

Keel-hauler's Ka-news

APRIL, 2026



President's Message From Robin Shell

Happy spring boaters!!! Spring has slowly been touching down, even though we haven't been completely out of the woods (6-8" had been expected as I'm writing this, hopefully that doesn't come to pass).

There is SO much going on. Let's get right to it.

Cleveland Amateur Boatbuilding and Boating Society (CABBS) has reached out to us to see how we can help each other out, as we are very similar clubs. If anyone has an interest in boat building (canoe, kayak, paddleboard, runabout or small sailboat), let me know and I'll get you in touch with CABBS.

CFalls Fest is coming up fast on April 25. If you'd like to work at the KHCC booth for a bit, please let me know. We always have a great presence at this event.

3ROC Pay-What-You-Want Adventure Race is taking place on Saturday, May 16 in Pittsburgh. This race combines trail running, mountain biking, paddling and navigation in a team-based challenge of 1-4 athletes per team. There is a 31 mile, 6 hour division and a 82 mile, 12 hour division. You can find more information here:

<https://www.adventuresignup.com/Race/PA/Pittsburgh/3ROCAventureRace>

May 16 is also the second annual NEO Adventure Fest. Thank you to Open Trail Collective for putting this on. Tim Eberling is going to be manning the booth along with some other volunteers. It is Stony Fest weekend, but if you aren't going to make it out to Stony Fest and would like to volunteer, please reach out to me and/or Tim. The more hands, the lighter the work.

<https://www.opentrailcollective.org/neo-adventure-fest>

We are coming up to festival season. We kick it off with our own Slip Fest, then there's Stony Fest and Cheat Fest. Who else isn't going to be home for the remainder of the spring/summer

weekends??? Kristina McCrone is coordinating Stony Fest and Laura Vaughn is coordinating Cheat Fest. Thank you, ladies! We can't do this without you.

And, of course, our very own Slip Fest. Pre-sales T-shirts have come and gone, but there will be some to buy at the festival.

T-Shirt Design (by Rachel Faber)



More information to be found at: <https://www.keelhauler.com/slip-fest>

And let's not forget about our amazing raffle. Not only do we have some amazing prizes to be had at the festival (must be present to win those), but we have a **Medium Antix 3.0** for raffle (you do not need to be present to win). Thank you to Andrea Morgen, Seth Anderson and Ace Adventure for assistance with obtaining the Antix. Tickets are \$20 each or 3 for \$50.



<https://www.keelhauler.com/store/antix-30-slipfest-affle>

A big THANK YOU goes out to all our sponsors!

AND.... we can't forget to thank the entire Slip Fest Committee! We'll get your names out after the festival, because there are so many of you, but you know we can't do it without you.

Phew, that was a LOT! Thank you all for reading and I'll see you on the river!

Robin Shell, President, 216-482-6100

**Veep's Views
By Jacki Zevenbergen**

The trip schedule is coming along nicely. We still could use some more organizers, but a lot of members - both new and old - have stepped up. The scheduled trips are really an asset for our newest members because they allow them to communicate with and meet so many other members.

Please review the trip schedule and let me know if I can add you. I'm especially interested in getting organizers for the May and June trips with an ** in the organizer column. We have hundreds of members so trips on multiple rivers in a weekend are not a problem.

Please consider submitting a short trip report and/or some photos to the newsletter after your trip. If you (or a participant) made an online post after the trip you can copy and paste that to submit to the newsletter. Some of our members don't use social media but they will enjoy hearing about your adventures!

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at Slip Fest! This is our annual club fundraiser. Bring some gear to swap and plenty of money for gear, raffles, auctions, camping, food, drink and race participation.

March traffic on both the upper and lower slip has been vibrant, and we have lots of good beta on the racecourse. It's looking good but please send pictures if anything problematic comes down in the next few weeks. Link to view schedule:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iRGtZinVPHOzy-tfEbs3OfR3s93VSBp3ULA6l3gQoM8/edit?usp=sharing>

Jacki Z

**Keel-hauler Treasurer's Report
March 31, 2026
From Michael Duvall**

Checking \$9699.29

**Volunteers are needed for Slip Fest
April 17th -19th, 2026**

Slip Fest is in need of volunteers to help with the swap meet, selling raffle tickets, and shuttle bunnies! Please reach out to Rachel Faber faber.rach@gmail.com or Robin Shell clevelandkeelhaulers@gmail.com if you can help, please!

More information here: [Slip Fest — Keel-Haulers Canoe Club](#)

**Join us at ↑ SLIP ↑
 FEST ↑ **APRIL
17-19th****

**Slipping into Spring 2026
From Jacki Zevenbergen**

According to participant feedback, the 6th annual Slipping into Spring trip was a great success. Held on the weekend after the first day of spring, this trip draws members from near and far. It is an early afternoon paddle that takes advantage of increasing hours of daylight, and if we are lucky, milder spring temperatures.

Terry Griner, Paul Isaac and I did a recon trip on Friday afternoon to see if any wood had moved since the previous weekend. It was a very pleasant run and was my chance to knock off the rust before Saturday.

This year, 20 different members from Michigan, Columbus, Cincinnati, NE Ohio and Southwestern PA joined in over the 2 days. We're down a bit from the first few years when we had over 40 paddlers, but a lot of people who started in those covid years have moved on to bigger and better rivers or other outdoor pursuits.

This was a wonderful group with a few LOYO boaters doing PFDs of the RP to Harris section and one newer boater doing a PFD of the Lower Slip. A few paddlers went earlier on Saturday or Sunday. The weather was wonderful for March with high temps in the 50s on Saturday and 70s on Sunday. Water levels at 550 to 650 cfs had just the right cushion for my tastes and practice rolls weren't too painful on Sunday when the water temp was around 50 degrees. Carrie Betts suggested a wonderful restaurant called Georgetown Eats for our after-paddle meal on Saturday night. 8 of us had a great farm to table meal there. A few people had to leave us after the Saturday run, but several different members joined us

on Sunday. At the Mill we lost Ethan to the noble task of helping Martin and Matt (WW) remove the strainer in Maze.

It amazes me how many of you have been a part of this spring event throughout the years. These two pictures represent some of the best weather. I know many of you have navigated a gauntlet of snow and ice in other years 🤔 🤔

Jacki Z



March 21, 2021



March 21, 2026. Slipping into Spring. A wonderful tradition continues. Photo credits 2026 Jim Wojno

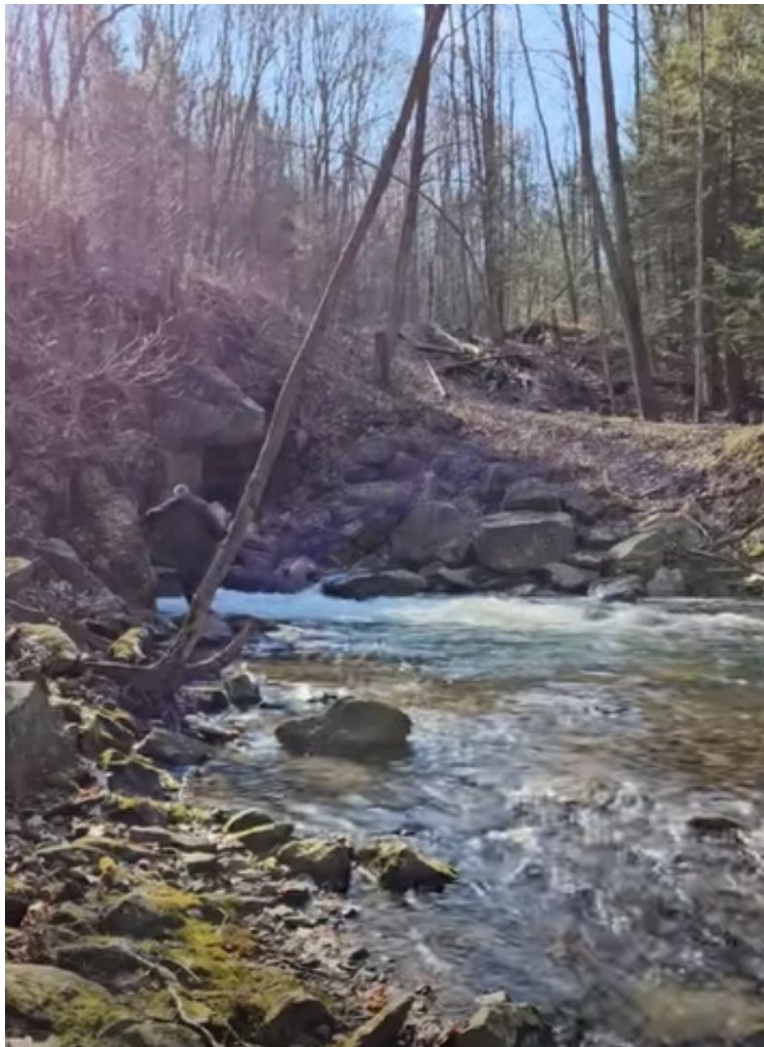


**Great day on the Casselman!
March 14, 2026
From Joyce Schrickel**

Paddled the Casselman at 3 ft. Great day on the river. Video is across the river from the put in. The best sound on earth introducing our time of the year. Thank you to Tawni Wilson, Mark, John, Kevin and Robin Lockshine Shell for joining as well as Chuck McDowell. SYOTR.

Video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1253006466365474>



Keel-hauler River Ratings
River Ratings page:
<https://www.keelhauler.com/river-ratings>

These are the generally accepted river ratings for normal water levels indicated. Weather and water conditions can drastically alter the nature and difficulty of any river. Water level is extremely critical, and it should be determined prior to accepting these general river guidelines. Ratings are not a substitute for careful scouting and a realistic evaluation of one's own paddling skills. Ratings are indicative of the paddler skill level required to attempt the entire section not just the difficulty of individual rapids.

Classification of Rivers

BASIS OF RIVER RATINGS

- Average Gradient
- Maximum Gradient
- Volume river vs Gradient
- Width of River
- Ease of Rescue
- Inaccessibility
- Difficulty of Rapids
- Continuousness and/or rapid length
- Obstacles, rocks, trees, undercuts
- Water Temperature

INTERNATIONAL RATING DEFINITIONS

International River Rating Vs. Keel-Hauler Rating

- | • International
Rating | • Keel-Hauler
Rating |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| • I | • 0 - 7 |
| • II | • 8 - 14 |
| • III | • 15 - 25 |
| • IV | • 26 - 33 |
| • V | • 34 - 37 |
| • VI | • 38 - 42 |

WHEN COMPARING TWO RIVER SECTIONS

A lower rating does not mean that you can't run a harder section, only that you will be much more challenged

- +/- 1 point - Very Similar

- +/- 2 points - Noticeable Difference
- +/- 3 points - Meaningful Difference
- +/- 5 points - Profound Difference

A list of rivers and their current ratings (sometimes per section of the river) can be found:

[River Ratings — Keel-Haulers Canoe Club](#)

The river rating information is presented as a spreadsheet so that you may sort and filter it to suit or needs. Even save a copy locally if you would like!

[If you are on a mobile device \(or want to open this in Google Sheets\), click here to open the ratings spreadsheet within the Google Sheets app.](#)

* If a record has an asterisk, the rating is based upon a short portage of rapid(s) that would otherwise significantly increase the rating.

Feedback on river ratings are currently being requested. Before you consider suggesting a new river rating, please read this: <https://bcpoa.org/khcc/SelfRatingSystem.pdf>

**Wet Spring Reminder:
Keep the KHCC River Ratings Current**

Wet Spring Reminder: Keep the KHCC River Ratings Current

Spring is here—and with it comes the best (and most changeable) paddling season of the year. Levels jump, channels shift, wood moves, and a river that felt “friendly” last season can feel like a completely different run the next time you show up.

That’s exactly why the Keel-Haulers River Rating System needs regular real-world feedback.

A quick reminder of what the ratings are meant to do:

- The ratings are the generally accepted guidelines for the normal water levels listed.
- Water level is extremely critical, and weather/conditions can drastically alter difficulty.
- Ratings are not a substitute for careful scouting and realistic self-evaluation.
- Ratings reflect the paddler skill level required for the entire section—not just one rapid.

Our KHCC system is intentionally granular, which makes it powerful for comparing runs—when it stays current. When you’re comparing two river sections, even small differences matter:

- +/- 1 point: Very Similar
- +/- 2 points: Noticeable Difference
- +/- 3 points: Meaningful Difference
- +/- 5 points: Profound Difference

How you can help (2 minutes after your trip)

We're collecting simple "verification" notes from paddlers after they run sections listed on the River Ratings spreadsheet. You don't have to be an expert. You just need recent on-water experience and an honest comparison to other rivers you've run.

After you paddle a listed section, please send a quick email saying either:

- "I agree — this rating still feels correct," OR
- "I disagree — here's what I'd change and why."

Where to send it

To: khriverrating@gmail.com

River Ratings page:

<https://www.keelhauler.com/river-ratings>

Copy/paste template

Subject: River Rating Feedback – [River Name]

Body:

River: [River Name]

Section: [Section Name]

Level: [Level when you ran it — use the closest level listed in the spreadsheet, or suggest a new one]

Rating on site today: [KHCC number]

Feedback:

- I agree this rating still feels correct.

OR

- I disagree. I think it should be: [new KHCC number]

Why: [1–5 sentences is plenty — what felt different, and how it compares to similar-rated runs]

Optional (helpful if you have it):

Date paddled: Gauge / cfs / stage (if you noted it):

Any notable changes (wood, new hazard, access issues, etc.):

One small spreadsheet tip

If a listing has an asterisk (*), the rating assumes a short portage of rapid(s) that would otherwise significantly increase the rating.

Safety note (because spring is spicy)

Please keep using the ratings the way they're intended: check levels, scout when needed, and be honest about your skills. If you're paddling Class III or higher, KHCC strongly encourages completing an accredited Swiftwater Rescue Course.

If everyone who paddles this spring sends just one quick verification email, we'll keep this resource accurate, relevant, and truly useful—especially for newer paddlers building confidence and choosing trips wisely.

Domenic Bentz—River Ratings Feedback Coordinator

Proposed 2026 Trip Schedule By Jacki Zevenbergen

[2026 trip/release/event schedule as of 02/13/2026 - Google Sheets](#)

Please review this proposed schedule and reach out to me or Cliff to volunteer to organize at least 1 trip during 2026. We could especially use organizers for pre-planned, weekend Slip, LOYO and Stony trips. In addition to myself and Cliff, there are plenty of members who will mentor you through the trip organizer process if you are new to organizing. Please pay it forward to the club for the support you received as a new boater or the subsidized training you received from the club.

Jacki vpkeelhaulers@gmail.com

Cliff cwire64@sbcglobal.net

April	4,5	Stony Release	21	
April	4,5	North Branch Potomac Release and Race	18	
April	5	Easter Sunrise Long Lake	Flat	Tim Eberling
April	8-12	TSRA Rendezvous (TN)		TSRA
April	12	Slip	13-21	Mike Gillam
April	17-19	Slipfest	13-21	Rachel Faber
April		Cheat and Potomac South Branch Watersheds - Casselman, Dry Fork, Upper Big Sandy or Little Sandy	18	
April	3rd sat	Upper Yough Release Tentative	32	Expert level - needs organizer
April		Middle Fork and Tygert	29	Expert level - needs organizer
April	24	Scenarios class		Duffy - Full
April	4th sat	Upper Yough Release Tentative	32	Expert level - needs organizer
April	25	Mad Hatters Race		Lake Metroparks
April	25	Cuyahoga Falls Kayak Fest	28	Need tent setup organizer
April	25?	Cheat Canyon Paddle (Sat) and Race Clinic (Sun) WV	26	Expert level - needs organizer
May	1st fri,sat,Mon	Upper Yough	32	Expert level - needs organizer
May	1-3	Cheat Fest and Race (include Narrows or similar trip?)	18-26	Laura Vaughn
May	2,3	Stony Release	21	
May	2,3	N BR Potomac Release	18	Mike Bailey
May	2,3	Slip (Upper)	21	
May	9	Grand River	6	Mark Spang
May	9,10	Cheat Narrows (WV) or Casselman (PA)	18	**
May	9, 10	Cheat and Potomac South Branch Watersheds - Dry Fork, Upper Big Sandy or Little Sandy	21	**

May	10	Slip (Mother's Day)	13-21	**
May		Intro to Cheat Canyon	26	Expert level - needs organizer
May	8 & 11	Upper Yough Release Tentative	32	Expert level - needs organizer
May	15	Upper Yough Release Tentative	32	Expert level - needs organizer
May	15-17	Stony Rendezvous and Race	21	Benscreek CC
May	16	Stony Rendezvous Skills Practice (Lower)		Chris Curley
May	During fest	Stony Canyon or comparable	21	Kristina McCrone
May	16, 7pm	Stony Potluck Dinner		Anne Little/Kristina McCrone
May	16	NEO Ohio Outdoor Adventure Fest		Tim Eberling
May	16,17	N BR Potomac Release	18	
May	16,17	Dry Fork with North Branch Fall Back		Cliff Wire
May	23	Stony Release Memorial Day Weekend	21	**
May	24	Slip	13-21	Meesh Crum
May	23, 24 or 25	Loyo	23	**
May	23, 24 or 25	Upper Yough Release Tentative	32	Expert level - needs organizer
May	30	Cheat Narrows (WV)	18	Micah Vertal
May	30	CVNP Lock 29 Stream Cleanup		Xavier Rivera
May	31	LOYO	23	Micah Vertal
May	30,31	Stony Release	21	**
June		Wednesdays on the Water (Lock 29 beginner WW)	11	Doug Waltman
June	5 & 8	Upper Yough (all Fri and Monday plus last 2 Saturdays)	32	Expert level - needs organizer
June	6	Savage	26	Expert level - needs organizer
June	6, 7	TRPC Slip Clinic		TRPC
June	13,14	Cheat Canyon	26	Expert level - needs organizer
June	13,14	Cheat Narrows (WV) or Casselman (PA)	18	**
June	13,14	Stony Release	21	**
June	13,14	LOYO	23	**
June	14	Middle Yough	12	Valentina Gomez
June	13,14	Upper New	Class II	Mary Spikowski
June	13,14	New River Gorge	26	Expert level - needs organizer
June	20,21	LOYO	23	**
June	20, 21	Slip (Father's Day)	13-21	**
June	27,28	New River Dries Release (Tentative)	32	Expert level - needs organizer

June	27,28	Stony Release		
June , July	27-6	Week of Rivers CCC (NC)		Jacki Z
July	5	Savage	26	Expert level - needs organizer
July	5	New River Dries Release (Tentative)	32	Expert level - needs organizer
July		Wednesdays on the Water (Lock 29 beginner WW)	11	Doug Waltman
July		Cheat Canyon	26	Expert level - needs organizer
July	5,6	Cheat Narrows (WV) or Casselman (PA)	18	
July	11,12	Cheat Narrows (WV) or Casselman (PA)	18	
July	11,12	New River Dries Release (Tentative)	32	Expert level - needs organizer
July	11,12	Stony Release	21	
July	11,12	LOYO	23	Mary Spikowski
July	11,12	Middle Yough	12	
July	17-18	Blazing Paddles		Tim Eberling
July		Upper Yough (All Mon, Fri, Sat) ?	32	Expert level - needs organizer
July	18	New River Dries Release (Tentative)	32	Expert level - needs organizer
July	19	LOYO	23	Dave Roush
July	21 (Tues)	LOYO	23	Matt Fredmonsky
July		Middle Yough	12	
July		Upper New		
July		New River Gorge	26	Expert level - needs organizer
July	25,26	Stony Release	21	
July	25,26	LOYO	23	CPC Mary?
August		Wednesdays on the Water (Lock 29 beginner WW)	11	Doug Waltman
August	1,2	Turkey Bash		TRPC
August		Upper Yough (All Mon, Fri, Sat) ?	32	Expert level - needs organizer
August	8,9	Stony Release	21	Not likely to have water
August	8,9	Summer Picnic Ohiopyle (tentative)		
August	8,9	LOYO	23	
August	8,9	Middle Yough	12	
August	15	Whiskey Island Paddle fest		
August	15,16	LOYO	23	
August	15,16	Upper New		
August	15,16	New River Gorge	26	

August	22,23	Stony Release	21	Not likely to have water
August	22,23	LOYO	23	Dave Roush
August	22,23	Middle Yough	12	
August	22,23	Upper New		
August	22,23	New River Gorge	26	Expert level - needs organizer
September		Wednesdays on the Water (Lock 29 beginner WW)	11	Doug Waltman
September		Upper Yough (all Fri and Monday plus first 2 Saturdays)	32	Expert level - needs organizer
September	5,6,19,20	Stony Release	21	
September	11-14	Upper Gauley Release	33	Expert level - needs organizer
September	11-14	Lower Gauley Release	27	Expert level - needs organizer
September	12,13	LOYO	23	
September	12,13	Middle Yough	12	
September	18-20	Upper New		
September	18-20	New River Gorge	26	Expert level - needs organizer
September	17-21	Upper Gauley Release	33	Expert level - needs organizer
September	17-21	Lower Gauley Release	27	Expert level - needs organizer
September	17-20	Gauley Fest		
September	26	Savage	26	Expert level - needs organizer
September	26,27	Upper New		
September	26,27	New River Gorge	26	Expert level - needs organizer
September	25-28	Upper Gauley Release	33	Expert level - needs organizer
September	25-28	Lower Gauley Release	27	Expert level - needs organizer
October		Upper Yough (first 2 Fri and Monday plus first Saturday)	32	Expert level - needs organizer
October	2-5	Upper Gauley Release	33	Expert level - needs organizer
October	2-5	Lower Gauley Release	27	Expert level - needs organizer
October	3,4,17,18	Stony Release	21	
October		Slip		
October		Annual Election		
October	10,11	Fall Colors Trip - WV (Gauley, NRG, Upper New)		Harlie and Seth
October	10,11	Upper Gauley Release	33	Expert level - needs organizer
October	10,11	Lower Gauley Release	27	Expert level - needs organizer
October	12	Holiday Paddle		
October		LOYO	23	

October		Middle Yough	12	
October	17,18?	Upper New		
October	18	New River Gorge - Bridge Day	26	No Club Trip
October	17,18	Upper Gauley Release	33	Expert level - needs organizer
October	17,18	Lower Gauley Release	27	Expert level - needs organizer
October		Slip		
November	7,8	Tohican Release		Doug Waltman with Lehigh Club
November		LOYO	23	
November		Slip	13-21	
November	21	Holiday Party		

April Trips and Events Calendar of Events — Keel-Haulers Canoe Club

4, 5 APR, SAT
NB Potomac Release (Day 1/2)
Stony release (Day 1/2)

8-12 APR, WED
11am Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association Rendezvous, Plateau Rd, Crossville, TN 38571 [Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association - Rendezvous 2026](#)

12 APR, SUN
Slippery Rock Trip

17-19 APR, FRI
3pm – 1am Slip Fest and Race (Day 1/2)
Breakneck Campground - Slippery Rock, 6pm

24-26 APR, FRI
7pm, All Scenarios Swift Water Rescue Class (3 days)

25 APR, SUN
Cuyahoga Falls Kayak Fest, www.cfallsfest.com

1-2 MAY, FRI
10am cheat fest and race (Day 1/2), Albright, West Virginia, [Cheat River Festival – Friends of the Cheat's annual Fundraiser and Outreach event for river enthusiasts, families, musicians, and artists!](#)

2-3 MAY, SAT
NB Potomac Trip (Day 1/2)
Stony and NB releases (Day 1/2)

2025-2026 Club Officers

President:	Robin Shell	Clevelandkeelhaulers@gmail.com
VP:	Jacki Zevenbergen	VPkeelhaulers@gmail.com
Secretary:	Meesh Crum	
Treasurer:	Michael Duvall	

Meetings: Approximately 4 meetings per year. Please check the website for the next meeting time and location.

Membership: \$20 per year. Membership Chairman: Rachel Faber, membershipkeelhauler@gmail.com
New memberships, renewals, change in address or phone, mail to the Treasurer: Keel-hauler Canoe Club, 2215 Atkins Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107.

Any opinions, views or recommendations expressed in the articles in this Newsletter are those of the article's author. Printing these articles in no way implies approval or advocacy of any of the opinions, views or recommendations by the Keel-Haulers Canoe Club or any of its Officers, editor, or members. Water sports are a potentially dangerous activity. Keel-Haulers Canoe Club recommends and encourages all of its members and others to abide by all laws, regulations and recommended practices when engaging in such activity. Each member is responsible for assessing her/his own abilities and for not engaging in activities which are beyond those limits. Members assume any and all risk when choosing to participate in any activity and the Keel-Haulers Canoe Club is not responsible for any damage resulting from such participation.

KHCC WEB PAGE URL: www.keelhauler.com

Please consider writing a trip report, an article, or sending a photo for the next newsletter! The deadline for the May 2026 issue of the newsletter is 4/23/2026. Please send articles and/or pictures to: Kelly Miller at peetzaguy@aol.com.

Keel-Hauler Ka-news

APRIL 2026

Kelly Miller, Editor

