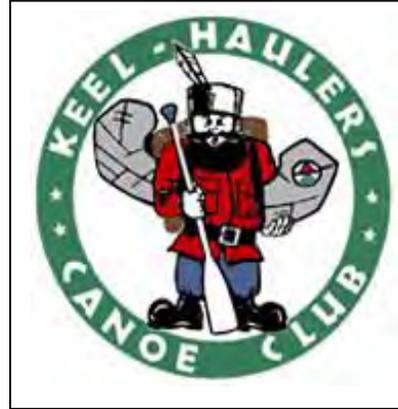


Keelhauler's Ka-news SEPTEMBER, 2016



Next Club Meeting is on Tuesday, September 13th

at Middleburg Hts Community Center, 16000 E. Bagley Rd
Doors open at 7:00 PM, Meeting is at 8:00 PM.

Program: Exciting Time for the Cuyahoga

By Elaine Marsh - The Watershed Specialist for Summit County Metro Parks

The Cuyahoga River transformed by the burning passions of river advocates and the Clean Water Act and is having a banner year.

Elaine will give us an update on the park's plans for Dam Removal along with other Cuyahoga River issues, including the Water Trail, Akron CSO's and the Brecksville Dam.

[Map to Middleburg Hts Meeting](#)

All meetings are open to guests so invite a prospective member!

It's that time again.....

It's that time again.....

All club memberships expire on **October 1st**. As soon as you can, please mail a \$20 check for your 2017 membership dues. To:

Keel Haulers Canoe Club
1649 Allen Dr
Westlake, OH 44145-2506

Or pay \$20 using Paypal. Use this link to pay:

<http://keelhauler.org/thanks.htm>

You can review your current membership listing, using this link:

<http://keelhauler.org/khcc/members.htm>

User Name: "dir" and the current 2016 password found on pg 20 of our 2016 yearbook or see the passwords sent out in our monthly e-mail.

If you need to change any of your membership information use this on-line form:

http://keelhauler.com/khcc_registration.htm

Please encourage any of your non-member paddling friends to join/rejoin the club. The club offers a lot, to paddlers of all skill levels, at less than the price of a tank of gas to go paddling.

John Kobak

CELEBRATING KARL NELSON AND DAVE ROUSH **By Marcia Karchmer**



As Karl and his wife move to Alabama to be closer to their grandchildren, let us celebrate all that he has done for the club! Karl operated without a program chairman this year and was able to bring in interesting programs for every meeting. He has indeed been a reliable and excellent leader!

Karl had a farewell tour on the LY. Canoers converged from several states for the tour. You rarely see so many canoes (nor want to). He made a three-day weekend of it with 10-20 paddlers each day.

We had the full experience: hot weather, rain, sunshine when we needed to change, dinner at Curt's, camp fires, reminiscing, bad jokes, etc. We are going to miss Karl's very dry sense of humor.

Dave, Leslie, Marcia and others put in too many hours to research, communicate with and set up the NE OHIO PADDLER'S NETWORK on Meet Up. We have 14 sponsors and 885 members. The site is getting the word out about opportunities for kayaking trips and training in three NEOH counties. It was my privilege to work with Dave on this project! Dave is resigning in order to dedicate more time toward a nonprofit school for children with special needs, the Julie Billiard school in Akron, OH. Despite his busy schedule, he led the LY trip in August when no leader was available. His time as vice-president has been very productive.

As we celebrate Karl and Dave, let us also celebrate the trustees, Sam Reynolds (treasurer) and the Chairpersons, all of whom put in many hours of service to the club! Of special note: Jon Kobak logs 30 hours/week as webmaster (whether in or out of town!); Jim Hunt, as yearbook editor; Kelly Miller, our talented newsletter editor; and Jon Reising, the organizer of the Vermillion Race. What a special group of people!!

As we move to new leadership and a new meeting format, I hope we all stay in touch. Keelhaulers is family. Once you are part of the family, you are always part of the family! ☺

Godspeed and a safe journey, Karl! Best of outcomes with your school, Dave! Stay in touch and visit if you can. We will miss you both!!

Monthly Treasurer's Report By Sam Reynolds

Keelhaulers' Canoe Club Treasurer's Report - August 18, 2016

CD 0402	\$2, 279.16
CD 1077	\$2, 276.73
CD 4709	<u>\$2, 257.01</u>
CD'S (3)	\$6, 812.90
Checking	<u>\$5, 481.66</u>
Total	<u>\$12,294.56</u>

50 YEARS OF THE KEEL-HAULERS

Memory Lane By Judi Fordyce

As I sell my whitewater gear after 40 some memorable years of kayaking, I guess it is only fitting that I think back on those times. Volumes of fond memories, interspersed with a few moments of terror - such as recirculating in a hole, or worst yet, seeing one of your friends recirculate in a hole, or shatter their leg during a swim, in a remote location. But on to the fond memories....

Back in the day, when I first started kayaking in the late 1970's, we would make our own gear. Some people made their own kayaks from molds provided by various club members. Those were back in the days when fiberglass ruled and you would not be caught dead in a "plastic" boat. My, have times changed! And for the better. On more than one occasion I returned from a river trip and had to make a fiberglass repair in the bow of my boat. Yes, strips of fiberglass and layers of resin, all while trying to lie on your back and reach up into the bow of your boat, and breathe in those vapors - what a challenge!

We also made our own neoprene river wear. John Kobak provided the material and "glue" which we applied to butted seams. To get the "perfect" fit, you would use masking tape and newspaper to fashion a pattern. Then have a friend cut the pattern off of you. The end result fit great! Very customized. During the early days, John Kobak was our source for everything "whitewater" and for a couple of years he was the top selling "Perception" dealer in the US.

Of the most memorable times on the river, I recollect the following. My top ten (though there were many more), in more or less chronological order...

1. My first trip down the **Lower Yough** the weekend after spending the week at Nantahala learning how to whitewater kayak. Several Keelhaulers guided us down. It could have been disastrous without them, but with them, it was a hoot! Who would have thought it would take me more than 30 years to learn to roll. On one Yough trip recently, and in a testament to my husband's ability to teach someone to roll, I became "one" with the kayak roll. I was paddling with two other people just above Railroad, and they instructed me to go first and be safety boat. I ran the normal line (when those who know me, know I always run frog's back) and of course, flipped. I could feel my right knee releasing from the knee brace and thought "I'm gonna swim". But then thought, hey wait, "I can't swim! I am the safety boat." So I let go of my paddle with one hand, re-seated the knee, then re-grabbed the paddle and rolled up. I was certainly smiling in the eddy when they came down. And, they, did not need any "saving"; unlike me, they did just fine.



Judi in KH Yough Slalom in early fiberglass boat

2. Rafting the **Cheat**. It was the first time I had been on the river. It was probably within the first few years of my paddling, and I did not feel comfortable kayaking it, so I went in a raft with other Keelhaulers. Part way down the river, one of the women kayaker's (who was just coming back from an injury) decided she really couldn't make it any further in her kayak, so I was volunteered to trade spots with her, and kayak the second half - yikes! It was just above high falls, I recall. I survived, and actually it was fun, but I sure was scared. This was pre-flood days and I remember running Pete Morgan on river right at the top, before sneaking through a gap in the extended rock divider, to end on river left.
3. Rafting section 4 of the **Chattooga River**, again in the early days (with Fred Robinson). My first time on the river which was a thrill to paddle. And the thrills began while waiting in an eddy at the put-in, holding on to a tree branch, while the group got ready. A large snake fell out of the tree right into our raft! Before anyone (like me!) could panic, Dennis, using the blade of his paddle, adeptly scooped up the snake and flipped it out of the raft. Phew! In later years when my daughter, Kristen and I would shred the same section, we would have to dodge snakes when we carried around Woodall Shoals on river left. We were quite the sight with the shredder on our heads, dancing through the bed of boulders, doing our best to stay away from all the hissing sounds.



4. Shredding the **Lower Gauley** with my daughter Kristen. For a number of years Kristen and I became quite the shredder duo on rivers such as the Cheat, the Gauley, and more. Our minds would think as one and with very few words said, we blissfully navigated the river. After a while, we would find other shredders following us down the river, especially at Lower Mash.



Lower Mash on Lower Gauley, with other shredders following

5. Shredding the **Upper Yough**. I was only on the Upper Yough once. With Chuck Singer, in the shredder. It was an absolute hoot, and certainly had my heart pounding.
6. Sea kayaking in **Glacier Bay**, Alaska, my first date with Larry, my then future husband. We kayaked tidal races, where my white water experience came in very handy. Who knew you could eddy behind an iceberg? But watch out, unlike rocks, they can move!
7. The **Big South Fork**. The river where I "earned" my roll. After a full winter season of hitting the pool weekly and performing an uncountable number of successful rolls in the pool, I was ready for the river. It was a Southern Rivers trip, and we were going to run the Big South Fork, which I had never been on. John Kobak told us, "there are just three major rapids and we will scout them all first. So with a contingent of very strong paddlers, as escort (John Kobak, Wayne Carey, Michael Duvall, Bill Miller, Elliott Drysdale, and Larry), I signed on. The river turned out to be very exciting (perhaps it was the higher level?) with several blind drops, and you guessed it - zero scouting. On one "horizon line" rapid I remember seeing multiple people run with what all looked like less than satisfactory results, so no clue as to what a good line might be. Hah... I got lots of roll practice on this river, but I never swam - yay! Another funny/scary moment was when Wayne Carey and I were the last two boats left in the eddy above a rapid. Wayne, who knew the river somewhat, recommended I run the rapid on the left. OK, I'm ready for this, I have my roll, right? Then as Wayne pulls out of the eddy, he looks over at me, as I wait my turn, and says "but not too far left!" OK, so now what is that supposed to mean? Really? As I left the eddy and rapid came into view there was a significantly mean looking crease on the left hand of the river. I suppose there was I line there, but not

anything I was willing to mess with, so instead I went right down the middle.... and into the hole and flipped... but I had my roll!

8. Kayaking the glacial melt rivers in/near **Futaleufu, Chile**. Also sea kayaking from the Andes to the Ocean. Wendy, Larry and I started out on the lower Futaleufu and ended up in a small village on the coast that is situated below a volcanic site that had just erupted the year before and deposited ash everywhere. What looked like white sand beaches were really all ashes.
9. Sea kayaking with icebergs among the glaciers near **Svalbard**, an island north of Norway. We were at 80° latitude. Larry and I camped out in polar bear country. The guide had his gun, which fortunately, he never had to use. He had a dry bag for it which he fastened to the bow of his kayak.
10. Drumroll please! The **Colorado River** through the Grand Canyon - simply spectacular. A magical place. And getting to experience it with friends (twice) was nothing short of priceless!



Steve Ingalls, GC guide extraordinaire, at Crystal



Anne Kmieck at Horn Creek



2001 GC Crew, note shredder in background

I want to express a HUGE amount of appreciation to all of you Keelhaulers, who have taught me the sport, mentored me, rescued me on multiple occasions, and became my close friends both on and off the river! Bravo Zulu!

So if there is someone out there who teaches you how to execute a river roll, or gives you that last missing piece you needed to do so, do express your gratefulness. And what the heck, you might even marry them. That's what I did!

While I no longer have my white water kayaking gear, I DO still have my shredder and gear. So you just might see me again sometime on the river... re-living those glory days!



50 YEARS OF THE KEEL-HAULERS

Still looking for some good club stories from some of the old
time club members!

50 YEARS OF THE KEEL-HAULERS

Queen's Cup Race - Cuyahoga River - Late 70's - Mid 80's By Don Manson with comments by John Kobak.

Once upon a time during the 70's and 80's there was an elegant river race held on the Cuyahoga River in the Cleveland Flats sponsored by the English Speaking Union. Viewers came decked out to celebrate Queen Elisabeth's Birthday. There was a big parade and contestants had matching uniforms. It was a circular race - counter clockwise - and not long... just a race of gladiators in teams of four, to provide entertainment for the elite royalty and dandies of society. The teams were comprised of groups representing Cleveland area businesses, restaurants, bars, universities, and sports teams usually paying a pretty steep entry fee for each category - to raise monies for a local charity - the English Speaking Union - Cleveland Branch Shakespeare Competition. That's why poor paddlers like us had to get sponsors. I think I raced in at least 3 maybe 4 races. There were usually 5 boats per heat, consisting of several different categories. We paddled in our respective heats and the winners of each heat would then paddle the winners from others until there was a final champion.



Kobak's Comments - The first race our club raced in had 1 woman and 3 men, Dennis Shelby got a bar in Lakewood to sponsor a team. Dennis, Ann Rayburn, Elliott Drysdale and I were the winning team that year. All the teams were young and fit looking. We were in our 40's but it seemed we were the only ones who knew how to paddle a canoe.

Over the years there were refinements from the 1st races. A team made up of Keel Hauler paddlers: John Kobak, Lester Stumpe, Elliott Drysdale and Dennis Shelby were going to be hard to beat by any other teams because they had a few years' paddling experience. They were sponsored by the Elegant Hog Restaurant and had guaranteed the restaurant a win. There was local TV coverage and good publicity for the bar. They entertained us on their big yacht and we got bottles of Champagne for winning. Most of those teams weren't sure how the oars? were to be used. Bob Bellas' canoe livery in Painesville provided the paddles, life jackets and standard 17' aluminum canoes to keep the competition somewhat even.

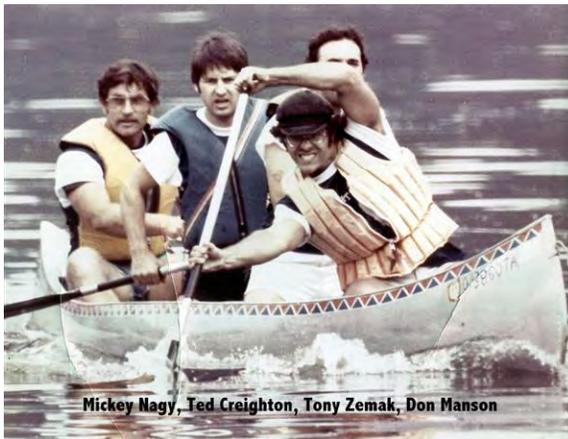


The first two years we won with ease. Then Don Manson heard about the race.

The race course was on flat water just below Terminal Tower on the west bank of the Cleveland Flats. It was short - as canoe races go...just about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile around 4 or 5 buoys,

and all left hand turns to the finish, back close to the starting line. The 1st 2 races I was involved in were held at Diamond Jim's Steakhouse on the river (now torn down). The rest of the races were held one bend downstream - just down from the revolving Center Street Bridge, near what is now the Nautica Pavilion.

When I first learned of the race, I put together a team of 4 flat water canoe racers,



Mickey Nagy, Ted Creighton, Tony Zemak, Don Manson

figuring we would blow any competition out of the water. Kobak was paddling with White Water paddlers and I thought they did not have much flat water racing experience... *Wrong!* Kobak had the expertise to win the race and would always get the inside 'pole' position for the best start. They had no one on their left side and would have the least distance to paddle during the race, forcing the others in their heats to the outside if they were attempting to pass. They made sure they had the pole position at the beginning of

each heat and after the start no one could get past them. Our team was paddling between the KH team with the other teams banging into us. After getting free of the other canoes, we were forced to the outside and it was hard, almost impossible, to get over the wake made by a heavy KH war canoe with 4 paddlers. For the 1st two years we took 2nd place overall. We either needed to get the pole position or be able to beat the KH team to the 1st buoy or get over their wake as we were paddling around and passed them.

Next year's race Kobak's crew again had the pole position but there was a longer 1st leg which gave us a better chance to get ahead of Kobak's team. We decided to take the far right position, substantially longer in distance - but with no one on our right side and no interference we had a better chance of beating them to the 1st buoy. *Kobak's Comment- I actually remember Don's team trying to ram into us and we partially filled with water. But they made it! Now they had the advantage of leading with the inside position.*

Other teams would have to cross our wake if they wanted to get ahead of us. We had them beat with no problem! AND, found ourselves overall winners on the gazebo podium drinking champagne out of the Silver Bowl (The Queens Cup), with the names of all the winners

inscribed, the winning team got to display the cup in their establishment for the following year.

Kobak's Comment - My memory is foggy but near the last of the races the KHCC also fielded a women's team. Our racers were Marcia Mauter, Elaine Marsh, Nancy Hudson and Kathy Pichola. The final year we raced there were separate winners for each division like Restaurants, Colleges, Corporate Teams and the Women's division. That year Kobak's team won the Restaurant division which was for the Queens Cup but the Union decided why not have the winner of each division compete in a final race for the overall champion. But the Keelhauler's had a devious plan. The Kobak team would take a position to the right of the women's team who had the pole position. At each turn Kobak kept going straight taking the other teams with him allowing the women's team to get around the buoy and move into the lead. They did this at each turn and ran interference on the final leg so the women's team won the overall race. I don't think the race organizers liked this too much.

I don't remember why we didn't go back to defend our win... Maybe the Queen's Cup was no longer being held? I contacted the English Speaking Union recently and learned that because of waning interest and liability concerns, the last race was held in 1991. Such a shame...So many things are discontinued because of Liability and Litigation.



(People I paddled with in the 1st races were - Mickey Nagy, Ted Creighton, Tony Zemak?, and in the 2nd races - Gary Worob, Donn Flower, Curt Jones.

We Get by with a Little Help from Our Friends By Fran Hoven

The July 2016 Intro to the Lower Yough trip was more re-acquaintance than introduction for the participating paddlers, as all had paddled the LY many times before. Still, since a few were in new boats or still lacking any semblance of a reliable roll, the support of a strong and experienced group was an appreciated consideration in their electing to be there. All of the 10 am permits had already been spoken for when I hit the website, so our Saturday launch time had become an 11am slacker slot, in stark contrast to days gone by, when we had often put several permit-less safety boater reserves on the river before 8 am and launched a massive flotilla at 9.



July 16th would be my first day on a river this year, as I hadn't had time to get in my kayak except for one Lakewood pool session and a serene evening paddle on Lake Erie at the Huntington picnic. A few prudent preparations were attended to prior to launching. Having been apprised of a disastrous and ill-advised Stony River run earlier this year, I made some adjustments to Sue Lan Ma's outfitting and added some hi-visibility tape and an indexing cue to her paddle. She said that her knees were not making good contact with her thigh braces, despite her seat being all the way forward, and the thigh hooks as far back as possible. I moved her bulkhead a little closer to the cockpit and tightened up her backband, which put

her knees under the thigh hooks, greatly improving the chances that she might manage an Eskimo rescue in lieu of a swim. Subsequently, when Sue mentioned that one of the back band's ratchet straps was missing, I fished it out and re-inserted it. Teresa Pitt proved her worth as a safety boater at the top of Entrance eddy on river left, when she noticed that I had neglected to fasten my still new and unscathed Sweetwater helmet. I'm still getting acquainted with my Jackson Zen. After mugging for the camera at Cucumber, and watching the others descend, I flipped across the eddy line and did a practice roll in the current. Mike Greiner from Columbus was with us in his brand new blue Piranha Burn, which he managed to roll successfully at Cucumber and a few other places over the course of the weekend. Sam Reynolds, considerably more accustomed to his red Burn, was providing safety boater services.



Jim Allen, having driven in from Michigan, was paddling his venerable old Noah with obvious finesse. I couldn't resist encouraging him to fix the cracks in his thigh hooks with some ski-base weld sticks.



Rick Feryok joined us for a loop run in his open canoe, and astounded Chuck McDowell with a well-executed roll after flipping at either Piddy or Camel and Walrus. Chuck had approached in anticipation of needing to bulldoze the canoe to an eddy. Rick didn't need any help, but Sue provided Chuck with an opportunity for an Eskimo Rescue. A few others who had expressed interest in joining us had to opt out due to other obligations, but we had a nice little group and a relaxed day on the river, which was running at a quite comfortable level of about 1.9 feet.



Last year the LY was running at about 3.5 feet, and I had coaxed Sue and a few of the newbies into doing the Middle Yough instead on day one. At a higher water level, the Middle is not such a long slow slog, and affords a lot more fun than low water runs. Brent and April escorted the others down the LY. On day two, with the LY still running above 3 feet, Sue had flipped trying to run the sneak route at Dimple, precipitating a long swim for both her and Dave Roush, who had attempted to offer an Eskimo rescue before flipping on a rock and having to bail. I grabbed the all black paddle she had relinquished, and chased after the two boats, managing to hang onto both of our paddles after dropping into the hole at Swimmers. My older displacement hull boats, a Dagger Crossfire and a Transition, might have been stuck in a side surf for an extended time, but it was relatively easy to spin the Zen around and cruise out of there. I handed off Sue's paddle to Mary Ann Roberts, who Dave Roush had encouraged to join us in a rented ducky. She had paddled her sit on top rec kayak on the Middle the day before. I continued downriver to retrieve the boats, which had been corralled by a couple of girls in duckies. Sue turned up in tow on the back of Tim Stull's boat, but would have to wait for her paddle till after lunch. I towed Dave's boat back up to him at Swimmers.

This year Sue opted to run the usual line at Dimple. She came around the corner fine, but stopped paddling before continuing to ferry across to the eddy, which prompted several of us to yell vociferously for her to "Paddle!" lest she get swept into the rocks behind her. Years ago, as a relative newbie on one of Jane Andraka's Intro Trips, I had broached and flipped on one of those rocks, and finally rolled up after about a half dozen desperate attempts.

After stopping at Swimmers for lunch, we continued on down the river at a leisurely pace. I was feeling pretty comfortable in the Zen and ran the slot at Schoolhouse Rock. Ty from British Columbia asked to join us, as he was attempting to get off the river a little earlier than the group from Pennsylvania he had been paddling with. He was anticipating a 5 hour drive to New Jersey for a rendezvous with his girlfriend. A competent paddler, albeit unfamiliar with the LY, he just needed a clue or two regarding the upcoming rapids and the takeout. We enjoyed swapping tales and reminiscing about Whistler-Blackcomb and the Bowron Lake Canoe Circuit. Lucky dude. BC is a beautiful outdoor paradise.

Someone remarked that we hadn't had any swims, and then Sue obliged, perhaps at Staircase if I recall correctly. This time it would have required over-exertion on Chuck's part to proffer an Eskimo Rescue before she popped the skirt, as he was several yards away when she flipped.

En route to Maze I encountered a young siren with an enchanting singing voice, who serenaded us with a haunting melody from years before her time. Trying to recall the name of the song, I turned back to ask her. She had been singing "Leaving on a Jet Plane" by Peter, Paul, and Mary. Except for having to forego indulging in beer or boxed wine whilst providing escort services for the rafters, she was in her happy place, soloing the raft. On other days she safety boats in a kayak, which requires more focused attention. We concurred that favored brews included Magic Hat #9 and Straub, and then segued into an extended conversation regarding learning, and the lack thereof amongst many of the recreational rafters. Given her laid-back temperament, river guide experience, and passionate interest in outdoor education, I couldn't resist encouraging her to consider



becoming an Outward Bound Instructor, which would afford opportunities to inspire engaged learners.

Our roster underwent some changes on Sunday. Jim Allen's back was feeling fine, but he didn't want to tempt the fates and overindulge, so he opted to head back to Michigan, which given his need to stop and stretch, is typically an 8 hour drive. Chuck McDowell had also left for home. Sam Reynolds, Mike Greiner, Teresa Pitt, Sue Lan Ma, and I were joined by Jackie Simpson, Joe Marksz, Cliff Wire, Mike Duvall, and Jim Murtha, as well as a couple other paddlers a few of us had met at the Stone House outdoor barbeque the evening before. John Batman and his son Adam, both in Jackson play boats, appeared as we were preparing to embark and asked if they could join us. John had lost his drain plug and had stuffed a hunk of sponge in the hole. Figuring that the group would be at Entrance for a while, I told him I wasn't in that big of a hurry and encouraged him to run over to one of the outfitters and get himself a new drain plug. The screw holes matched, but he had to carve out a larger opening for the plug. A right-sized Forstner bit would have worked nicer than a knife. He turned up on the river with some tape wrapped around his finger, but would appreciate having a much drier boat for the day.

The Yough was running at about 1.8 with the water temperature in the 60s. Cliff was paddling a pink Zen, which despite being labelled "I'm Purple" is most definitely pink. He got his Zen quite cheap compared to what I paid for my urban camo version, so being a pragmatic conservator of his resources, he wasn't going to let the color bother him. That morning, at Tall Oaks, I remarked that he was assuredly secure in his masculinity, which

elicited a funny story from Jim Allen. Joe was paddling his new Nomad. Cliff, Joe, and perhaps Mike Duvall and Jim Murtha exhibited their Upper Yough maneuvering skills as they eddied out on river left above the guide rock at Cucumber, and then ferried across the river above the drop. We meandered down the river at a leisurely pace, with many in the group tarrying to play various features. Jim Murtha pointed out a whirlpool near the loop takeout at Railroad conducive to stern squirts for the playboaters, and I got a couple of good shots of Adam and a few of the others as they repeatedly attempted getting vertical.



I don't recollect any misadventures until we got to Dimple. Teresa Pitt, who had exhibited good paddling skills until that moment, had an unexpected mishap, broaching on that rock just past Dimple that we had been yelling at Sue to paddle away from the day before, and that I had a close encounter with decades ago. I believe she tried, but couldn't roll, and swam to shore on river left a few dozen yards downstream. Her paddle and Jackson Karma were secured by Jim Murtha and Joe Marksz. I was behind them as they corralled the boat in a squirrely eddy. The current in the channel on river left was too strong to attempt towing or bulldozing the boat to Teresa, and too strong for her to swim it. A bearded guy attached a carabiner to his throw rope and tossed it to Joe and Jim. Years ago at a Slippery Rock clinic, I had learned how dicey it can be to handle a rope in a kayak once it hits the water and is being swept downstream. When you ferry a rope across a river, you really need to send someone across the river ahead of you, so they can get out of their boat, brace themselves, and remove the rope from your tow system. If you try to do it yourself, the rope dragging in the water will pull you over, and you'll end up needing to roll, and will have to let go of the rope. As I attempted to lend a hand by grabbing the rope in order to facilitate their efforts to clip the carabiner to Teresa's boat, I was about to be reminded that I should have known better. The other mistake, of course, is that there was

too much boat traffic down that channel, and I don't think anyone had bothered to direct paddlers to avoid that channel while we had a rope in play. In an instant I felt a tug on my paddle and knew I was in big trouble. The rope had wrapped around the shaft just above my right blade. There was no way I was going to let go of my AT paddle, so I was getting pulled over. Somehow I managed to extricate my paddle from the rope, but now I was upside down, smacking my Sweetwater helmet against rocks, and furiously attempting to roll while getting swept down the river toward Swimmers, in one of the worst places on the LY for an underwater tour. I made multiple attempts to roll up, switching sides a couple of times to try to get a little help from the current, but it was to no avail. I knew it was time to bail when I began just bringing my head up to grab air instead of maintaining proper form, and then felt the kayak just stuck up against rocks. Although the Zen is much easier to roll in current than the stern squirty Dagger Axiom I had paddled on the Middle Fork of the Salmon a few years ago, I was now appreciating Cliff's acknowledgement that his roll in his Zen was not yet reliable. I think I could have rolled my Transition or an RPM in similar circumstances. Of course, Cliff's swims were precipitated by flips on much harder rivers, like the Upper Yough. I hadn't had an out of boat experience on the Lower Yough since the mid 1990s, when I swam a long and bony section of Entrance after broaching on a rock, and got a tow to the staging eddy above Cucumber from Karen Petit's daughter, Angie, who was already an excellent paddler as a teen. The stern grab loop on my Crossfire had torn loose on one side. Subsequently Dagger sent me some plastic weld sticks so I could fix it. I was still fairly functional, but firmly resolved to do my utmost to avoid exiting my boat at Entrance ever again.

This time, I really didn't go for much of a swim. When I finally exited my boat, I found myself in a narrow rock slot on river right, a couple dozen yards above the hole at Swimmers. The slot was not an eddy, as a fairly strong current was flowing through it and keeping me there. I was still hanging on to my paddle, treading water, and out of breath and energy. My boat was too heavy with water to push out of there against the current, and the rocks were a little too slick and steep to climb. As I considered my predicament, my old compadre Cliff stopped by in his pink Zen and politely inquired: "Do you need some help?" "Yes I do!" I said. I pushed my Zen toward him and he got some of the water out of it before sending it downstream where Jim Murtha and some of the others corralled it near a rock suitable for relaunching on river right. I grabbed Cliff's bow loop to rest a little and tossed a raft paddle that had joined me in the slot back out into the current. Cliff attaches a length of climbing rope to his stern grab loop, which facilitates towing swimmers. He directed me to let go of his bow so he could turn his boat around. I grabbed the ropes and he started towing. As he paddled past the slot I was still stuck in it and had to hold him there while I pushed off the rock with my feet to get myself around the corner and free of the slot. He towed me to the rock where the guys had brought my boat. I set my paddle on the rock, but needed a few moments before climbing out of the water. Although Cliff was telling me to get out of the water, I was wearing a Kokatat Gore-Tex drytop with a merino wool top underneath, so I was comfortable and in no danger of hypothermia. I just needed to get my wind and energy back after that extended underwater run before trying to climb up on that rock. I can still hold my breath for a fairly long time, but it ain't what it used to be, and it would probably help if I got back on my bike on a regular basis... I seal-launched off the rock and ferried over to recuperate and eat lunch on river left. Jackie and Teresa told me that the guy had let go of his rope after I got tangled in it, and that Sue had also been running into the rope as she proceeded down that river left channel,

apparently unaware of the hazard. I too lost a rope at Dimple one year—sometimes you just have to let it go, and try to learn from the experience.

The rest of the day's run on the river was uneventful. I think I pretty much stayed in energy conservation mode, shooting some pictures of ducks, somehow skipping Killer Falls, and circumventing Pharaoh's Tomb at Bruner's Run. After tipping Jack and loading up our boats, Sam and I enjoyed a good conversation as I drove him back to his Jetta wagon at the put-in, at an unusually sedate speed in my Saab. I showered at the boat house, and poked around OhioPyle before heading home, checking out the pictures at River Photos, and exploring some of the newer food stops and shops. I ran into John and Adam Batman at the outfitters by the tracks. Adam, who is extremely flexible and has a great roll in his little playboat, had been experiencing some wrist pain. Earlier in the day I had suggested that he might want to try using a bent shaft paddle, so there they were, checking them out. Unfortunately, my Adventure Technology flex shaft is now going for about \$450, so it's no wonder I'm reluctant to relinquish it! I suggested that he figure out what length would work best for him, and see if he can find a deal someplace like the Gauley Fest, where I had picked up my Transition for \$300.

After dining at the House Café, I pulled over to insert a Joe Cocker CD as I headed up 381. With sobering synchronicity precipitating some reflection, the first track was: "I Get by with a Little Help from My Friends." While self-rescue skills are essential, and kayakers really need to put the time and effort into developing reliable river rolls rather than perpetually relying on others to save them if they flip, try as you might to go with the flow, the river can take you places you don't want to go. Nevertheless, as Joe had implied in an earlier conversation, we are all between swims, no matter how well you can usually roll and brace. When kayaking, we most certainly do get by with a little help from our friends. It would not be possible for the club to offer an Intro Trip on the LY if we didn't have paddlers willing to serve as safety boaters. Across the years we have had some epic days where their skills were sorely needed. Cliff had suggested that I write a story for the newsletter, so here it is: This tale tells that he was there when I needed a little help from a friend.



Revisiting the Gorge Dam Removal Submitted by Karl Nelson

The Keelhaulers Canoe Club has long advocated for the removal of the Gorge Dam in the Cuyahoga River, and with the release last year of the Ohio EPA/TetraTech engineering report, that reality has taken a big step forward. But there are still a lot of questions about the next steps in the process. That's why WKSU is revisiting the discussion through a public forum in Cuyahoga Falls. Here are some of the details:

WHAT: WKSU Exploradio public forum - The Gorge Dam Removal Project - One Year Later

WHEN: Sept. 21st 2016, 6:30 -8:30 pm

WHERE: Sheraton Suites, Cuyahoga Falls

WHO: The panel includes: Bill Zawiski, Ohio EPA; Lisa King, director, Summit MetroParks; David Hill, member American Whitewater Association, REPRESENTATIVE, City of Akron

It's been one year since the Ohio EPA released its engineering report on the proposed \$70 million removal of the Gorge Dam in Cuyahoga Falls. This forum brings together many of the stakeholders in the project in a public discussion of the feasibility of the project and its effect on the future of the Cuyahoga River.

As you see, we've asked David Hill to represent your group - and he has agreed. But I also want to invite you to attend and to help spread the word.

Yours,

Jeff St.Clair, host/reporter, WKSU-fm, stclair@wksu.org



Conservation News
The Party That Saved the Gauley
Submitted by Jim Hunt

THE PARTY THAT SAVED THE GAULEY

30 YEARS OF GAULEY FEST: THE STORY BEHIND THE SOUTHEAST'S WILDEST FUNDRAISER

This story first appeared in the August 2014 issue of *Canoe & Kayak Magazine*.

By Susan Hollingsworth Elliott



Fall paddling hasn't been the same since 1968, when six paddlers ran the 26 miles of Class IV and V rapids below the newly constructed Summersville Dam on the Gauley River. John Sweet and his cohorts discovered a whitewater playground full of steep cliffs and house-sized boulders, serene pools and complex whitewater. In those days the Gauley represented the pinnacle of eastern whitewater, and the intermittent dam releases brought an air of celebration mixed with trepidation.

"We met in the shadow of the dam," West Virginia paddling legend Charlie Walbridge wrote of one early trip in the 1973 *AWA Journal*. "An adrenaline-induced sense of humor prevailed."

The Gauley was destined to become a West Virginia classic, not least because since 1984 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases water from the dam for six weekends each fall. Those scheduled releases gave life to Gauley Season, which now draws tens of thousands of

whitewater boaters to West Virginia, not to mention busload after busload of rafters and the raucous tribe of river guides who follow in their wake.

We take it all for granted now, but in the early 1980s a hydroelectric project threatened the Upper Gauley's best rapids, and releasing water for the enjoyment of a few unkempt river runners seemed like a radical notion. Changing that view would take paddlers years of hard lobbying. Naturally, they began the campaign with a party. Citizens for Gauley began the tradition with the West Virginia Whitewater Festival in September 1983. The following year, the task devolved to a fledgling group of paddler-conservationists known as the American Whitewater Association.

"It was bad, really bad," says Peter Skinner, a director with American Whitewater at the time. "AWA was on its last legs and the hydro developers were poised to pounce on our favorite rapids."

Rivers across the country faced similar threats, but paddlers rallied to defend the Gauley. The small cadre of boaters soon developed a reputation for partying and a talent for pissing off hydropower executives. They also demonstrated incredible commitment to preserving their playground. With letters, phone calls, legal interventions and more, the AWA pushed hard against hydro development and for scheduled whitewater releases from Summersville Dam.

The soul of that effort—not to mention its economic engine—was Gauleyfest. "The first Gauleyfest was epic, just plain epic," former AWA director Peter Skinner says of the 1984 festival. As a massive thundercloud threatened the event, organizers meandered around the fairgrounds, unsure of how to organize the festival.

Just when they most needed a dose of encouragement, the reigning Miss Florida sauntered up to Skinner, who was preparing the t-shirt sales. "I told her, 'You'd look amazing in this one,'" he recalls, "and without the slightest hesitation, she grasped the sides of her top, pulling it up and over her head in one very smooth movement. Only a tiny overburdened pokadot bikini top on a perfectly tanned rib cage remained." Skinner promptly convinced the beauty queen to wrap herself in a roll of raffle tickets. "She sold more raffle tickets than I ever dreamed was possible," says Skinner.

Organizers were not so lucky with the scheduled entertainment. "I was pissed as hell that night at the bear guy," says AW director Pope Barrow, who thought bear wresting would be a hit with river runners: Take on the most challenging rapids in the East, and then try your luck with a bear. Alas, it was not to be. "He never showed up and I later learned that an outfitter on the New had paid him a few bucks more to go to his event instead of ours," says Barrow. "You just can't trust bear wrestlers."

Even without the bear, Gauley fans had begun to arrive in unexpectedly high numbers. Organizers couldn't cook the chicken and corn fast enough, so they served the chicken half raw, and gave free beer to folks who helped shuck corn. Somehow, everyone got fed. The party was a fundraising success, Barrow says, and "AWA actually had enough of a budget to start causing trouble at FERC." That would be the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the agency that issues hydropower permits.

As Gauleyfest became an institution (this year's festival, the 30th, is Sept. 19-20 in Summersville, W.Va.) American Whitewater continued to lobby for boater access and recreational dam releases. Today, dam operators and officials at FERC and other government agencies know the six of full-time AW Stewardship staff members well. Thanks to the persistence of Skinner and his generation of river conservationists, these relationships have blossomed immensely. In 2013, American Whitewater participated in management decisions that provided scheduled dam releases and paddler access on at least 24 rivers across the country.

And as tradition dictates, this new crew of whitewater stewards—a little less ragged, slightly better connected, equally passionate—travels to the hills of West Virginia the third weekend in September every year. Here, they string lights, park cars, sell t-shirts, quell rowdy crowds, and ultimately collect the money that will allow them to return to their work and fight for the conservation of our favorite rivers.

8/26,27	Upper Yough (MD)	32	John Pratt	307-871-3081
September	For More Trips - Check our Message Board		Time to Pay Dues	
9/2	Upper Yough (MD)	32	John Pratt	307-871-3081
9/3,5	Upper Yough (MD)	32	Jim Murtha	614-282-3293
9/3,4,5	(5) New River Gorge (WV)	27	Phil/Jen Raber	740-498-7063
9/9 to 11	I will coordinate all Camping at Battle Run for Lower & Upper trips (WV)	27-33	John Kobak	440-554-1383
9/9	(5) Lower Gauley (WV)	27	Jim Hunt	330-335-5203
9/10,11	Upper Gauley (WV)	33	Needs organizer	
9/10,11	(5) Lower Gauley (WV)	27	Phil & Jen Raber	740-498-7063
9/9-11	Midwest Freestyle Canoe Symposium Camp Butler 880 W Streetsboro Road Peninsula, OH		Bob and Elaine Mravetz	330-239-1725
9/13	Club Monthly Meeting at Middleburg Hts		Dave Roush	440-623-9035
9/16-18	Upper Gauley (Festival Weekend) (WV)	27-33	Cliff Wire	440-439-6541
9/17,18	(4) Lower Yough(PA) Get Permit	23	Chuck McDowell	330-477-1086
9/17,18	(2) Middle Yough (PA)	12/SK	Gene Baker	440-320-4490
9/24	(5) Savage River (MD) - Scheduled Dam Release	26	Needs organizer	
9/24,25	(5) Lower Gauley & Upper Gauley (WV) Camping at Battle Run	27-33	Joe Marks	216-533-0604
October	For More Trips - Check our Message Board		Time to Pay Dues	
9/30,10/1	Upper Yough (MD) Last Saturday Release	32	John Kobak	440-554-1383
10/1	17th Annual Over Ohiopyle Falls Race (PA) Falls Race Info	30	Barry Adams	412-242-4562
10/1,2	(5) Lower Gauley & Upper Gauley (WV) Camping at Battle Run	27-33	Needs organizer	
10/8,9	(4) Stonycreek River Release (PA)	21	Anne Kmieck	216-371-8250
10/8,9	(5) Lower Gauley & Upper Gauley (WV) Camping at Battle Run	27-33	Needs organizer	
10/11	Club Annual Election Meeting at Middleburg Hts		Dave Roush	440-623-9035
10/15,16	(4) Lower Yough (PA) Fall Color Trip Get Permit	23	Dave Roush	440-623-9035
10/22,23	(4) Stonycreek River Release (PA)	21	John Banach	330-606-5032

2016 Club Officers

President: Karl Nelson 330-497-2483
VP: Dave Roush 440-623-9035
Secretary: Marcia Karchmer 440-773-4132
Treasurer: Sam Reynolds 330-962-5501

Meeting Place: Middleburg Heights Recreation Center, 15700 Bagley Rd, second Tuesday of each month
Doors open at 7:00 P.M., meeting starts at 7:30 P.M.

Membership: \$20 per year. New memberships, renewals, change in address or phone, send directly to
Membership Chairman:

John Kobak, 440-871-1758
1649 Allen Dr.
Westlake, OH 44145

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KHCC WEB PAGE URL: www.keelhauler.org

Non- Commercial advertising is free to all members. To place an ad, send the information the way you want it to appear. Please write or call when item is sold. It will appear for 2 months unless canceled. Commercial ads may be submitted by club member's owned businesses four times each year with a maximum of four lines of copy per ad.

Please consider writing a trip report or article for the next newsletter! The deadline for the **October issue of the newsletter is **9/23/16**. Please remember that articles should be sent to Kelly Miller (Laubaugh) at peetzaguy@aol.com.**

KeelHauler Kanews
Kelly Miller, Editor
701 Forrest Ave.
Geneva, IL 60134

peetzaguy@aol.com

September, 2016

