



KEELHAULER KA-NEWS

JUNE 2005

NEXT KEELHAULER MEETING

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 14th at the Hinckley Reservation.

Be sure to bring your boat and paddle around in the lake. Come anytime around 6pm. The meeting will be held at dusk. Additionally, there will be a Freestyle Canoe Clinic. The first session will begin about 6pm, with a repeat session afterwards as needed. The clinic will include a demonstration of the principles and boat physics behind Freestyle Canoeing, and how to use boat pitch and heel, body mechanics, and efficient paddling strokes and placements to make the canoe perform precisely. Basic maneuvers will also be covered, and paddlers who are interested will have an opportunity to learn a few of the basic compulsory maneuvers used in competitions. You can bring your own solo canoe, or there will be several on hand to try while learning basic skills. Basic Freestyle skills are practical, make the boat respond to you, and are easily transferred to whitewater canoeing as well as canoe tripping and touring. The Clinic will be taught by Elaine and Bob Mravetz, Keelhauler members and 2003 National Interpretive Freestyle Canoe Champions in tandem class. For the meeting, we plan to meet at the Hinckley Lake Boathouse at the SW side of the lake, off of West Drive. We will meet at the south side of the Boathouse.

Directions to Hinckley Lake coming from the north:

From I-77: Exit at Miller Road in Brecksville. Turn left (east) on Miller Rd. to Rt. 21 (Brecksville Rd.) Turn right (south) on Rt. 21 to Rt. 303. Turn right (west) on Rt. 303 to State Rd. Turn left (south) on State Rd. Turn right onto Bellus Rd., then turn left on West Dr.

From I-71: Take the Brunswick exit 226 (Rt. 303). Go east on Rt. 303 and continue 4.5 miles. Go past Ridge Rd./Rt. 94 to Rt. 606 (Hinckley Hills Rd.). Turn right (south) on Rt. 606 to Bellus Rd. Turn left (east) on Bellus. The Hinckley Reservation entrance is 1000 feet. Turn right on West Drive.

From I-27: Exit at Hawkins Rd. and take it west. It will turn into Bellus Rd. Turn left on West. Drive.

Keelhauler Meeting minutes, 5/10/05

Attendees - 25

Guests:

Rob Kindry.

Brian Bigley with fiancée.

Approved minutes as printed in newsletter.

Treasurer, Rob Hammond. \$7,726 balance. \$99.01 profit from Vermilion race.

Conservation, Dan Zaleski.

1. Government to allow roads in forest lands in Alaska and western states.
2. AW and Friends of the Cheat raising money for Jenkinsburg (Cheat) take out. State matching 60/40 donations until June 1st.
3. May 14th national river cleanup week.
4. Builders at New River withdrew building request for homes with in national park.
5. Chattooga River ban over ruled on some sections.
6. River sweep collected 15 tons of trash on Cuyahoga Canal River Corridor.
7. May 14th Meeting at Vermilion on the Lake to discuss water shed problems.
8. Discussed proposed dam on Cuyahoga River that will eliminate some rapids.

Instruction, Steve Ingalls.

1. Red Cross CPR class was held on May 3rd.
2. White water I class on Slippery Rock in May and June.

Library, Michael Duvall.

1. Chuck Singer donated 'Girls at Play' DVD to library.
2. 'In the Surf' VHS added to library.

Membership, John Kobak. 301 paid members, 12 behind last year.

Web Master, John Kobak. If message board does not work (msg '500 service error') try 'refresh' or pick new name.

Cheat River Race, Rob Hammond.

1. Entered three teams, took 4th place ahead of Kent State, 3rd place.
2. Paul Lang took 17th out of 142, 4th in class.

Newsletter - Kelly Miller to continue in Pittsburgh.

Program, Bill Miller. June meeting at Hinckley Lake. Elaine and Bob Mravetz from 'ACA Midwest Freestyle Canoe Symposium' will demonstrate flat water canoe dancing.

Refreshments, Jim Hunt.

1. Bob Bair to take over for summer meetings.
2. No food at June Meeting except pop and chips.

Safety, Ed Charlton.

1. Asked John Kobak to describe accident on the Southern trip.
2. Andy Gross described accident on Cuyahoga River paddling alone.

Rescue Weekend, Rob Hammond. June 25th and 26th on Slippery Rock. Looking for volunteers.

Cuyahoga River Day, Rob Hammond on May 20th and 21st.

Old Business - None

New Business - Donate \$100 to Lorain Metro Park for Vermilion Race. Passed

Program Presented by Kay Carleson re: The Nature Conservancy.

A Visit to the Canal By Judi Cleary

It was the beginning of March, and spring break was around the corner. So my daughter, Kristen, and I headed to a place where it was hot - Panama! I had wanted to see the canal for quite a while, but as I found out, Panama has much more than just the canal.

We left Cleveland with a foot of snow on the ground, arriving in Panama City just as the sun was setting. Although the taxi driver only spoke Spanish, we were successful in communicating our desired destination - a gated Bed-n-breakfast (Casa de Carmen) where a large dog barked our arrival. As it turned out, this same dog would sleep just outside our window and welcome all the other guests and passers by, too.

Casa de Carmen had a quaint décor and a lovely courtyard full of brightly colored tiles, tables and chairs so typical of Central American countries. This was the perfect spot for an open air breakfast the next morning.



Although the people who staffed the B&B spoke no English, almost all the guests did. We soon learned of a local park (Metropolitano) on the outskirts of town that had good hiking trails, wildlife, and a great view from atop a hill of the city. On one side you could see a panoramic view of the city and the Pacific beyond, and on the other side there were glimpses of the canal. After a nice hike in the morning (did I mention that it was a Sunday morning?) we realized we should have asked the cab to wait for us. But not to worry, a kind-hearted fellow tourist offered to share his cab and we made our way over to the Miraflores Locks Visitor's Center for the afternoon. Unfortunately it was an incredibly expensive ride, as I inadvertently left my digital camera in the taxi (ouch!).

The visitor's center was wonderful. There are three floors of displays explaining the mechanics of the locks - think gravity. There is also a hands-on canal navigation exhibit that Kristen demonstrated her skill at. And, being right at the locks, visitors were provided with an up close look at ships navigating the canal.



On day 2, we took a trip to visit the Embera Tribe about an hour and a half drive from the city. Once at the Chagres River, we traded our minivan for a dugout canoe. We motored (yes, it had an outboard motor) up the river a ways and stopped to hike up to a pretty waterfall. During the rainy season they can take the boat up to the waterfall, but since it was the dry season, we had to walk. I experienced a bit of quick sand as I put a foot on the sandy beach and sunk in up to my ankle (help)!

For lunch we visited a local Embera tribe, who make beautiful baskets and carve figurines out of cocobolo (hardwood) and more recently, tagua nuts. We were treated to a delicious lunch of Talapia fish server in a leaf "bowl", along with fried Plantains, which I definitely got tired of by the end of the trip. The company we went with was Gamboa Tours, and I would highly recommend them.



Kristen receives assistance from a young Embera tribesman.

Day three found us awaking at 4:30am (yawn) to catch an early flight to the island of Bocas del Toro. It was an hour flight in a prop plane reminiscent of the ones in the old movies. The airlines not only weighed our luggage (25 lbs per person limit), but they wanted to know how much we weighed! We got a great view of the many islands on the Caribbean coast as we flew toward Costa Rica. We traveled with Ancon Expeditions (I give them a rave review) and stayed at the Bocas Inn, an unassuming place right on the harbor with a wonderful wooden deck over the harbor, complete with Adirondack chairs and a hammock - right outside our room.



We stayed on Bocas for three days (two nights). Each day we went on an expedition by boat with a canopy to ward off the grilling rays of the sun. There were typically 4-6 other people with us and we toured island jungles, more indigenous tribes, and beaches (ahhh!). By ten each morning we would stop by a beachside local eatery where we would order our seafood of choice, to return around noon to devour the expertly prepared fare. My favorite was lobster tails (about 6 medium sized ones) grilled to perfection! Although the Conch stew was also quite tasty. Our guide was a local so he knew all the best places to eat and to snorkel, which we did a couple of times each day. I was particularly fascinated by the larger-than-usual jelly fish who basically hung out on the sea floor near the mangroves.

One morning we visited a small rocky island which was home to tropic birds (bright orange beaks) and yellow-footed brown boobies. It brought back memories for those of us on the boat who had been to the Galapagos Islands.

On the last day on the islands we took an unusual trip to visit a chocolate farm (called Green Acres). It was not a commercial setup but rather an effort by an American couple to restore the raising of cocoa trees to the area.

They make chocolate (very laboriously I might add - think of a process as labor intensive as making maple sugar) only for the family and the occasional visitor, e.g. us). Dave (the farmer) had an elaborate set of hand made tools to produce his chocolate bars. He has tried unsuccessfully to encourage the locals to go into cocoa farming also.

Dave and Linda Cerutti not only cleared out the area around the old cocoa tree orchard, but also landscaped a lovely area around a primitive house (no electricity, and a cistern for water) that they built on a lagoon off the mainland across from the island where we were staying. In addition to the wide variety of plants and trees, we saw green poison dart frogs, and heard stories of Bushmaster snakes. Not a place for the feint hearted.



Dugout canoes also make good flower pots!

That afternoon, Kristen and I were winging our way back to Panama City where we tried out a different B&B for our last couple of days. It was named La Estancia and is located on Ancon Hill, in the area formerly occupied by the US forces when they managed the canal. It was a very simple, clean (think Asian) décor with a great view of the Bridge of the Americas, with a view of sloths, monkeys, birds, etc, right outside your window! Our hosts, Gustavo and Tammy, spoke fluent English, were very attentive, and arranged tours, taxis, or whatever their guests needed.

The next day found us arising early again to meet a boat in Gamboa to visit Isla Barro Colorado, a research island managed by the Smithsonian. Many universities were represented among the island researchers who were spending various lengths of time in the endeavor to uncover new information about various plants, animals, and insects. Our guide, Sophie, was an attorney during the week, and a guide on the island one day a week. Our small group was mostly into birding, but the

leaf-cutter ants were what caught my interest. The island is in the waters of Lago Gatun which forms a part of the canal. The water was quite muddy while we were there due to the effort to deepen the canal by a couple of feet, which is expected to take a few years.

Back in Panama City, Kristen and I went out to dinner at a lively restaurant located on the causeway, which was built to connect the mainland to two nearby islands. Diners are treated to a view of the city aglow with dots of light. The open-air restaurant we enjoyed had a towering palapa roof which reached about 50 feet into the air. We liked it so much, we returned to the area the next night, too.

The last full day in Panama began by embarking on a partial transit of the Panama Canal - the reason for my visit. These tours are only run on Saturdays, and once a month the trip is a full transit. The partial transit that we took traverses the two locks that are on the Pacific side. Travelers are then bussed back to the pier where the trip began. The locks operate on gravity as water flows from the lake down to the Pacific (and Caribbean side), and rain water (nine months a year) replenishes the lake.



Also on our boat was a film crew from the BBC who were filming a documentary.

During our week-long stay we chatted with a couple of different people who were in various stages of moving to Panama to retire. This area of the world seems to be a popular retirement place for Americans as of late. I have more information on this if anyone is interested.

Panama has lots of good white water to run, I hear, but I didn't see/experience any of it. So, I am thinking of putting together a club trip here in the next year or two. Let me know if you are interested.

Upper Yough, Sept. 03, 2004

By Cliff Wire

(Written then, published now)

Friday, Sept. 03, the first day of my vacation to visit my brother in Charleston, SC. Friendsville, MD being sort of, kinda on the way down I-77 required a visit as a scheduled release was on. Elliot Drysdale was trip leader of a party of miscreants listed as: Mike Duvall, Jim Hunt, Scott Debalski, Gregg Debalski (did this count as gym class?) for his 2nd trip down the UY, Rob Hammond, Bob Nicholson, and I. The weather was glorious in the high 70's and sunny. The level was a nice 2'1".

The day was largely uneventful until National Falls. All but Scott, Gregg and I had taken the sneak route on the left. We three were still in the eddy above. Scott is telling Gregg how to boof the falls. I've been thinking that it is about time I tried the move. I started thinking about it last June when I cleaned John Denver Falls on the Roaring Fork in Aspen. Co. Scott then proceeds to explain how he has a 70-80% failure rate on that move. I start wondering what am I doing...

Well, they run it cleanly. I'm the only one left, and I can't let Gregg do it on his 2nd trip without my doing it yet. So off I go. Needless to say, names were taken, butts were kicked, and heads were handed out. Unfortunately, they were all mine. I don't quite get where I need to be. Quoting/paraphrasing Jim Hunt: "There is this crease in the current which feeds directly into the main part of the hole at the bottom of the falls. Cliff, you were right in it. And over the falls you went, calm, no frantic paddle strokes".

National Falls isn't really a direct drop as it is a big slope. It is interesting how your sense of down doesn't move forward to in front of you as you go over the falls. Penciling in I go! A major chundering occurs. Just as I am about to pull my skirt, I wash out, and was able to roll up. Much entertainment was provided for the rest of the party. It is nice to contribute my part.

The rest of the day was uneventful until we get past Luke's Final Insult. I happen to be the lead boat by this time and am just sort of paddling along with no great rush. After about a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, I look back and there is Rob going like 60! He calls it exercise, training and therapy for his shoulder as the next 2-3 miles is largely class 1-2 rapids mixed with flat water, and ending the last $\frac{1}{2}$ mile with flat. John Kobak (who was on his way to England) always finishes first, but wasn't here. I can't

let Rob finish first, at least without really working for it! And the race is on! In my corner: Youth, and a 2-3 boat length head start. In Rob's corner: Age (he has more than I do), boat length/hull speed, experience, and regular race training. For quite awhile, I hold the lead, but Rob is making constant advances in the flats. Inch by little bitty inch. Through the rapids we go, sometimes I'm in the lead, sometimes Rob. Who can edge whom out for the best line? Nothing is fully determined until we hit the final stretch of flat water. Then his superior hull speed really starts kicking in and Rob makes constant gain until the end when he finishes under the bridge about 50' ahead of me.

And so ends another fine day on the river. I continue on to Fayetteville, WV to camp for the night and to see if I can hook up with anyone to run the New or Gauley on Sat. I camp at Rivers campground (known as party central). They do have a quiet area which was a pleasant surprise, so it ends up being a nice place to camp. They are on the same road as the New R. takeout road. I find two gentlemen from Ky who have been paddling for 25 years and we set shuttle for a Sat. morning New R ride at 1900cfs.

Then off I go to Charleston, SC. I arrive at Ed's place around 10pm Sat.

One of the things I want to do while there is paddle around the harbor, see Ft. Sumpter from the water, and perhaps paddle some ocean. Come Friday, off I go. I find a local public boat launch that feeds the main harbor. From where I hit the harbor, I can't see Ft. Sumpter, but off I go downstream. It is a nice ride with 1-2ft swells. The fort comes into sight, and I pass it on the way to ocean. After I pass the fort by about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, I decide to start heading back. Uh-oh. The winds are contrary to the way I want to go. I have to put the wind on my right quarter in order to gain any measure of distance and take the longer loop back into the harbor. This kills my shot of paddling around the fort. I need to worry about getting back upstream. I do make it without incident; it just took longer than expected. I was already at low tide, so I wasn't fighting that at least. A cargo ship loaded with cargo boxes that fit on semis passes me by 200 yards. It creates a 3-4 ft swell for me to ride. From 200 yards away! If you ever get the chance to paddle there, rent a sea kayak or have a long boat. Short boats like my RPM are too much work for such a large flat water.

I get back to shore around 1pm. After lunch, I go walk the old town of Charleston. Fascinating place, full of history. Buildings range from 150-300 yrs old.

They are open as museums. Take a carriage ride to get a history lesson. Just plain wonderful!

And so ends the vacation in SC. I made plans ahead of time with Ron & Sue Whitney to ride the Upper Gauley on the way back Sunday, but that is another story filled with a rare sighting.

Vermilion River

Report Type: Day Trip Report

Trip Dates: April 2005

Nearest City: Vermilion, OH, USA

Difficulty: Easy

Submitted by: [emanoh](#) 🇺🇸, Eric Slough

Description:

Like a mail carrier on their daily rounds, the severity of the elements rarely keeps them from their appointed duties. It has been said that wind, rain, sleet and event snow won't keep them from making their deliveries.

For 37 years the Keelhaulers canoe club has hosted their annual river race around the middle section of the Vermilion River, braving the elements like a rain slicker wearing mail carrier. Without fail this annual race has weathered countless changes in our temperamental weather patterns in northern Ohio, except for spring 2005. A period of rain and a late spring snow storm that dumped almost a foot of snow and broke Cleveland's all-time snowfall record interfered with the running of this annual spring paddle. Race morning the USGS gauge read a blistering 6.5 ft and almost 5000 cfs, a lot of water for this usually pleasant paddle. Ideal race conditions would see the gauges closer to 3 ft. In addition the air temperature was hovering in the low 40's and there was a strong NW wind cutting across Lake Erie.

My partner and I pulled into the take-out the morning of April 3, 2005 excited and ready to race. We found the Vermilion to be in a bad mood at the Mill Hollow Bacon Woods Reservation. To quote George Costanza in an old Seinfeld episode "the sea's were angry that day my friend." There was a dusting of snow at the take-out, aftermath of the Cleveland snow storm. Vermilion is still an hour west of Cleveland but not outside the storm's reach. The river was screaming around the bend to the take-out and there was nothing but frothy, brown, whitewater. We looked to our left and right and found no other cars at the take-out. We drove to Schoepfle Gardens in Birmingham to check with race

organizers. We found 40+ racers huddled and waiting for a determination on the start of the race. At 9:30 a.m. a sigh of relief could be heard as organizers wisely cancelled and rescheduled for the following weekend.

Vermillion Race "part-deu" April 10, 2005 turned out to be night and day different as the previous weekend. Sunny skies, temps reaching the 70's and lower water levels greeted racers. Perfect weather conditions also produced water levels that dipped below 3ft and began leveling off at 2.8 ft.

As the sun started to peek, organizers and racers could be found stripping off gear quicker than the tires on a freshly stolen sports car. Racers had to find a middle ground in their clothing selection between dressing for the water temperature or the air. The rescheduled race date may have eliminated some racers, but check-in was still a bee-hive of activity and the contingent looked at least as large as the week before.

A quick racer meeting was held at 10 a.m. and by 10:30 our rainbow armada had moved to the race start. One minute intervals paced the distance between racers and the enthusiasm was high. It didn't take long for the enthusiasm to wane as you could hear paddles clanking the bottom even before racers rounded the first bend. From the beginning I knew we wouldn't be breaking any water-speed records.

The Vermilion is known for its fun series of class I-II rapids, its winding route, sheer rock walls and its beautiful scenery. Its designation as one of Ohio's official scenic rivers is well deserved. While the water level was a disappointment, the newly budding scenery and trickling waterfalls were still a treat to see and helped break-up the technical aspect of racing and finding the correct line. I probably had more time to sightsee this year than others because of the slower pace.

The Keelhaulers do an excellent job of clearing deadfall, sweepers and strainers from the race course, which also adds to the general health of this part of the river year round. Racers can float with confidence that they won't be swept into a dangerous situation when the current is up. Racers do have to pay attention to the current and the possibility of getting swept into a wall or submerged rocks.

While I've run the Vermilion at higher levels, the low water didn't damper anyone's spirits. I joked with my paddling partner about the trail of blue and white marks

I left on the rocks for him to follow, like a trail of bread crumbs. I can truly say the Vermilion is a wild ride at higher levels and I can now say from experience that is also frustrating, but still fun to race at depths below 3 ft.

As racers neared the Mill Hollow Bacon Woods Reservation finish line, families and friends cheered our final strokes toward home. A mere 12 seconds separated me and the racer that finished 2nd in my class. A few less missed paddle strokes, rock bumps and breaks to sightsee, would have put me in silver medal contention.

As usual, the race is well run, organized and populated by a fun group of racers. This is a great spring paddle that many use to knock the dust off their equipment and I have no problem telling my friends to paddle the Vermilion.

If you want to contact me, email me or you can contact me through the USA Olympic training center, where I'll be working on shaving at least 12 seconds off my time for next year!

Accommodations:

The put-in and take out area's are excellent parks with restroom facilities and ample, close to the river parking.

Fees:

Ohio boat registration.

Directions:

The course is an eight-mile section of the Vermilion River from the Schoepfle Gardens in Birmingham, Ohio, (Rt. 113, 14 miles west of Elyria, Ohio) to the bridge at the Vermilion River (Mill Hollow Bacon Woods) Reservation near the city of Vermilion. This very beautiful stretch of river can be difficult at different water levels.

The easiest way to get to the put-in is from the east or west travel down Route 2. You can go from Toledo to Cleveland Ohio on Rout 2. Go south on Route 60 and then go east on Route 113 (turn left at the wooly bear restaurant). The put-in is about a mile on your right. If you cross the river you've gone too far.

To the take out, retrace you steps, by going west on 113, north on 60, then take a right (east) on Mason Rd. Rodger Bacon Reserve will be on your right several miles down.

Resources:

Click on the Keelhaulers site and you'll find a map of the Vermilion River and more info about the race.

<http://www.keelhauler.org/>. Here is the USGS gauge for the Vermilion:

<http://rapids.americanwhitewater.org/gauges/id/5855/>

SOUTHERN RIVERS TRIP - 2005

By Michael Duvall (Liberally edited by John Kobak)

NOLICHUCKY

The Southern Rivers trip always starts on the Nolichucky. This year's cast included John Kobak and Elliott Drysdale, Judi Cleary, Bob Weible, Bob Nicholson, Shawn Reese, Eric Olle, Joe Yilek and Lee Owen and Kay. We all met at Warrior Path State Park, which has a great group camping area with showers. The St Louis group, Santo and Kris Albright and Eric Roush joined us on the 16th after doing a low run on Little River on the 15th.

We chose to schedule the trip in mid April in hopes that we would have milder weather. It turned out not to make much difference. The weather on Easter weekend was just as warm and more rivers had good water levels. This weekend we had plenty of water on the Noli and the Chattooga, however every place else was dry. So we skipped the Tellico and took advantage of the higher levels on the Noli. by running it both Fri & Sat at 3000 & 2700 CFS.

The Noli is basically class 3 and not much harder than the Lower Yough so it is a good place to wash off the cobwebs from a long winter. The weather was cool but sunny. Judi brought both a kayak and the shredder (2 person cataraft) but really wanted to shred so she was trying to round up a partner. Bob W stepped up and took the single blade paddle challenge on both days. Traditionally someone always has to swim at "On the Rocks" and this year was no exception. However the "prank" of the second day was when Eric O. played in "Jaws" then baited Joe to try it with less than perfect results.

OCOEE

Sunday on the Southern rivers trip means we must be at the Ocoee River. The nite before, Judi and I somehow became the lead car from the Noli heading toward Cleveland, TN. Because we were coming from I-75 and



Michael on Nolichucky

not the back way we would miss the Mexican restaurant in Copper Hill. Kobak was surfing, the web not a wave, looking for a Mexican place to eat in Cleveland. As the lead car it was our job to find his elusive restaurant with vague directions. As luck would have it we found a different Mexican place, "Tres Hermanos" (3 brothers) right on the bypass at Ocoee St. We pulled into the parking lot and asked people leaving if they liked the food and they were very positive. That was it, Judi called Kobak and gave him the location. Everyone liked the place but a word to the wise; do not get the Grande Margarita (\$11) unless you plan to spend the whole day there. Even their Medium is huge.

Sunday always starts with a pancake breakfast with Kobak's secret recipe of adding bananas to the batter. John and Elliott worked at one grill and Shawn fired up his stove with a cast iron grill. Judi fried up the bacon. After everyone enjoyed breakfast we started to get ready to shuttle. Some of the play boaters went looking for boats to demo. The initial plan was for the remaining boaters was to drive to the put-in to unload and then we would take all but one or two cars to the takeout.

As we drove over the bridge from the campground to the main highway we noticed water coming from up stream. This could only mean one thing, the Olympic course had water. This was not a scheduled release weekend so we had no way of knowing what the flow was or how long it would last. Nonetheless, we continued to the put-in to get organized. Judi, who had convinced John to shred, and Lee were the only ones to wait at the put-in. Elliott, Bob W., Joe, Bob N. and I rearranged the shuttle to do the Upper and Lower. When we tried to get to the put-in for the Upper we

found that the gate was locked so we went to the Visitors Center and carried up to just above Mike's hole missing some boogie water and one named rapid. We saw people in slalom boats practicing although there were no gates. They were catching every eddy. Someone said that the course was class II but it was more like class IV. The current was very pushy and the holes very trashy. We were told "When in doubt go left" and that is certainly the case at "Humongous". I remember seeing more than a couple Olympians swim there during the '96 Games. We dodged the holes and caught a few eddies and thought we were finished with the course. That is when we almost blundered into a big pour-over hole named "Pumphouse", I think. Then it was fun boogie water to the lake and only about a third of a mile of flat water to the dam and the lower section.

When we got to the dam we joined up with John, Judi and Lee who patiently waited for us as well as the rest of the crew that went for demo boats. After putting on the Lower we went with the usual scenario, half the group broke off and cruised down with little play. I went with the much slower group that had a "play till you puke" attitude. When we finally got to "Hell Hole" I took two quick attempts at surfing then left the group to paddle out. At the take out I was grateful to find that Judi my co-pilot had retrieved my dry clothes from Bob's car and my car from the Visitors Center. All right, now we head to the Chattooga.

CHATTOOGA - Section IV

Elliott and Judi thought it would be a good day to hike instead of paddling so they helped with the shuttle and watched us put-on at "Bull Sluice." "Bull Sluice" provides the paddler with 3 choices; door number one, put-in below the drop, door number two, run the easy single boof in the middle, and the third door is the "hero" route. Those taking door three were both Erics and Santo, with only Eric Roush being successful. Bob W had an excellent line between door two and three. The remainder took door two with a simple boof or slide. We checked the gauges at the bridge, 2.05 and 1.95 (USGS & Bridge). Joe and Shawn were the only two that had never run this section, so John took the lead and only needed to provide minimal explanation. Woodall Shoals, Ravens Rock, and Seven Foot Falls all went smoothly.

It wasn't until the Five Falls area that we needed to take extra precautions. The problem with this section is that there is very little recovery time between rapids. Starting with Entrance John set up at the top and

directed us one at a time through the drop. At Corkscrew we all got out and scouted. Someone would have to walk this one and set up a throw line above Crack in the Rock. Having been the recipient of the rope a few times I figured it was my turn to be on the throwing end. After walking around river right and setting up on the downstream rock we were ready to start. Bob W ran first followed by John who ran it smooth without a bobble or splash. I will just say that not everyone was that smooth, but no one needed the rope. Then, we all ran the center crack without any problems.

The next rapid is Jawbone. With the water being a little high we could take the easier left line into the "Parking Lot" above Jaw Bone. Bob W. and John eddied in and John got out with his throw line to set safety above Sock-Em-Dog. This is where we had **the "Incident."**



Bob at Bull Sluice

John signaled the group to hold up but most did not see the signal. The group entered the crowded eddy one by one. When Bob Nicholson started along the left sneak into the eddy he flipped. He attempted a few rolls but then went into the crease of Jawbone. Erik O and Santo started down after him. Bob swam in Jawbone and bumped into Hydro Rock. He swept around the left side and drifted toward Sock-Em-Dog rapid. John, still running down to his set-up position, was shouting for Bob to swim right to avoid the serious pothole entrapments in the center of the drop. Eric & Santo followed in hot pursuit, Santo wisely went to river right and got out with his rescue rope. Bob swam over the drop falling onto a rock and self rescued. Erik got too close to Sock-em-Dog and ended up dropping sideways into the big hole and could not get out. He finally wet exited and was pulled out of the hole by Santo who just got there with his throw line.

The rest of us, not able to see what happened, ran Jawbone and went to see what we would do at Sock-Em-Dog. John and Joe then walked down and paddled across the pool to see how Bob was doing. We could see that Santo was with him just out of the water on river right. John came back to tell us that Bob's leg was broken and we needed to get help. I suggested that Joe accompany John because his truck was at the takeout and I knew that he had a cell phone. The rest of us walked the Puppy Chute and paddled across to help Bob.

When I got to the other side, the Erics were working on splinting Bob's leg with rope and sticks. Bob was in good spirits and had good color showing no signs of shock. It became obvious that no one had a good emergency kit. If we at least had a roll of Duct tape we could have almost made Bob a cast. I could see that Bob was being well taken care of, so I turned to help Santo who had started making 3 kayaks into a raft with long sticks and rope. To evacuate Bob, we still had Shoulder Bone and some class II rapids to run before the lake, then 2 miles of flat water to the take-out. The raft, like many other ideas was re-evaluated and modified to better fit the situation. If the raft went over a rapid and broke apart, the resulting tangle of boats, sticks and rope would be a dangerous. The decision was to put Bob in his boat with his splinted leg out and a boater on each side, Santo and Eric R, holding his boat steady. Eric Olle towed them across the pool to the other side of the river, which looked like a possible sneak. Erik R said to find a stick for a crutch and I said Bob should not walk. I was then told that Eric had rescue experience and was in charge. I don't know when that decision had been made but it is the first rule of both rescue and first aid, someone needs to take charge. The statement had a unifying effect on the whole group. We seemed to work together even better after that. The six of us working together carried Bob over the big boulders around Shoulder Bone then alternately walking and wading Bob in his boat, backwards with both legs out, along the shore and carrying him in the boat over smaller rocks until the river was calmer.

In the meantime, Joe and John raced ahead and reached a fisherman who had a cell phone that surprisingly enough could reach a 911 operator. They then paddled to the boat ramp to wait for the rescue people. Two ambulances, 5 cars and a motorboat eventually responded to the emergency call. The first two paramedics arriving commandeered a fisherman who took them up the lake in his fishing boat.

Once again we returned to the method of steadying the boat with Eric Olle towing until reaching the lake. We proceeded down the narrow lake a short way until a fishing boat arrived with paramedics. We met at the shore where the paramedics took over and replaced our sticks with an inflatable splint. They started an IV, and administered some morphine for the pain. While evaluating Bob, one of the paramedics said he grew up in the Toledo area very near where Bob lived, what a small world. After a while, the Sheriff's boat with another rescue worker in a wet suit appeared. All the rescue workers transferred Bob to a body board and into the boat and took off. Nothing left for us to do but continue across the lake with Eric Olle still towing Bob's boat.

Rumor has it that the sheriff was going to fly Bob out with a helicopter but Kobak couldn't find Bob's credit card so he negotiated down to borrowing a fishing boat!! Actually, the waiting ambulance took Bob to Oconee hospital in Seneca, SC which was 30 miles away. We gave Bob his cell phone so that he could call Dawn with the bad news. Bob Weible drove to the hospital to see how Bob was doing and called us to inform us that Dawn was flying down and would bring Bob home after his operation. They didn't operate until Wednesday where they fastened a steel rod for faster and better healing.

The next morning John dropped Bob's car off at the hospital and found Bob still in good spirits. He loved that Morphine I guess. Elliott shuttled John back to the section IV put-in where John, Joe, Eric O and Shawn would attempt to successfully run the river. The rest of the group headed back home as planned.

The day was uneventful, with a smaller group, communication was better and John set-up a throw rope at the two dangerous rapids but it remained dry.

It was only Tuesday and the trip still had three days to go, but where was the water. The weather had warmed to the 70's but everything in the South except for the Noli and Ocoee was dry. The group decided that since the Noli was on the way home they would head there. They all got together in Ashville for a nice dinner and camped at the picnic area at Rock Creek Campground. Lee & Kay had arrived earlier and were given permission to camp there, since the campground itself was still under repair with a delayed opening.

John took a rest day and worked out the shuttle so that all the cars would end up at the take-out. This would have been great except that Lee had his third

out-of-boat experience attempting to run "On the Rocks" and then decided to walk back to the put-in. He hoped to be able to hitch a ride back but was unsuccessful. He ended up relaxing in the sun until the group finished and Joe drove back to pick him up.

Lee, John & Elliott decided that they would head home but the die-hards, Eric O, Shawn and Joe drove up to WV. They took a rest day on Thursday but then headed for an Upper Yough release on Friday. Ted Pablo and Jason Miller met them and showed Shawn down for his first Upper Yough run. All did well so the group headed up to the Stonycreek Riverfest.

Safety Lessons Learned

Throw lines are mandatory on dangerous rapids. Communication with the entire group is very important. If a throw line had been set up before people started into the staging eddy, the waterfall swim may have been prevented. We all carry throw lines, some carry spare paddles but few carry good medical kits, duct tape can be used for lots of emergency situations and is as valuable as a spare paddle.

Update on Bob's condition.

Both the doctors in SC and OH said that the fast action of splinting the break helped prevent the break from coming through the skin. Dawn got him home on Saturday but by the following Thursday they realized that Bob had a blood clot that needed to be treated, so back to the ER for injections of a clot dissolver. Dawn needed to give Bob two injections daily for the blood clot. The clot finally dissolved and he is now starting physical therapy. The doctor and Bob are hopeful that he will be kayaking in August, while Dawn is figuring out a way to destroy that "Bad Mojo" kayak.

A Rescue on the River **By Rob Hammond**

Wow... talk about a tough day on the river! Three of my friends and I were doing the run last year and we had a trip that we will never forget! About five miles into our trip we found some hikers on river's edge shouting and motioning to us. When we got closer we see that someone had waded out into the middle of the river and was stuck there! It appeared that one or both feet were entrapped in the river bed, even though the water depth was only a little over knee deep, the pressure of

the water against their body made it impossible for them to get their feet out, and worse the victim was obviously tired and struggling to keep from being completely pushed over by the strong current.

At that point his head was still out of the water, but it would not be long before this ugly situation turned tragic! I yelled for Tom and Julie to paddle to river right and be ready to catch a rope. Meanwhile Bill and I headed over to River left. Foot entrapments are one of the most difficult rescue scenarios on the river. We all knew from the river rescue clinics that there are several ways to extract a foot entrapment. But, it is a very difficult maneuver, and we learned that it is much easier to talk about it than to do it.

I pulled out my throw rope and Bill talked to the hikers. Bill knew that putting a line across the river creates a hazard to navigation, any boaters coming down river could potentially get tangled in the rope and endanger themselves along with the victim. He also knew that the victim has been in the water for quite a while at this point, and the cold was wearing him down, if he stayed in much longer he would become hypothermic, eventually loosing conscious and possibly dying from the cold. The victim's leg may also be broken, but even if it was not, it was possible that our extrication may break the leg. Bill instructed a bystander to go up river 100 yards and flag over any boaters to prevent yet another problem. Bill tells two other bystanders to hike out and call 911 and to advise them that we may have a hypothermic victim with a broken lower leg. Advising the 911 response team of what they could be facing will help them respond better, especially considering the team was at least an hour, and probably more like two hours away from the scene.

The immediate problem was to stabilize the victim, he was using all of his strength to hold himself up and keep his head above the unrelenting force of the water. We had to get a stabilization line across the river that the victim could hold on to. If we could set this line quick enough while the victim still had some strength and was conscious, things will go much better. The victim may even be able to get his foot out of entrapment by himself by bracing himself on a taut line across the river. I pulled out my throw rope and threw one end to Tom on the other bank. My throw is short! Damn... time is quickly running out. The victim is clearly loosing strength. No time to take a chance on another bad throw. I yell to Bill to get back in the boat and ferry

the line to Tom. While Bill is getting into the boat I frantically pull my rope back in.

Man, this was so much easier at the clinic; now in real life, we don't have the luxury of re-dos and debates about how to best pull this off, the clock is running against the victim we can not afford another mistake! Bill grabs one end of my rope, while I feed it out as he ferries to the other side. It is important for me to keep the rope high above the water as possible. If the rope dips into the water, the drag from the current on the rope may pull Tom off course, or cause him to let go of the rope or even flip. As Bill gets past midway to the other side, the rope starts to dip into the water. Soon Bill is struggling to get the line across. Tom is wading out in the eddy to receive the rope from Bill. Just as Bill gets close to the eddy, he flips over. Tom is only about 3 feet away, and is able to grab Bill's boat, pull him into the eddy, reach down and pull Bill up.

Fortunately Bill still has the line, Tom takes it to Julie, she knows that the line will be too short to tie off to a tree, so she beineers her throw rope to the line from my side of the river. At this point Julie and I walk the rope down stream to the struggling victim. He grabs it, and pulls himself up. Now the victim is stable but his foot is still stuck and he can't get it out. Bill comes back to my side to help me tie off the rope to a solid tree, Julie and Tom do the same to their side. The rope is taut across the river and we advised the victim to put the rope under his arms and to rest against the rope. Communication with the victim is very important, not only to instruct them, but to encourage him. We don't want him to give up because he mistakenly believes that there is no hope.

Now that we had the victim stable for the time being, our next move is to get him out of the entrapment and back to the river bank. On surveying the scene, we find that the victim is in about two and a half feet of fast moving water. Down stream 100 yards is a three foot drop with an undercut at the bottom on the river left side and a strainer on river right below the undercut. This is a class III drop that we have all run dozens of times, and there is no danger to boaters that are paying attention to their surroundings, but this could be a huge problem to an exhausted hypothermic victim unfamiliar with river features. Not only do we have to extricate the victim from the entrapment, but we have to assume that the victim will not have the strength to assist much in his own rescue to get back to the river bank. Making the problem worse, is that there are only

4 of us working against the hypothermia clock. There are still two hikers around that are of limited help, none are trained in swiftwater rescues.

My preferred technique would be to use a snag line across the river to pull back on the victim's leg and pull it out of the entrapment, but the down river threats make this too dangerous to the victim that would be unable to swim strongly. Also the distance is too short to assure that a person in a boat or a throw rope would reach them in time, and we certainly did not want to tie a throw rope to the victim for fear that it could snag on a rock. We all agreed that the safest and most likely to succeed scenario was to do a wading rescue to the victim.

This was not going to be easy, especially with only 4 people; we debated about doing a two or three man wade out to the victim. Finally we agreed to Bill, Tom and I wading out. Julie would remain on the bank and with the help of the 2 hikers handle a throw line. We also took Julie's PFD so that we could put it on the victim. The Three of us formed a triangle with our arms around each others shoulders. Bill was the biggest of us so he took the point that was facing upstream, I took the left base and Tom took the right base. Tom was the only one of us with a rescue PFD so we binedered our third Throw line to his vest. Tom's job was to grab the victim in a bear hug while Bill and I got his foot loose. Tom would then float the victim to the bank. This should work because Julie and the hikers, holding the throw line, would be in an excellent position to pendulum Tom and the victim into the calm eddy well above the drop.

The three of us head out into the river, Bill is holding on to the stabilization line that the victim is on, Tom and I are holding on to Bill's shoulders with one arm and the other arm is around each other's shoulder. We take one step at a time, first Bill, then myself, and then Tom, Each time we give a verbal OK when we are sure that our footing is solid. We are also talking to the victim, giving him encouragement and telling him what we are doing. We are making good progress out to the victim, when about half way, the rope binedered to Tom's vest starts dipping into the water and pulling on Tom. Tom tries to fight it but as we move closer to the victim, the pull becomes too much for him. Finally he tells us that he has to let go, and we respond saying to go! Tom is pendulumed into the eddy and is fine, but now we have to start over again. The victim is

weakening from the stress and the cold, his voice is getting noticeably weaker.

Julie recognizes the problem and instructs the hikers to move up higher on the bank, while she grabs our forth and last throw bag. Julie finds a good position higher up, but it is further away, so she bineders the two bags together. The victim is definitely getting weaker to our voice communications as we encourage the victim to stay with it just a little longer. We move as quickly as we can safely, Tom cautions us to not be too hasty, as we can not afford at this point to make any more mistakes or create any more victims!

It seems like we have been at the scene for over an hour, sunset is three hours away, storm clouds are gathering and we have to splint the victim's leg, hike him up a steep bank and out to the road about a mile a way. Man... this stuff was so much easier in the rescue clinics we took! The cold water on my legs and Tom's admonishment brings me back to reality and the urgent task at hand. The three of us wade out again, all keenly aware that this was our last chance to save this victim. As we approach the victim, I step around to his left, Tom gets behind him and Bill to the victim's right. We carefully put the PFD on the victim, talking him through each step, taking one hand off of his life sustaining stabilization line, then putting that hand through the PFD arm hole, then we do the same with the other hand. Now we try to get his foot out, with a little maneuvering, the foot is free! Whether it was relief or just pure fatigue on the victim's part: he lets go of the stabilization line. Fortunately Tom has his arms around him and the two float off to the eddy were Julie runs down to pull the two to shore while the other two hikers pendulum the pair to safety.

The moment that the victim touches dry land a judge steps up and yells TIME! No... this was not a real rescue; this was just a sample of one of the scenarios that you may have missed if you have not attended the Slippery Rock Rescue Rodeo!

Yep, rescue clinics are an absolute requirement, we need them to learn the basics of what, we as paddlers, need to know to keep ourselves and our buddies safe while we are on the river. But talking about techniques in a clinic, detached from the realities of a serious injury or even a life on the line, is not going to prepare you as well we might like. Although nothing can replace a real life rescue, the rodeo does a great job of getting your adrenaline flowing and giving you a flavor of how you

might react when all of a sudden you come on a scene where there may only be minuets, possibly even only seconds to react! If you ask any of the people that have attended the rodeo, they will tell you that the competition, the realism of the scenario and the ticking clock all push you into a hyper drive that can only be exceeded by a real rescue!

I don't think a season has gone by since we started the Slippery Rock Rescue Weekend in 2000, that I have not had someone come up to me and tell me about how the rescue skills they learned at our clinic or rodeo helped them in a rescue situation. Maybe none of them were as dramatic as the story above, but then again, maybe they didn't get to be dramatic because they had the training and experience to keep the incident as a non-noteworthy incident with a good outcome, instead of something that got out of hand because they did not have the experience to realize how much the difficulty of even simple techniques multiply when you are under pressure.

Nothing from the story above, came from my imagination, the things that happened to this fictitious group are things I have seen at our rodeos, or have experienced myself in rescue drills. One of the things our group of paddlers did well was their team work, each paddler knew what had to be done, what options there were and what their buddies' strengths were. They had good communication and good leadership. These skills are built, not in classrooms, but in drills such as we have at the rodeo.

So come on out to the Slip on June 25 for our clinic and the 26th for the rodeo. If you don't want to compete, come out and help or just enjoy the camaraderie, the pot luck dinner and the action, I promise you... you won't be bored!

The Rescue weekend is brought to you by the Keel Haulers and Three Rivers Paddling clubs. For details check the website www.keelhauler.org or contact myself at Rob@SCD-Corp.com phone: 216 292-5618, or Karen Dearfield at: riverfun911@hotmail.com phone: 216 292-5618.

June				
6/3,4,6	Upper Yough	32	Gib McGill	724-946-9158
6/4	Cuyahoga River, Peninsula to Boston Mills	8	Chris Kiehl	330-869-6549
6/4,5	Cheat Canyon	26	Pam Poljak	440-268-9194
6/5	Lower Yough	23	Sabine Iben	440-543-4969
6/11	Walk - Deer Lick Cave Trail in Brecksville Reservation		Dennis Plank	216-939-8229
6/11,12	Upper New	16	Ed Charlton	440-716-5489
6/11,12	Red Cross - Basic River and Whitewater Paddling in Western PA		Red Cross	440-298-1293
6/12-24	Colorado Rivers - advanced/intermediate trip, trip could shift by a week if water levels are too high or too low.	25-32	Elliott Drysdale	216-496-8482 C
6/14	Club Meeting & Free Style Clinic at Hinckley Lake at 6pm		Elaine and Bob Mravetz	330-239-1725
6/18,19	Lower Yough - permits	23	Ron Tomallo	440-953-1335
6/18,19	Middle Yough	12	Carl Kudrna	440-835-5744
6/20,27, 7/11,18,25	Fundamentals of Kayaking at Orange High School Pool - Red Cross - \$95		Seanna Perry	216-831-8601
6/20,22, 27,29	Fundamentals of Kayaking at Mentor Dept. of Recreation Pool - Red Cross \$95		Seanna Perry	440-974-5720