



January, 2010

Our Aims

PROMOTE canoeing and kayaking as a water sport
TEACH boating techniques and water safety for river travel
PRESERVE our remaining wilderness rivers for future generations

**Tom Lessick will present a pictorial
summary of his friend Bill Cannon's
motorcycle trip through Labrador Canada.**

**The Craft Room
Oak Ridge Civic Center**

**Tuesday
January 19, 2010
7:30 pm**

East Tennessee Whitewater Club
Post Office Box 5774
Oak Ridge, TN 37831-5774

-OFFICERS FOR 2010-

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!!!! Renew Your Club Membership Now !!!!

East Tennessee Whitewater Club Membership Renewal for 2009

Dues are \$15 per year for family membership. Our dues year is the calendar year, Jan 1 to Dec 31. Please renew early in the year.

Send the membership form on the back of the newsletter with a check (payable to ETWC) to:
ETWC P.O. Box 5774 Oak Ridge, TN 37831-5774

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE – 7TH OF EACH MONTH

Newsletter Editor: Derrick Zingg

Phone: 865-675-4184 Email: zinggds@gmail.com

Photos in jpeg, gif, or bmp format.

Reports and Classifieds as a Word or Text File Document.

Newsletter is available in PDF Format-contact the editor for information.

Check out our website at <http://www.etwcweb.com>

River Gauges by Telephone

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(800) 899-4435 – **Big Pigeon**

(800) 232-7238 – **Chattooga River**

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(900) 288-8732 – **Tellico and Little River
theSmokies***

(865) 632-2264 – **TVA Lake and Rivers Gauge
(Knoxville)**

(865) 751-2264 - **TVA Lake and Rivers Gauge
(Chattanooga)**

(800) 238-2264 - **TVA Lake and Rivers Gauge
(Out of Town)**

*NOTE: For this call there is a \$2.00 charge that helps support the continued operation of the gauges.

Presentation

Tom Lessick will give a pictorial summary of his friend Bill Cannon's 2008 motorcycle trip through Labrador. The presentation is full of beautiful scenery, interesting facts about Labrador, and humor.

Winter Roll Practice

Roll practice is now at the Oak Ridge Civic Center Indoor Pool. Practice is from 8:30 to 10:00pm on the Friday nights listed below. The table below lists the Paddler in Charge (PIC) for each session. The sessions in **blue** currently do not have a volunteer to oversee the session. If you would like to volunteer AND are certified in both First Aid and CPR contact Kary Scarborough or Rick Zingg (see contact info in the Officers Section above).

January	15	Jason Darby
	22	Ken Klipple
	29	Ken Klipple
February	5	NO ROLL PRACTICE
	12	NO ROLL PRACTICE
	19	Rick Zingg
	26	Ariana Beste
March	5	Rick Zingg
	12	
	19	NO ROLL PRACTICE
	26	
April	2	NO ROLL PRACTICE
	9	
	16	
	23	Tris West
	30	Tris West
May	7	
	14	Kary Scarborough

Club History

At the suggestion of former president Phil Austin and due to the absence of any submitted trip reports, the history of the East Tennessee Whitewater Club up to 1988 is presented below.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EAST TENNESSEE WHITE WATER CLUB

Compiled by Paul Dutky in 1988

Conflicting opinion has always existed in ETWC, and many of our current members delight in debate. When I became President in December, I set out to learn all I could of the different points of view held by our membership. Believing as I do that a knowledge of the past would help me to understand the present, I read every existing club newsletter and interviewed several past Presidents to develop a feel for how the club has evolved

The East Tennessee Whitewater Club has been around for twenty-five years—since the early 60s. When John Bombay arrived in Oak Ridge he brought with him a fiberglass kayak—the first kayak most Oak Ridgers had ever seen. The interest generated

by that first decked boat resulted in the construction of a fiberglass kayak mold and over 40 fiberglass clones of John's boat. A small informal group began to meet which, they called themselves the East Tennessee White Water Club (the term "White Water" was a club innovation because the word "whitewater" had not yet been coined). The ETWWC preceded the formation of the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association (TSRA), Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP), Tennessee Valley Canoe Club (TVCC), and Chota Canoe Club by many years. Equipped with Bombay kayaks, non-offset kayak paddles, and US Geological Survey maps, club members set out to discover East Tennessee whitewater. What they found was a network of truly fine navigable rivers in their own backyard on the Cumberland Plateau.

Jerry Cosgrove soon began to accompany the kayakers downstream in a keeled Grumman aluminum canoe, the first canoeist to do so. And soon after Tom Berg joined in, paddling a flat "shoe" keeled Grumman. With canoes came super 8 photography and pictures to pass around back in town. The plateau canyons were magnificent, and their sandy beaches devoid of people. Whitewater crafts became vehicles with which to escape into the wilderness. At that time there was no vandalism of cars or trucks, even during the occasional two day expedition. The Obed-Emory watershed began to be thought of as a private resource. An almost secretive, possessive attitude about the plateau soon evolved.

There were lots of people working at Union Carbide and living in Oak Ridge eager to get in on a good thing—and it wasn't too long before a massive club expansion began to take form. Most new members to the club could relate to canoeing easier than kayaking, and the demand for canoes skyrocketed. In 1968 Tom Berg proclaimed, "the best canoe and the equipment most suitable for these waters" was the shoe keeled Grumman aluminum canoe. In 1968 and 1969, easily 50 of these canoes were purchased at an average cost of \$250 apiece and \$4.25 per paddle. The need for a delivery location for batch shipments of twenty canoes was the initial incentive for the establishment of the Carbide Canoe Club.

Officially, ETWWC and CCC had two sets of officers, although in reality they functioned as one entity. This dualism had several advantages. Carbide had a policy of financially supporting recreational groups within the company to the tune of \$100 a year. With Carbide's help, club newsletters could be produced using Carbide resources (not an easy task in the pre-copy center era!) and distributed through the company's in-house mail system for free. The Carbide affiliation also permitted purchase of whitewater equipment at commercial discount rates . . . and the storage of batch shipped canoes in large warehouse areas.

With the influx of novice whitewater enthusiasts, the club's core of knowledgeable boaters spearheaded programs to school the new paddlers in river safety and paddling technique. It's easy to see how the club came by the first two of its Aims: "the promotion of canoeing and kayaking as a sport" and "the teaching of boating techniques and water safety". An early newsletter refers to the "continuing losses of canoes on the Obed River" and a pleas to paddle with an experienced club member and to practice safe boating. The momentary broach of an aluminum canoe could result in a crumpled unrestorable heap of scrap metal rather quickly as the open canoe filled with water and washed against obstructions in the river bed. The appearance of the third club Aim, "the preservation of our remaining wilderness rivers", appears in the club newsletter in 1968, at about the same time TVA proposed to dam the Obed river and build the Tellico dam.

Reality struck, and a concerted effort had to be made to loudly proclaim the value of the Obed-Emory watershed as a recreational resource. A pretense of secretiveness would not help save the Obed. The TCWP proved instrumental in quashing the Obed dam proposal, but ETWWC shares some of the credit. A large amount of time and energy was expended by club members in charting these streams, their put-ins, take-outs and quality. Eventually this information, collected by club members (especially ETWWC's Jerry Cosgrove who, like clockwork, paddled every weekend), resulted in the publication of several pamphlets and a canoeing guide to the Obed system and the Cumberland Plateau. When home movie equipment became available in the late 60s, member John Landry filmed representative sections of the plateau and shared it with other eastern whitewater clubs. The ETWWC subsequently acted as hosts for visiting clubs to explore the plateau. The Obed-Emory watershed and neighboring rivers had been put on the whitewater map, and the way was paved for the successful fight to include these rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers bill.

I think the vandalizing of unguarded vehicles on the plateau was a spin-off of the bruhaha over whether the Obed should be dammed or preserved as a recreational resource. The area's local inhabitants undoubtedly thought that the sparsely settled plateau should be left just as it was before the invasion of environmental protection freaks and the economic development freaks. They began to deftly communicate their *own* possessive attitude about the plateau by making visitors unwelcome.

It amazes me that the ETWWC started as a decked boat club and essentially remained that way, instead of first adopting the more traditional open canoe and than slowly, as Chota had done, come to accept the kayak as their preferred whitewater conveyance. But even though ETWWC's decked boaters often paddled water well above the capabilities of the open canoeists, in today's terms that meant only class three whitewater. No one had an Eskimo roll—that was a skill reserved for master kayakers. A flip usually meant a swim. There was no playing; the objective was to simply get down the river. They were very cautious, setting up ropes at all major rapids and sending only one boat through a rapid at a time. These were pioneers pushing their limits, paddling for their lives.

Innovation in those early years of whitewater sport was (and still is) rampant. Although thigh straps were used in canoes almost from the beginning, foam C-1 saddles and boat mounted knee pads did not evolve until the early 70s. In 1969 Tom Berg purchased the club's first decked C-1, an imported Czechoslovakian design. This sleek new river machine was more maneuverable and wave proof than the Grumman's, and prompted a whole new era of boat building. Tom's C-1 was only the first of many "new and improved" models to fall into club hands.

Boat building determined one of the basic organizational units of the club until just recently—the boat building group. Each group consisted of six to eight club members who pooled their resources to purchase enough fiberglass equipment to make six to eight boats. Several weeks of team effort were needed to crank out, one at a time, eight boats and perform finishing touches on each one. The ante needed to join a group was the cost of fiberglass materials, about \$55.

A fiberglass boat was the ticket to "hair" paddling, but it wasn't easy to get into a boat building group. If one group filled up, you had to recruit five or six other people to join you in forming a new group—some of whom had to know how to lay up a kayak. And the mold wasn't available to just anyone, it was very carefully kept under lock and key. There was no hesitation pirating boat designs, but a low-grade paranoia kept the process under wraps. Reid Gryder, by the way, still has the original mold of Tom Berg's original C-1.

Once a group was formed, boat building became a communal task imbued with all the enthusiasm and mutual support of a barn raising. Teamwork was essential with 13 feet of fiberglass slowly and irrevocably setting up; once resin was mixed and the first layer of fiberglass cloth applied to the mold, the laying up process had to be carried through to completion. For many years the nerve center of all this activity took place in the basement of Dick and Phyllis Read's house. Dick was a founding father of the club, the first president, and the driving force behind the club's mold and boat building efforts. Dick maintained the club's large stores of fiberglassing materials in his basement, and tolerated the invasion of his home by club members at strange hours day and night.

New kayak and C-1 designs, in all their evolving shapes and volumes, kept the boat builders busy keeping up with the Joneses. The process of cloning a kayak begins with rubbing a hard wax onto the thoroughly clean, smooth boat. A soft wax is then applied and a polyvinyl "parting" film applied to the soft wax. A heavy duty mold is then created of the upper and lower halves of the boat by layering resin soaked fiberglass cloth carefully onto the original hull. Just enough resin is applied with each fiberglass layer. The resin has to have just the right amount of hardener, and the boat allowed to cure at just the right temperature. If the initial wax job was applied well, the newly hardened fiberglass and the boat hull separate leaving a glistening smooth chrysalis from which innumerable future kayaks, identical to the first, can be manufactured.

Boat building must have been, indirectly, a major social activity of the club. Along with the uncommon boating expertise rapidly developing within club ranks, the know how to create kayaks must have strengthened the club and broadened its drawing power within the paddling community. Testimony to this was a club census that showed that half of all boats owned by club members were made by club members, and that meetings during the early 70s often filled the First Presbyterian Church meeting hall.

Since the widespread availability of plastic boats beginning in 1981 and 1982, boat building as a club activity has disappeared. Even now that fiberglass boats are coming back into vogue (because the now remarkably good skill level of paddlers is creating a demand for increasingly sophisticated boat designs) building groups are unlikely to be seen again because of the excellent, widely available commercial products on the market. The art of clandestine mold making and boat cloning is seldom practiced. The large club stockpiles of fiberglass cloth, and bottles of epoxy and polyester resins are things of the past.

Part of the urge to build better and faster boats stemmed from a developing interest in racing. The club's golden age of racing spanned the years 1970 to 1975—beginning before the 1972 Munich Olympics showcased whitewater paddling to the world, and ending as paddling skill levels and interest in whitewater were burgeoning across the U.S. During this period several ETWWC members were nationally ranked in wildwater competition, ETWWC paddlers were featured on the covers of several national magazines, and the club became sponsor of the Tellico races, the first leg of the Southern Cup circuit.

The club's interest in racing may have begun in 1970 when Reid Gryder accompanied Jerry Cosgrove to the 7th Annual White Water Weekend in Petersburg, West Virginia—the first, and at that time the most southern, whitewater race of the season. In those days no one trained for competitions—canoe and kayak racing was an amateur sport in its infancy. Although he flipped once and had to empty his boat along the bank during the 12 mile C-1 wildwater competition, Reid unexpectedly placed second. The following year he demolished the competition and placed 1st. Reid attributes his success to winter paddling; while competitors from further North had been ice bound all winter, Reid was able to stay in shape.

The budding interest in whitewater racing bloomed when the club attracted several strong young paddlers to the Spring Beginner's Clinic in 1970 and 1971. Scouts Kenny Cooper and Marc Hall joined the club and became excellent paddlers—often placing first or second in regional competition. Ken was the first to build kayaks specifically for racing. Mark Hall (later a club President) competed in the 1976 (?) wildwater C-1 competition in Yugoslavia. The Singley brothers, Paul and Alan,

became nationally ranked about the same time the scouts did. Paul raced K-1, and mixed C-2 with his future wife at the U.S. team trials. Brother Alan developed a reputation as a wild man—paddling the upper Nantahala (and anything else) and showing off his no hands, no paddle C-1 roll. Martin Begun made a national impression when photographed paddling off the edge of 17 foot Potters Falls on the Crooked Ford outside Wartburg. In addition to pioneering waterfall jumping Martin was nationally ranked #1 in C-1 wildwater in 1975. Reid and Monte Meals, although never competition fanatics, continued to place in races.

The developing expertise and conditioning in the club, and improved equipment, soon pushed back the limits of what was possible in whitewater to Class 4, and then Class 5. A 1972 newsletter mentions a lake session with Don Jared who was teaching the Eskimo roll and how to “deck” Grumman canoes to make them more whitewater worthy. The whitewater sport was maturing in East Tennessee and everywhere else. This came as a rude awakening to Reid Gryder who in 1975 again competed the Petersberg downriver. This time he was passed by a 14 year old in mid course. As Reid tells it, the C-1 paddler, Kent Ford stopped to lend another boater some duct tape, allowing Reid to momentarily pull ahead. Kent then stashed the tape back in his boat, pulled his spray skirt on, and effortlessly stroked back in the lead.

Newsletters at the time were 2/3rds race reports, and announcements of upcoming competitions and gate training sessions. A statement in a 1973 newsletter disavows any club responsibility for organizing trips, “members have an obligation to organize their own trips”. The club’s obligation in 1973 was felt to reside in teaching beginners how to run gates for slalom competition. With enthusiasm for racing firmly entrenched by the success of many club members, ETWWC filed for and became official sponsors of the Tellico downriver race. The 1975 Tellico downriver was a booming success with the entire club participating in running the race. Reid Gryder and Monte Meals were the race coordinators, Margo Stone was in charge of judging, and Don Jared directed communications. The race results revealed some new names in the winner's column: Payson Kennedy, Bunny Johns, and Les Bechdel, all from the recently established Nantahala Outdoor Center.

A new status quo was evolving in the whitewater community. The NOC was rapidly becoming a training ground for “semi-professional” competitive paddlers who trained year round in North Carolina, and made a living teaching whitewater skills. Simultaneously, the young successful racers in the ETWWC were growing up or moving elsewhere. By the late 70s, racing was well past its prime in the club, and was not generating enough steam to keep a critical mass of members involved in the process. Efforts to run the 1981 Tellico races resulted in confusion due to the collective inexperience of the members who were coordinating it. Non-members had to be recruited to help set gates and plan the race course. By that time, the NOC had completely supplanted ETWWC as the regional leader in whitewater racing and instruction. And the Tellico, being unpredictable in its water flow and having forced cancellation of the Southern Cup race on several previous occasions, was replaced by the lively and reliable Ocoee. By 1982, the year I arrived in East TN, racing as a club activity was dead.

A shift in club leadership and direction came about in 1982 to fill a void. Racing interest was not killed off, it had died an honorable and natural death. The ten years of emphasis on decked “hair” boating and racing resulted in the attraction of a narrower segment of the paddling community than had the care-free exploration that served as the club’s original mandate. When two Presidents in the same year moved out of town, one of whom was blue blood racer Marc Hall, the club was left rudderless. The average length of the newsletter dropped to just one page and meeting attendance dropped precipitously. More domestic attitudes began to prevail. Sam Suffern took the helm in 1983 and drew up the club’s first activity and club-organized trip schedule in years. He filled a real need by establishing a paddling information relay station through his home answering machine to encourage pickup and scheduled club trips. Cynthia Soumoff restructured the newsletter into the current magazine format, and shortly after, the first fork and knife wielding “BRING COOKIES” pig was gracing its title page. The club, as we now know it, was born.

It’s interesting to look at those things that have remained the same and those that have changed in 25 years of club history. Members still meet at Hilltop at 8 AM many Saturday mornings to run the Plateau. The club still holds meetings at Fellowship Hall, and still struggles to fill all of its executive officer positions, just as it always has. We continue to invest ourselves in the stated Aims of the club: the teaching of boating techniques and water safety through workshops, clinics, pool and lake sessions, the promotion of canoe and kayaking as a sport, and the conservation of our wilderness heritage.

A recurrent theme in the newsletter has been the cajoling and cries for more active member participation in conservation issues. (I personally see this as wasted effort. The club only has an obligation to inform its members about conservation issues. If the process of informing stimulates participation, wonderful and if not, so be it. But we can comfortably let the record speak for itself: ETWWC participated in the successful fight against the proposed Obed dam, the successful effort to include the Obed and tributaries in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the successful landmark 1973 lawsuit (along with TCWP) to force the state to enforce enacted strip mining legislation to protect water quality, and the successful fight to save the Ocoee. The club continues to give strong input into regulation and development of the Ocoee, and, I can now add, the fight to save the Pigeon.

What we’ve lost has been the novelty and adventure of participating in the dawning of a new sport. Whitewater rafting and river running are now highly publicized and advertised—a sport of the masses. Club members no longer confront the geographic unknown—the frontier has been conquered. Boat design is now in the realm of experts. New boats of exceptional quality are now mass produced—communal building projects are extinct. Whitewater instruction has in great part been

institutionalized, and racing has become a pastime of semiprofessional instructor/athletes. In recent years the regional preeminence ETWWC had in the area of decked boat instruction and hair paddling had evaporated. Activities such as boat building, exploration, and racing no longer draw paddlers from Knoxville, Morristown, and Marysville to our meetings. Chota, our large urban neighbor to the East, now has as many decked boat paddlers as open boaters, gives decked boat instruction and sponsors trips on Class IV and Class V whitewater, just as we do.

It is nostalgic to look back on our losses, but it is really *change* we have experienced, not “loss”. Any preeminence our Club might have possessed in decked boat paddling skills has faded because the average paddler’s skill level is so extraordinarily good by the standards of only a few years ago. This is not a regression. This represents club success of the highest order! Summertime access to the Ocoee has given Southeastern paddlers the opportunity to paddle challenging whitewater year round. We are no longer pioneers, but we are no longer trying to survive Class III whitewater either. Many paddlers are now able to *play* on Class IV whitewater. Whereas before the geographic unknown was next door, now average paddlers have the ability to enjoy an impressively wide range of whitewater anywhere in the world—the Grand Canyon, Costa Rica, Chile, Nepal, New Zealand.

Boats are now often changed as readily as a suit of clothes. You keep the ones that feel good and look good, and trade in the others. Resale value is high because compared to ten years ago plastic, fiberlastic and S-glass kevlar boats are indestructible. How much time do you spend patching your boat now-a-days? The maneuverability and performance of the newer kayak designs contrasts with those ten years ago like a DC-3 to a Lear jet.

The nature of the club’s activities and interests always reflected the needs and desires of our membership, and still do. Our choices have been conscious ones; we voted to sponsor races and later to abandon that sponsorship, the club has chosen to schedule club trips, then chose not to, and then changed direction again. Strong leaders have come along and helped move the club in different directions—but no one individual has dominated. As our membership has changed, so too had the character of the club. Despite change, we have always enjoyed the camaraderie of paddling together, teaching together, learning together, and sharing good times with one another.

For my part, the friendships I’ve developed and the experiences I’ve shared with you during my six years in East Tennessee have been the highlight of my stay here. This brief summary of our heritage is my going away present to the club. I want to thank you all for your support and your friendship.

This is a “brief”, somewhat dated history of ETWC. If any of the present day membership would like to elaborate or update this history it would gladly be accepted and published.

Last Meeting Minutes

Last month’s meeting was the Annual Christmas Party. Thanks to Sam Suffern for extending his hospitality and for the preparation of the main course. A new set of officers (see the first page of this newsletter) were confirmed and the clubs donations to conservation and whitewater organization (see the December 2009 Newsletter) were approved.

Treasurer’s Report

ETWC Cash Flow Report Fiscal Year = 11/1/08 through 10/31/09

Income:

Clinic Income	\$1,920.00
Dues	780.09
Roll Practice Income	799.11

Total Income **\$ 3,499.20**

Expenses:

Clinic Expenses	\$ 384.03
Roll Practice Pool Rental	708.75
Meeting Rooms Rental	171.50
Newsletters (2007-2009)	199.92
Donations	1,000.00
Swift Water Rescue Class	500.00
Education (First Aid)	165.00
Corporate Non-Profit Fee	20.00
P.O. Box Rental	70.00
Christmas Party	175.84
Web (Name renewal)	9.02
Bank Charges	41.82
Secretary Logbook	24.00

Total Expenses \$ 3,469.88

Difference in Expense/Income \$29.32

Transfer from Savings \$ 1,000.00

Total \$ 1,029.32

Checking Account as of 11/1/08 522.45
Checking Account as of 10/31/09 \$ 1551.77

Savings Account as of 11/1/08 \$6,663.08
Savings Account as of 10/31/09 5,731.27

Upcoming Events

February 20

A FREE Land based Swift Water Rescue Course is being offered. It is open to any interested paddler. For detailed information on the course, check out the ETWC Forum (www.etwcweb.com).

