interviews with GCA Officers, Board Members, Volunteers and Other Notables

Did you ever wish you knew a little more about the people who have given their time and effort to make our club what it is today? Hopefully this series of articles will give you some insights as to who these people really are and why they are so generous with their time. The plan is to publish one interview per issue of the newsletter as space allows. -EL

Interview with Allen Hedden, Newsletter Assistant

Eddy Line: How did you become interested in boating?

Allen: That goes back a long time. When I was just a kid I read James Fenimore Cooper's, "Last of the Mohicans" and was instantly hooked by the descriptions of the canoeing techniques used by the Native Americans. From then on, I got in a canoe every chance I got and paddled around, emulating those techniques and using them to get super close to wild life around the water. Opportunities to do that occurred at a two-week YMCA summer camp, and several times each summer when my family would take trips to Callaway Gardens and I would rent a canoe and spend the day in it while the rest of the family relaxed on the beach. Soon after I got out of the Marine Corps I obtained an old Grumman shoe keel canoe and continued the pastime every chance I got.

Eddy Line: How long have you been a GCA member?

Allen: I joined GCA in 1983 if memory serves me right. That would calculate out to be about 40 years. At that time I had been paddling whitewater with a small group of friends for about 14 years, just doing occasional trips when we could coordinate our schedules to have a minimum of three boats on a trip.

Eddy Line: How did you hear about the club?

Allen: I read an article in "Outdoors in Georgia" that mentioned GCA and did some research to find out what the club was about. There was no internet in those days so the research was more difficult. I and a couple of friends had previously had an encounter with a rather large GCA group at the Hwy 9 put-in for the Etowah. They impressed us as being somewhat like a drill instructor trying to get his troops organized – they even tried inadvertently to include us in their group asking if we were with GCA. We were a bit horrified. We later found out that the group was a rather large GCA beginner canoeing clinic. That explained a lot.

Eddy Line: Why did you join GCA?

Allen: I had been paddling for a long while with a small group of friends and for safety reasons we could only go boating when we could get a group of at least three boats together. We began to notice that we were
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paddling less and less because our family lives and work lives were making it more and more difficult to put a viable group on the water. We found out that GCA had scheduled trips virtually every weekend, so we decided that we should join so we could have a viable group to paddle with when we could not put our own group together. The rest is history.

Eddy Line: What positions have you held, elected or appointed, in the club and which was your favorite?

Allen: Let's see how many I can remember. The first was Membership Director – we always remember our first, right? Then there was Treasurer, President, Member Services Committee Chair, Newsletter Editor, GCA Directory and Guide Book Editor, Roll Practice Coordinator, Red Cross and ACA Certified Canoeing Instructor in GCA clinics, River Safety and Rescue Instructor back before ACA had a certification program for that, Advertising Director, and currently I'm assistant to the Newsletter Editor and administrator for the GCA Email List. Probably there are some I've left out. My favorite has been instructing in GCA clinics, but I haven't done any of that in a long while. I just really enjoyed paying back what the club had done for me over the years.



Eddy Line: What other positions in the club would you aspire to serve in?

Allen: Retired!!

Eddy Line: What type of water craft do you / have you operated in your boating career?

Allen: Primarily I've been an open canoeist, both white water and flat water, but I spent quite a few years paddling primarily a C-1. I paddled white water kayak for a couple of years. I've paddled duckies, rafts, and done some ocean surfing. Also I've done a lot of competition over the years – white water slalom, down river and wild water racing. I probably qualify as a "racer head".

Eddy Line: What has been your favorite boat and why?

Allen: Difficult question.... Over all I'd have to say it is a toss up between a Dagger Ocoee and a Mad River Outrage. Why? Because white water canoeing has been my favorite form of boating and they are the best fit to my paddling style.

Eddy Line: Who has been a major influence or mentor in your boating career and why?

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Allen: Well, for paddling technique and ability, there was Brad Nichol. He sort of took me under his wing and spoon fed me with tips and techniques over the years. I learned very quickly that his tips usually involved un-learning bad habits and learning better ones. Doing things his way was never easy, but if I stayed with it, I learned his way was always the best way. For safety consciousness, several names come to mind – the late Ron Towe, David “Psycho” Simpson, Wayne Gentry to name a few. I always admired the abilities of Nolan Whitesell as a sort of daredevil open boater, but I could never aspire to reach his ability level.



Eddy Line: What is your favorite boating destination?

Allen: For white water, locally it has to be the Tellico River in Tennessee, but world wide it has to be the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Only done it twice, but if I were 20-30 years younger I'd go again in a heartbeat. Great boating, fantastic scenery. For flat water, there are quite a few to choose from, but over all I'd have to pick Myakka River in Florida. Beautiful place and more wild life than you can imagine.

Eddy Line: What's the most unique place you've boated?

Allen: There have been quite a few unique places in my somewhat lengthy boating experience. After due thought and consideration I'd pick Soco Creek in North Carolina. For most of the run, the creek was too narrow to catch an eddy – i.e. more narrow than the length of the boats – so we had to resort to the old school method of “setting into an eddy”. That's back paddling to slow down and then back ferrying into whatever small eddies we could find. The scenery was everything from forested to pastoral to resident's back yards. We got a lot of strange looks from the few spectators we encountered. The white water was pretty continuous but not too difficult. There were a couple of pretty big blind drops but we were able to negotiate them pretty successfully. It was the closest I've ever come to paddling a drainage ditch. ;)

Eddy Line: What's the coolest thing you've ever seen on the water?

Allen: Well that had to be at a lunch break at Second Ledge on Chattooga Section III. A young deer – not a fawn – was trying to cross the river above the drop and didn't quite make it before the drop. She washed over the biggest part of the drop into the pool below and nonchalantly swam to the river left bank, climbed out, shook herself off and sauntered into the woods. This was on a day so cold that there was ice forming on the surface in the eddies and ice cycles hanging from the rocks. I was REALLY impressed with that deer!

Eddy Line: What's the most unexpected thing you've ever seen on the water?

Allen: Another bitterly cold winter trip on the Middle Tellico. A couple of us were sitting in an eddy wait
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ing on the rest of the group and my buddy pointed and said, "Look! A dog!" I misheard him, thinking he said "log" and looked where he was pointing. No log. But there was a small black dog barely visible in the current being swept rapidly down the river, barely able to keep his poor head above the water. My buddy peeled out, caught up with the pup and grabbed him up with one hand and pulled him into his boat. What to do next? He had no collar or tag and he was shivering uncontrollably. We exited the river, hitched down to pick up a vehicle, wrapped him as warmly as we could and tried to bring his temperature back to normal. My buddy and his wife ended up keeping the dog, who they named Lucky for obvious reasons, and he lived a long and happy life.

Eddy Line: What's your favorite underrated boating location (that you don't mind sharing)?

Allen: I think Lake Jocassee in South and North Carolina. It's pretty big with gorgeous scenery, lots of wild life, plenty of places to stop and hike. A lot of loons winter there and their calls are mind blowing. There are sheer cliffs dropping into the water near the dam. It's a favorite destination for divers as there is a town submerged with a lot of structures still intact.

Eddy Line: What / where would be your dream trip(s) of a lifetime?

Allen: That's a really hard one. Being way past my prime, common sense severely limits the possibilities on white water. The Boundary Waters would probably qualify as my "dream trip" even though it includes some difficult flat water and some killer portages.

Eddy Line: What do you do when you aren't boating or doing volunteer work for the club? (Career, job, other hobbies & activities, etc.)

Allen: I retired from corporate life at AT&T / Western Electric many years ago. More recently I retired from private instruction and boat outfitting and repair. I enjoy back packing, hiking, cycling, amateur photography /videography and playing with our dogs. I DON'T enjoy yard work. ;)

Eddy Line: Is there anything else you can add that you would like for the other members of the club to know about you?

Allen: I still enjoy giving back to GCA, meeting new boater friends and learning new things about boating. I like to think you CAN teach an old dog new tricks.

Eddy Line: Thank you so much for participating in this project! Your time and efforts are very much appreciated by the members. - EL

TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

- August 5—Nantahala River—William Powell (wcp70@hotmail.com)
- August 6—Directional Rolling with ERA (contact ERA—828-488-6199)
- August 12—Upper Ocoee—David Asbell (David.asbell@Outlook.com/404-803-4223)
- August 13—Boat-based rescue with ERA (contact ERA—828-488-6199)
- August 19—Nantahala River—Marvine Cole (marvinequilts@hotmail.com)
- August 20—Work the Nanty with ERA (contact ERA—828-488-6199)
- September 2 & 3—Hiwassee River—Carol Proctor (crproctor11@gmail.com/404-597-2128)
- September 15-17—Fall Gala— see www.gapaddle.com for more information
- September 15—Wildcard Paddle—Lisa Haskell (Ishkayaker@gmail.com/678-858-2012)
- September 16—Broken Nose Eddy Clinic with ACE Kayaking—see website for info

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 Allyson Davis at 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.

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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 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.



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GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.

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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.