

BOWLINES

Award Winning Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association since 1976. Sept/Oct 2020

In our Own Words.....

In this Issue:

A Willing & Eager Victim
My First BWA Trip
It Was the Tribe That Kept Me Sane!
A Major Change for the BWA's most Paddled Home River
Eddy Lines

Been missing campfire stories this year?

Let Bowlines be your "Virtual Campfire" to tell and hear stories!

In this issue: More why we paddle stories!



Kyle Koberlein

Looking Ahead

Second Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

BWA Monthly Meeting

Location can vary

For more information on Club Meetings
& Activities always check the [online Calendar](#).

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org>

All BWA

Meetings/Activities are on hold, check BWA web site or look for e-mail updates

Roll Sessions

For Dates, info and to register go to Calendar:

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org>



The BWA wishes to thank Canoe Kentucky for its support.
We urge you to patronize them for your outdoor needs.

Check out Bowlines Online Archive with many great issues going back to 1998!

Issue Archive:

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org/Newsletter>

A must read for all members, our 30th Anniversary issue:

http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv_Aug06.pdf



Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, POB 4231, Lexington Ky, 40504

Club Officers 2020-2021

President	Sandra Broadus	859-983-4475
Vice-President	Emily Grimes	859-358-0912
Treasurer	Kyle Koeberlein	502-370-1289
Secretary	Walt Hummel	859-351-0132
Safety	Dave Forman	859-550-9040
Program	Clay Warren	859-326-0602
Newsletter	Don Spangler	859-277-7314
Cyber Communications	Michael Williams	859-893-0114
Conservation	Bob Larkin	502-550-4225
Film Festival Coordinator	Regina Hatfield	859-797-6988
Equipment Coordinator	Jansen Koeberlein	270-703-0352
At-Large Member	Gus Milton	859-489-1337
Membership Coordinator	Will Samples	859-351-0132
Past President	Rober Watts	859-554-8489

Join in on the Fun!

Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$20/individual; \$25/Family year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club equipment, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, a stream gauge guide, and web site with a forum for member's messages & a parking pass for the Elkhorn.

Meetings are held at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each month at location announced on our website: <http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>

**BWA members want to read your story!
Short or long. Sad or Funny.
Tell us your paddling related story! Please!!**

Files can be e-mailed to the Editor: DonSpang@aol.com



About the BWA's Bowlines

The Bowlines has been a unique record of the BWA and its members. Unique in that it has been more than a listing of club activities and general information about paddling and related issues. When you read Bowlines you read about each of us and what we thought and did over the years. Members have contributed articles not only about paddling, conservation, and the club, but also stories crafted with humor, imagination, and the spirit of enthusiasm of life and enjoyment of each other. These are only a small portion of the many articles worth rereading. There have been songs, poems, soap operas, jokes, cartoons, wedding announcements, birth announcements, and unique trip reports among all the issues. Not what you might think you would see in a whitewater club newsletter.

We owe a thank you to all the newsletter editors that spent countless hours preparing each issue. To all you club members a big BWA hand for your contributions. Please keep it up! Now dig in and enjoy old memories or chuckle at the amusing stories, poems and pictures...

The Virtual Campfire: Why we boat series

A willing and eager victim of Sam's effort to "pick someone each year and help them ... to pass along the tradition".



Jerry O'Connor

Jerry O'Conner: From the July/Aug 2020 Bowlines.....Now we would like to hear from you about why you boat.... and what boating with the BWA has come to mean to you and your life. If you help, I can make this a regular feature in each future issue. It can be just a paragraph or two or it can be a page or two. Some of our best stories over the years have been about our club and how the BWA & paddling has been an important part of their life.

Jerry O'Conner was a very active BWA paddler & moved to U of Texas to teach Physics, But he came back regularly to paddle with us & often joined us on trips we made out west. Now retired, he still boats & keeps a place in Tennessee he goes to when he wants to boat in the SE.



After seeing the recently republished stories of Mike Weeks and Sam Moore, I was inspired to provide this contribution to the BWA Repository. I am one of the willing and eager victims of Sam's effort to "pick someone each year and help them ... to pass along the tradition". It was the spring of 1979, and I had moved to Lexington the previous fall to work my way through graduate classes at UK.

Unlike Dr. Danger, it did not take a Deliverance moment to develop my addiction to moving water; it was an invitation to join a few of my high school team-mates on a canoe camping trip on the Rifle River. The skills I had developed from lake-boating, and water skiing came in handy, but the additional challenge and exhilaration of maneuvering on moving water was overwhelming. After a few more trips to the Current and Eleven Point Rivers, I started thinking about going up a level on the scale of river difficulty.

So there I was in Lexington, armed with a 15 foot Sea Nymph aluminum "whitewater" canoe *1 and a copy of Bob Sehlinger's Canoeing and Kayaking Guide to the Streams of Kentucky – just enough to b)e dangerous! It did not take long to find the Elkhorn and convince a fellow grad student that his life would not be at risk by being the bow-man for a first run. It was a cool dreary gray morning in mid-March with a light rain falling when we were finally able to break free from our assignments. We set up the shuttle and excitedly prepared to launch near the confluence with what appeared to be a healthy flow rate. All went well until the narrows.

The extended series of 3 foot standing waves, along with a slightly bow-heavy trim conspired with fluid dynam-

ics and the law of gravity to fill the canoe with cold water. Although we did not have any flotation, we were able to remain upright and quickly landed to unload the weighty and unwelcome cargo. But the damage was done; the shivering and cold rain persisted relentlessly. To make matters worse, our lack of familiarity with the normal whitewater take-out resulted in an extra 7-10 mile paddle, and we arrived at the take-out with hypothermia. After a long warm-up in the car we loaded the boat and headed back to celebrate our survival.



Although my whitewater spirit was undiminished, an equally commanding survival instinct was now rekindled, as it had become chillingly clear that I needed more than just a guidebook to learn how to paddle whitewater. Fortunately, I remembered a reference to the BWA in the back of Bob Sehlenger's book, along with a telephone number. After speaking with someone (was it Katie Keene?), I was at their next meeting (at Ed Puterbaugh's house). The "natives" were friendly and encouraging, and at that meeting it was Sam who announced he was going to be hosting a throw-rope practice session at his apartment complex (which was next to a small reservoir).

At the practice session he also had some kayaks available and encouraged the newbies to try one. Until that time I had only seen pictures of eskimo kayaks, and had just recently heard anecdotal accounts of the amazing capabilities of a more modern version in moving water. After paddling across the reservoir and back, I was hooked. The only problem I had after that was what to paddle, since I liked paddling a kayak just as much as paddling a canoe. Many people said I needed to stick with one or the other to become competent, but my non-conformist tendencies prevailed and I kept paddling both. Fortunately, the diversity inherent in the Club and the supportive efforts of several skilled and sympathetic members enabled me to gain proficiency in both categories.

But that was not all that the BWA had to offer – on each trip to the next river or creek there was such a strong general camaraderie in effect that I felt like a long lost family member. It soon became an informal tradition for several of us to show up at Dandy Don's house on Friday afternoons, load his station wagon with gear and beer, and head south on Highway 27 for the next weekend adventure. (A fringe benefit of these trips was achieving an unprecedented level of bladder control). Sometimes, especially when water levels were on the low or high side (we did not have real-time gage readings available back then!), a rivalry would emerge between a few powerful personalities who had different ideas about what our next move should be; these occasions were both inspiring and entertaining to observe. On many celebrated occasions, around a blazing campfire I felt supremely fortunate to be living the phrase "it doesn't get any better than this!"



On many celebrated occasions, around a blazing campfire I felt supremely fortunate to be living the phrase "it doesn't get any better than this!"

The tradition Sam was referring to is not only real but really fun. Without the BWA I probably would have ended up as a statistic in one of Charlie Walbridge's annual reports. The many friendships that developed as I was learning and then sharing that learning with new boaters have been among the best and most permanent in my 60+ years of experience. Although I never obtained a more advanced degree from UK, I would unabashedly declare myself to be a proud and grateful alumnus of the BWA Clinic and "Continuing Education Programs"!

*1 This same canoe would later become the conveyance of choice during a Big South Fork trip to deliver a wounded kayaker to Leatherwood Ford.

The Virtual Campfire: Why we boat series

My First BWA River Trip **Jan Diebold Busse**

The earliest memory I have of a BWA river trip was back in March, 1981 and we were headed to the free flowing watershed of the Emory-Obed rivers. Stories of menacing rapids filled my brain after listening to crusty, veteran boaters I had met only recently while taking roll sessions in a steamy, enclosed pool at a YWCA. I did not really know what this new sport of kayaking was all about, I just knew that I missed the wide open ocean and brisk winds of sailing which I had enjoyed while in college on the coast and in middle Kentucky this seemed to be the only other means of getting out into water and hanging with folks who appreciated a cold beer (if Rum wasn't available) after a hot day as much as I did. I did not know much except that it was important to maintain good posture and attempt a roll if I flipped the borrowed C boat I would be paddling. I did have the good sense to bring a tent, sleeping bag, food, and the very necessary 12 pack of cold beer in the cooler to whet my thirst after the trip and to while the evening hours at the campfire away.

I had to borrow everything for the river trip itself (boat, paddle, helmet, life jacket etc) from Terry Weeks. Upon arrival at Sam Moore's house, I received a large net bag of gear, to include spray skirt etc..., and upon an order issued by General Sam, placed it in the back of Don Spangler's car. I specifically remember being awed at how Sam cracked orders to all those arriving and systematically, an odd assortment of multicolor rope and bungy cords wrapped the boats onto racks. The paddles were literally attached to racks along side the boats with a mystical set of odd-looking knots composed primarily of half hitches. Somehow all of the boats were successfully loaded on a variety of vehicles and a trailer and we were off. I remember wondering what I was getting into as I loaded up in Don's station wagon with the rustic roof racks that were adhered to the roof strictly by the forces of gravity (no apparent device holding it down). The boats were of a variety of vintages, mostly fiberglass, with ragged points at the bow, some had duct tape holding either the stern or bow together. Most had extra tape here and there to prevent leaks. The majority were kayaks and the buzz was about laying up new ones in Sam's backyard. I quickly realized that boats were like cheese. The aged fiberglass boats with multiple patches, and scratches were probably the ones you wanted to be around if you were interested in a good story with a glass of wine.

When we got to the river I had everything I needed except the critical, drown proofing, life jacket. I will never forget how ticked off Sam Moore was about that, giving me a succinct, but humiliating lecture in being "responsible for one's own gear even if it was borrowed". Thankfully Mike Weeks drove all the way to Wartburg to buy a really cheap, orange, kid-sized one for me. Sam really didn't think I should paddle with it, but Charles and Mike assured him that I'd be ok. I will



Jan & husband On Mineral Creek in Alaska.

Jan learned to paddle a C boat by determination and persistence. She is passing that love of the river on to her two daughters, who may pass it on to their kids and it started with the BWA!

never forget the humiliation of being a woman paddling a manly C-boat (one that looked like it had been built to accommodate Landis' testosterone load - it was at least 13 feet long and the largest penile shaped boat I remember) with a little kid's neon orange life jacket on. I definitely felt like a drafted soldier being officially inducted into the river annals fraternity, as there were maybe two other women on the trip, one being Sam's wife, Karen. I set out on the river, paddling with as much determination as my bent, aching ankles would permit as I did not want to be an additional liability by becoming a dreaded Swimmer. The Emory was relatively smooth, not too much to upset the boat as long as you paddled hard through the rapids. I received a small confidence boost from Charles who kept telling me I looked good in neon orange. I also received good pointers from Sam attempting to teach me what an eddy was. I also remember being glad that at least I had brought my own tent and 12 pack of beer.

The river was great, Sam was a good teacher, Charles and Mike helped by demonstrating what to do or what not to do. Later that night (I don't remember details, but at some point in a routine BWA post river alcohol binge, Mark Wilson and some others hoisted Sam's C-boat up in a tree about 20 or 30 feet using Sam's throw rope. I will never forget his face the next morning. His eyes were the size of big chocolate moon pies and his face was a bright shade of strawberry red. I remember thinking how funny the "be responsible for your own gear" message seemed that morning! I think it delayed us getting to the river a good half hour. We paddled that Sunday, my confidence slightly better and I ran Widowmaker successfully.

I knew after that trip that I was hooked on canoeing/kayaking-it didn't matter if I would ever be good. The stories alone would more than make up for it, along with plenty of interesting boaters to observe. Then there was the river experience itself, an opportunity to hone decision-making skills, improve physical conditioning, but mostly an opportunity to be outside on a river, away from the crowded city. In addition, there was an entirely new vocabulary that only a boater could understand, a fraternity built in calm waters and in tough, dangerous rapids, but a camaraderie that would always prove interesting and endearing.

The Virtual Campfire: Why we boat series

It Was The Tribe That Kept Me Sane

John Dougherty

I can't tell you how important the BWA was to me in the 80s and the early part of the 90s. It was the tribe that kept me sane and helped me recover from a week of taxing work - it was such a completely different experience to be on a river that demands complete presence of mind and to be there with such great people - for me it captured some pre-industrial age tribal spirit that nourished in some fundamental way. Of course, tribes have their rituals (taking students down Nemo for the first time), and their gods and goddesses (the former with a six-pack and the latter dressed in rubber). I missed the tribe so much that when I was on sabbatical in DC for 12 months, I spent most of my weekends meeting up with BWA folks in WPA or in WVA, and of course had to come back to Lexington for Barry and Cynthia's New Year's eve party to welcome in 1988.

It was Beuren who finally convinced me to try whitewater boating. I had been a flatwater - northern minnesota - trekking - portaging - mosquito-eating boater before moving to Lexington in '73. Beuren had been suggesting that I try WW boating for years before I finally said yes. One of my early trips in '81 or '82 was on the Chattooga in flood, where Beuren assured me that it would be no problem to take my double-hulled plastic lake-boat, with no way to brace myself in and with no flotation, down Bull Sluice. Look at the size of that eddy at the bottom - and . . . I'll be down there with a throw rope. Of course I was reassured, and of course I was trashed in the hole - but true to his word Beuren pulled me out of the river before I got to Augusta and those nice folks in Savannah sent my boat back real soon.

Buying a boat designed for whitewater (Nolan Whitesell's 50th Pirhana) made doing those rivers so much easier, especially after going to Madawaska. I also bought a Gyramax C- 1 from Ed at RiverSports, for which I actually took an NOC course to learn how to do pop-ups. There were so many trips, clinics, rivers, and experiences - Ocoee, BSF, Obed, Lower Gauley, Cheat, the New, the Drys of the New (so many boulders and great drops), Nolichucky, Yough, Potomac, Chattooga, Nanny, Maddy, etc. And of course, the Elkhorn for quick winter trips. So many campgrounds and so many restaurants - Mildred's (Mike - did you go there only for the banana pudding?) and the Blue Heron on the way back home.

At the post-film festival parties, nobody, but nobody, ever, ever, came close to beating me and Lythia Metzmeier in the swimming pool dance contests. Of course boating makes folks much better dancers, but I have to say that we were outstanding in spontaneous and unrehearsed gyrations in everything from dirty dancing to latin beats. There should be a plaque at the swimming pool honoring our accomplishments during those professional-level performances. Hanging around with Sally Rose and taking all those great road trips with her were great and varied experiences. On one trip we paddled a wilderness river in Ontario in the morning and were at a Eurythmic's concert (still dressed in polypros, that evening).

Even though I am so far away and am not good at staying in touch, I still feel connected to every BWA member that I've ever shared an eddy, a beer, or a dessert buffet with. You are in me still. A few mysteries remain: Who is the clinic wrestling champ? How many beers does it really take to get from the stadium parking lot to Tsali or Frozen Head campground? Who has not gotten fooled by Double-Suck? Is there a way to get down Pure Screaming Hell in an open boat without getting two tons of water in the boat? What ever happened to the devil worshipping - child sacrificing cult that used to hang out in the abandoned railroad tunnels on the road to the BSF?

The answers are still out there, I believe.



John, moved to Oregon years ago, but his heart and mind still turns to his paddling days in the Southeast with the friends he has in the BWA. He still reads the *Bowlines*.

A Major Change for the BWA's most Paddled Home Stream is coming!



The pool just below the Jim Beam Distillery on Elkhorn Creek.

Elkhorn Creek has been the go to stream for many decades of paddlers in central Kentucky. It gave many of us the opportunity our first experience of paddling and learning how to run whitewater. The convenience of the Elkhorn was important to paddling and to the forming of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association. It provided a place to learn the skills needed to paddle moving water and a place you could go after work or on a weekend for enjoyment with friends on a moments notice.

Best of all it was relatively safe for someone that was new to the sport yet it had rapids that at higher water levels provided some challenge to learn on. The one location that required paddlers to be most careful was the old distillery dam at Jim Beam. Rebar and a powerful hydraulic provided a danger potential for those who had little or no skill or understanding to the consequences of not being careful around the dam. There has been several drownings or near drownings at the dam over the decades, some where at a time of high water, one was of a doctor who tried to portage the dam on river right. The dam was also a popular spot for those who liked to fish, that also made it a spot for lot of trash that many left behind.

It will take a while for us to discover how the lost of the dam will affect us paddlers. There is no telling of what is to be found in the pool above the dam.... Hope there will be a good spot to surf or play!

Don Spangler



Elkhorn Dam Removal - Details



As some of you may have heard by now, the fated removal of the low-head dam on Elkhorn Creek is finally in motion. A public notice was published in the local paper and spread around social media by our friends at Canoe Kentucky. This is a monumental victory for both recreational and whitewater paddlers, and one that the Bluegrass Wildwater Association has been advocating for decades.

The public is invited to send comments about the project to the Kentucky Division of Water by Friday, October 9th. The BWA would like to encourage its members to respond to this call for comments by clicking the button below. Please say THANK YOU and share your story about why the dam removal is important to you as a Kentucky paddler.

Send Email to : DOWFloodplain@ky.gov now!

A copy of the permit application to remove the Elkhorn Dam was obtained by your Steering Committee. Below are what we believe to be the highlights of the document for those who don't wish to dive into the 49-pages on your own. For those who do wish to read the document for themselves, a link to the PDF is included below!

SUMMARY:

- Project is expected to last one-two weeks for complete removal is slated for anytime between Fall 2020 & Summer 2021.
- The project area is approximately one acre, as outlined in the above image.
- Disposal of removed materials will take place at on-site treatment lagoons approximately 700' north of the dam removal construction area, also outlined in the above image (see page 12 of the permit application PDF for a full size image).
- A temporary work pad and access road will be constructed to facilitate the project (on the Jim Beam side of the creek), after which both will be removed.
- Vegetation along the right descending bank, immediately downstream of the dam, will be removed to allow access. Disturbed areas will be seeded and covered with straw mulch or erosion blanket after completion.
- Permanent impacts are expected to be limited the deposition of rubble material within the scour hole located down stream of the dam during demolition, which will impact approximately 25 feet (0.09 acre) of perennial stream. Some material will remain within the stream to partially fill the scour hole and establish proper stream gradient.
- The dam will be mechanically removed in lifts by creating notches in the dam to lower the water level and expose the concrete for removal.
- The intent is not to remove the footer of the dam, which would require extensive excavation.
- Following complete removal of the dam, the pump house will be removed, and the material will be hauled to the on-site disposal area.
- No endangered species are expected to be adversely affected by the project.

Read the full permit application:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yzvys9UeGAgpzYzx1D2FbbRY-kbM-vPTg/view>

Why now, after all these years?

Straight from the permit application: "The dam and pump house were originally utilized for the [Jim Beam] fire suppression system. A fire suppression system linked to the public water supply is currently being installed; therefore, the dam and pump house are no longer needed. Several deaths have occurred at the dam location due to the currents created by the low-head dam. The goal of this project is to remove the low-head dam and pump house from within the banks of Elkhorn Creek at the Jim Beam Old Grand-Dad Plant in efforts to remove safety hazards and restore natural flows back to this portion of the stream."



Photograph 1: View of Elkhorn Creek facing upstream towards the low-head dam and pump house. June 23, 2020.

What does the dam removal mean for the creek and for paddlers like us?

We can only speculate what the impact of the dam removal will be. However, based on low-head dam removals on other creeks throughout the US, we can be certain the health of the stream will be improved. Migratory fish, salamanders, mussels, and other species that depend on stream flow will be able to flourish and expand their habitats.

For paddlers, we can expect new rapids to appear that have long been covered by the pool between Church Wave and the dam.

Dam Wave may be altered or may disappear entirely due to construction impacts from the removal process and scour hole, or it may stay the same - this is the most uncertain element.



Photograph 2: View of Elkhorn Creek facing downstream towards the low-head dam and pump house. June 23, 2020.

Downstream from Dam Wave, nothing is likely to change after the rubble and sediment have cleared.

As the cherry on top, the Elkhorn should be accessible to paddlers at levels that would have previously been considered too high to safely portage the dam, opening up new possibilities. Elkhorn run at 10,000 cfs, anyone?

Eddy Lines of Interest

BWA Steering Committee Meeting Minutes 9/8/2020

A virtual meeting of Bluegrass Wildwater Association was held. Meeting called to order 7:35 PM.

Name	Office	Present	
Sandra Broadus	President	Y	
Emily Grimes	Vice President	Y	
Walt Hummel	Secretary	Y	
Kyle Koeberlein	Treasurer		
Don Spangler	Newsletter Editor		
Bob Larkin	River Conservation Liaison	Y	
Dave Foreman	Safety Officer		
Clay Warren	Program Director	Y	
Regina Hatfield	Film Festival Coordinator		
Michael Williams	Web Meister	Y	
Jansen Koeberlein	Gear Meister		
Gus Milton	Member At Large	Y	
William Samples	Membership Coordinator		
Robert Watts	Past President	Y	

Steering Committee Members in Attendance

Officer Reports

- Developing a database of property owners to facilitate building better relationships between the boating community and the property owners.
- Survey drawing is closed. Bill Lynch won the \$50 J&H gift card

Program

- Bethany and Kevin discussed what goes on at American Whitewater and answered questions. Had a drawing for AW gear, Sarah won the hoodie and Gus won the trucker hat.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned on 9/08/2020 @ 8:47 P.M.

Walt Hummel
9/8/2020
Secretary