

CLUB BUSINESS AT THE PUT-IN

The President Reports from the Canoe Saddle:

In the mid-Atlantic, there has been an abundance of rain—some of it torrential. It has made paddling some rarely available streams possible. Two trip reports, one about the Conway and the other about the Covington, attest to all of that water. Photographs from the Valley Falls waterfall workshop will document the levels there. There is enough water that the Army Corps of Engineers has converted a variable release on August 25 and 26 into the standard release of 1000 cfs. This has meant that some paddling, such as that on the Lehigh, has been done in the rain and that some paddlers had rivers running under their tents. Gotta love loading up boats in the rain and then trying to dry out every piece of gear you have! On the other hand, reports from Karen Egbert and Jon Hitchings, who spend the Summer in Colorado, indicate that water levels are very low out there. Even some scheduled agricultural releases have been cancelled. They have made a few runs in the Royal Gorge, but not done much else.

Because the water levels have been so high (the Potomac has not been below three feet), there have been some cancellations of activities. The Team River Runner Community Event was washed out twice and will be rescheduled for next year. We are in a holding pattern for the September Tire Rodeo at Brunswick and awaiting a final decision. Lightning struck a second time for the Annual Summer Picnic. No, we did not have lightning and wind like last year, but we did have high water which would have made the crossing difficult and the beach area small. It had already resulted in more strainers. Fortunately we are a flexible bunch. Mike and Daryl Martin, who have a home in Poolesville and are a hop-skip-jump away from Seneca Creek (site of a recent de-wooding fest) opened up their place to the BRV. We had real tables instead of canoes, for the vast array of food that arrived. Folks also had the chance to look at the cumulative set of trivia questions for 2018. Mark Wray, our VP, did an excellent job of arranging for drinks and fried chicken. Ginny DeDeau was the winner of the door-prize, Roy Sewall's photo book, Great Falls and Mather Gorge. Congratulations, Ginny! And thanks to all who helped with the arrangements. I understand that photos will be in the next newsletter!

We had a well attended mid-Summer program that featured a variety of videos. Our next meeting tentatively will be **Monday, September 10**. The program content is still in the works. The location will be the Clara Barton Rec Center (7425 MacArthur Blvd., Ste. 151, Cabin John, MD 20218) followed by pizza at Ledo's (5245 River Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816; 301-656-5336).

We have a draft roster that we will be circulating. Please check the information for accuracy. (Oh, I guess that I will need to update my own information given my recent move!) Please make sure that you are current for your 2018 dues—so that you can remain on the mailing list and in the roster. The dues for 2018 are \$10. (A mere pittance, and we do need to pay for things like meeting room rental.) Dues may be sent to Ginny DeSeau (1105 Highwood Road, Rockville, MD 20851) or paid directly at the meeting. (We are still working on that PayPal thing!)

Rick Koller

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UPCOMING EVENTS, RELEASES, AND TRIPS

August 25-Mark Wray (our VP) and his band will perform at the Westover Beer Garden in Arlington, VA from 5 to 9 P.M. All are welcome to attend

August 25-Bloomington-John Snitzer (navajuela@comcast.com)

August 26-Bloomington (skills development)-Beth Koller (240-506-0417)

August 25 & 26-Lehigh Release

<https://www.discoverlehighvalley.com/event/dam-release-whitewater-on-the-lehigh-river/50858/>

August 25 & 26-Stonycreek Release

<https://benscreekcanoecub.com/quemahoning-releases/>

September 1 & 2-Lehigh Release

September 8-Tentative Tire Rodeo (Brunswick)-Kathleen Senstock

(kathleen.sengstock@mail.house.gov, 240-381-7189) will act as the BRV point person. Susan Sherrod is the CCA organizer. Please check the CCA website (www.canoecruisers.org) for more information because the water continues to be high and such levels will interfere with the clean-up.

September 8 & 9-Stonycreek Release

September 8 & 9-Penn Cup Slalom Series--Larry March Slalom

Allentown, PA, Little Lehigh River (Academy Rd)

Contact: Dan Rempp <http://www.penncup.org/>

September 15 & 16-Variable Bloomington Release that may be adequate for whitewater runs (Check with Mineral County Parks 304-788-5732 and/or the Corps of Engineers 410-962-7687).

<http://www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/northBranch.html>

September 22-Wild Blue River Festival (Halifax, VA, Banister Lake/River)

<https://festivalnet.com/73175/Halifax-Virginia/Festivals/Wild-Blue-River-Festival>

September 22 & 23-Penn Cup Slalom Series-Fiddler's Elbow Slalom

Hummelstown, PA, Swatara Creek (Fiddler's Elbow Rapid)

Contact: Walter Sieger <http://www.penncup.org/>

September 29-Savage River Release

www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/northBranch.html

September 29 & 30-Penn Cup Slalom Series-Philadelphia Canoe Club Slalom

Location pending. <http://www.penncup.org/>

TBD--Family Fun Trip on the upper Rapp (12 miles west of Warrenton) (Class 1+). Phil Troutman (703-764-9106). Get on the call list because when the weather and water are right, Phil will give a four or five day notice.

Cancellation—The rescheduled Team River Runner Family/Community Event was rained out again. Lisa Weed has let us know that the event will be delayed until next year.

Planning for a Paddling Adventure? Costa Rica Anyone?

Consider contacting Jason Tonioli (Co-Founder | Amazing Vacations USA & Costa Rica) at 801-389-7324. He has trips to Costa Rica this Fall and Winter. They will be running new rivers on the Pacific side of the country. Class 2 and 3 runs are available. The trips are a week long and include boats. They run about two thousand dollars.

www.AmazingVacationsCostaRica.com

<https://amazingvacationscostarica.com/why-costa-rica-should-be-on-your-whitewater-kayaking-bucket-list/>

MEETINGS

Recent Meeting

At our mid-Summer meeting, we had a plethora of entertainment. We started off the evening with a cruise down Burnside River, an arctic river in Canada's Northwest Territories that is renowned for its wildlife (caribou, grizzly bears, raptors, and wolves). This was followed by carnage on the Ocoee as produced and narrated by FastFred. Then we explored the steep, upper reaches of the Hudson with "*The Hanging Spear*". We took a short paddle down the Secesh River on its way into Idaho's South Fork of the Salmon. We finished out the night with "*Ain't Louie Fest*", which is an annual gathering of open boaters in the vicinity of Tennessee's Tellico River. (The last three films were from the National Paddling Film Fest archives.) Then we adjourned to Ledo's for more stories and lies.

Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Monday, September 10 at 7 P.M. We are in the process of finalizing the programming. We may have material from the recent Valley Falls waterfall workshop and footage from the National Paddling Film Festival that will explain what a packraft is. (Yes, Court this is for you! See the Conway report.)

TRIP REPORTS—PART 1

Two days of Driving for Three Days of Paddling--Scott Gravatt

- ✓ Lower Youghiogheny River
- ✓ ~~Stonycreek River~~ (scratch that)
- ✓ Casselman River
- ✓ Cheat Narrows

On Sunday, June 17th, we (Denise and Scott Gravatt) left our house in Connecticut and started driving south. On Monday, we arrived at the Ohiopyle State Park Kentucky Campground near the Lower Yough. We were with four other New England boaters, some of whom had never done the Lower Yough or other rivers in the area. As usual, Scott was the only open boater, and everyone else was K-1.

On Tuesday we ran the Lower Yough at about 2.4 feet. Many thanks to Jim Pruitt, who joined our party and guided us down (because Denise and I could not remember doo-doo about the

run). It did all come back to us, but the group would have been uncomfortable with guidance from us “*I’ll remember the line when I’m about halfway through the rapid.*” Jim gave great instruction and led the way.

It rained a lot on Tuesday night, but the next morning we figured the Stonycreek would still be an option. Then on Wednesday morning, when we were halfway to the Stony, the skies opened up and dumped huge amounts of rain. We pulled over and reconsidered. We ultimately decided that the Casselman would be a safer choice if the area rivers started going to flood stage. We made a good choice because the **Stonycreek went from about 800 cfs to 8,000 cfs** during the day.

Denise and I had never done the Casselman. By the time we got to the river, it had risen from two feet (boating zero) to over three feet. It was running chocolate brown. Six of us were putting on, and none of us had ever done the Casselman. While we were on the river, it went up to four feet. The waves were big, and the holes were even bigger. Nonetheless one could always find a doable line around the big pour-overs and giant, boat-eating holes. I had been expecting a class 2 float trip, but it was much more than that. We really had a great time.

On Thursday, Randy McQueen came out to paddle with us. We’d paddled the Lower Gauley with him in previous years. Because of all the rain, everything in the Lower Yough area had risen to crazy levels. The Lower Yough was around eight feet. Our original group had dwindled to three, and Randy made four. We decided to run the Cheat Narrows. Although the Canyon was very tempting, the Narrows was a great choice. Calamity Rock was a pour-over, and all the other rapids were pretty zesty, but not scary. All in all, a great river on a nice day.

The whole trip was **EXCELLENT!**

- ✓ Check
- ✓ Check
- ✓ Check

Non-boating info...On Friday, as we were leaving Ohiopyle, we toured Falling Water, the Frank Lloyd Wright house. Like typical boaters, Denise and I have been going to Ohiopyle for 30 years, but never taken the time to see Falling Water. <https://www.fallingwater.org/> It was pretty cool place.

- ✓ Check

Madawaska Makes Skills Development Fun—Larry Lempert

This year, the Fourth of July found me far away from the fireworks and in Ontario for a five-day whitewater canoe skills clinic at the Madawaska Kanu [sic] Centre [sic].

MKC is *the Mecca* for canoe-focused instruction. It’s also a great place for kayak-focused instruction (as Sheila Chapelle can attest--she went to a clinic soon after mine, and reported that she had a stellar week). But, while Nantahala Outdoor Center in North Carolina is still renowned for kayaking, it no longer does much in the way of canoeing other than private instruction. The travel time from the DC area to these paddling havens is comparable: about 10.5 hours north to MKC (driving time, not accounting for stops) versus nine hours south to NOC.

Near Barry's Bay, Ontario, MKC sits along the Madawaska River, which, like the Nantahala, is a great class 2-3 learning river with interesting rapids and oodles of eddies. It's controlled by dam release so the flow is reliable. Classes are small--my intermediate class had three paddlers, while beginning and intermediate kayak classes running at the same time each had from three to six paddlers.

Plan on working intensively on strokes and maneuvers for 3.5 days. You can count on lots of personal attention from instructors who really know their stuff and can explain it. Just as importantly, they know how to catch you on what you need to improve. (*Note to self: keep working on that cross-forward stroke!*)

There's a half-day in the middle of the week for a lakeside take-a-break picnic. (Great for rolling practice.) The fifth day is a straight-out river run, but with a focus on using what's been taught in the previous days.

There's some serendipity involved on the last day. If the river gods are feeling kind, you get to run the Ottawa, a fabulous big-water river. (They were feeling kind, very kind, towards Sheila.) They were less benevolent on my fifth day, so we did a low-water run on the Lower Madawaska, a section downstream from MKC. It's terrifically scenic and worthy whitewater-wise, so I hear, when there's higher water. We all know how that goes--when it comes to river levels, you get what you get. (I did run the Ottawa when I was there a dozen years ago.)

MKC facilities include a comfortable, attractive wood lodge that houses the restaurant, a store for gear (albeit with a somewhat limited selection), outdoor gathering spots (complete with "black flies". See below!), and a block of rather small, spartan, but very clean, rooms. The basic rate is based on two people per room; it's worth the add-on charge for a private room.

Canoe and kayak classes come together for meals, which are top-notch and always include vegetarian options.

Just as important as the facilities is the overall atmosphere, which is constructive and can-do, and, of course, there's that whole shared love of the river that pervades the place. Staff across the board were friendly and helpful.

I'd be remiss if I didn't put in a caveat about the black flies, which were neither friendly nor helpful. These voracious carnivores could have competed with, and probably could have devoured, Tyrannosaurus Rex. The black flies were unusually heavy for early July, and they treated DEET like it was a gin and tonic. I'm told that May and June usually are the worst months, and that August can be much better (unless you're a black fly, in which case it's the other way around).

Bottom line: An MKC course makes for a great vacation, as long as you approach it with an attitude of seeking real skills improvement as opposed to just-have-a-blast river running. For more info, see <http://owl-mkc.ca/mkc/>.

Covington River Trip Report and Strainer Update—Mike Martin (BRV webmaster)

On August 5, four other BRV/CCA members (Courtney Caldwell, Larry Lempert, Gisela Padilla, and Hendrik van Oss) and I had the rare treat of running the Covington River in hot sunshine. The Covington is a tiny, rip-snorting, very busy class 2-3 creek near Sperryville, VA that requires eddy hopping to make sure the coast is clear in each of its many turns.

It had been wet all week, and a deluge of rain the night before made the Battle Run gauge spike to 2,000 cfs. Though the gauge had dropped to about 500 cfs by 8 A.M., the Remington gauge read high, and we were confident we'd have plenty of water for the Hughes, Thorton, etc. if we found the Covington to be too low.

On the ride down there, every farmer's ditch looked runnable, and I felt good about nailing the Covington. (I've been skunked on many previous attempts--finding that we were an hour late and an inch short.) We finally put on around 1 P.M. with an estimated 10 inches of water, which fell to about three inches by five P.M. (The bridge at put-in was recently rebuilt, and the previous painted gauge is gone.)

Anyhow, we had been warned about a dangerous strainer around a blind corner where the river makes a sharp turn to the right due to a cliff on river left. It may be visible from the tiny, one-boat eddy on the left-side eddy just above the turn. We hunted carefully for the strainer. Larry, who was the probe, found it easily thanks to descriptions we had received earlier. I marked the landing-portage point on river right with the hot pink, plastic streamers that surveyors use. It is a fine place to eddy out and provides a short, easy drag around the strainer.

The strainer in question is medium-sized pine tree that can be cut with a chain saw, and the dangerous branches that point down into the water could be removed with hand saws at low water. The strainer is located about 500 yards above the first bridge and a mile or so below the put-in. This strainer is a deadly trap for anyone who winds up in it--so heads up to anyone who runs the river while it remains there. The other obstructions were easily visible by eddy-hopping.

Tip: Don't crowd your probe paddler or the boat in front of you.

Logs bar the usual route at Volkswagen Rock. The rapid was runnable by setting up on river left and ferrying across right above the main log. One of our group made the move and one swam under the log while the rest of us opted for an easy drag around. Another strainer further downstream required a short drag around. Two limbo logs caused no problems for open boaters. We had a few other tight squeezes.

When we merged onto the Rush, we found it had plenty of water to quick run on it, but few of us, however, had the time or energy left to cash in on the Exacta. (The Rush usually holds its water longer than the Covington.)

Thanks to "Bharris" for his June 24th warning about the strainer report on the American Whitewater site and to BRV members, Ron Knipling, Jim Long, Jenny Thomas, and others, who sent descriptions from their trips earlier in the week. I posted a version of this trip report on the AW site and encourage others to post updates there about hazards and access issues.



A warm temperature Covington run!

FEATURE ARTICLE

Footwear for the River—Charlie Duffy

Introduction

I lead a lot of swiftwater rescue courses, kayaking classes, and trips. A suitable helmet and a PFD that fits are crucial, of course, but how many paddlers think of their footwear as being essential to their safety on the river? I've seen paddlers in bare feet, sandals, and some other footwear that provide no protection should the paddler ever need to leave his/her boat. (Remember, everyone is in-between swims.) Even if you have a roll that is 100% roll reliable, can you portage around an unsafe rapid or rescue someone else?

Let's list the challenges:

- Briars
- Broken glass, fish hooks, reinforcement bar
- Root snags
- Sharp rocks
- Snags on roots
- Sharp sticks
- Underwater rope or webbing

Footwear Requirements

Let's think about the perfect shoe characteristics:

- Fit – What good is a shoe if it comes off in a swim?
- Sturdy – Paddling is rough on shoes. Many water shoes fall apart in less than one season and that can get expensive.
- Thick Soles – A sharp stick in the ground can easily puncture neoprene booties or shoes with thin flexible soles.

- Sticky – We often walk on wet surfaces and some shoes make you feel like you are walking on ice – yikes! When we slip, we often fall hard – causing injuries.
- Good Drainage – When we go for a dunk, the shoe fills with water making it easy prey for slipping off.
- Snag Proof – Who knows what lies below the surface? If your shoe snags, you become foot entrapped with potentially deadly consequences.

Background Context

I started boating in 1979, a very long time ago. Back then, the best you could find were flexible rubber soles and a neoprene upper.

Some rubber soles had a gummy feel to them and did reasonably well when walking on moistened rocks. They didn't protect very well against natural punctures, so you needed to be careful on where you took each step. NRS came out with a variety of river boots with a stiffer sole, but, based on my experience, most of those were very slippery on rocks.



Some years later, Keen came out with a stiff and very thin segmented sole. The sole gave pretty good protection against punctures and fit easily into playboats (an issue for people with large feet). They held up well, but still didn't work well on slippery rocks. These are the best pool shoes in my opinion. Unfortunately, Keen no longer sells them.

The first great shoe for our sport was the 5-10 Tennie. These provided great support and came with Stealth Rubber soles – still the best sole in the industry. Earlier models used water-based contact cement which caused them to delaminate. (Astral ran into a similar issue early on.) This can be fixed with Weldwood Oil Based Contact Cement.



Another key design decision was very light uppers. This is really the only way to go for ankle high boots. Heavier uppers get waterlogged, and your feet will rip the upper from the sole in short order.

Later, Astral joined the shoe business with the classic Astral Brewer. They put a great deal of thought into this model. They started with Stealth Rubber, the same as in the 5-10 soles. Their soles are very thick so nothing is getting through them. They used a low-top design to avoid the common shearing forces on high tops. They also baked in lots of drainage. Unfortunately, 5-10 was sold to Adidas, and they no longer sell Stealth Rubber to others. Their new G Rubber is OK,

but not nearly as sticky as 5-10 Stealth Rubber. Astral has amazing customer service, they really stand behind their products. Astral has a wide variety of styles, but I would stay with their oldest model, the Brewer, as it holds up far longer than any of their other models. <https://www.astral designs.com /shop/footwear/mens/brewer>. The Rassler has a heavy upper, and it sheared off in just one usage by me.



Brewer



Rassler

5-10 came out with the Canyoneer. It is a great concept--basically a sturdy hiking boot with the best sole in the business. You will feel invincible wearing these. Unfortunately, the heavy uppers shear off the soles in just a few months of usage. So stick with the far less expensive and durable Tennies.



NRS made some shoes with felt soles. These really work well! They stick like glue on wet slippery rocks and are puncture resistant. But then, Didymo (AKA: Rock Snot) became prevalent. As a result, felt soles are banned on any streams of significant fishing value. ***That said, always wash and dry your gear after each river weekend.***



What are the Alternatives?

Two major issues some paddlers have:

Big Feet--Size 12 or larger. These are very difficult to fit in low volmes boats like playboats. Good luck fitting in your boat with a big heavy boot like the 5-10 Canyoneer. Even tennis shoes won't fit. Kevlar reinforced socks are an alternative.



<https://www.amazon.com/Stohlquist-Waterware-5565-Watermoccasin-Sock/dp/B004ZR9E0G>

To increase durability and sole stickiness, you can add ribs with Shoe Goo.



Budget--When getting started in paddling, there is a lot of gear to acquire. It takes time to accumulate decent gear. Regular tennis shoes are an acceptable starting point. They will provide good foot protection at a reasonable price.

Conclusions

- Consider the ideal characteristics for footwear delineated above.
- Wear your shoes. Carrying shoes inside the boat and going barefoot is simply asking for an injury.
- Don't wear sandals. They are a death trap.
- Make sure that your shoes fit snugly.
- Inspect and replace worn shoes when needed. Sales in the Fall yield better prices.
- Wash your shoes after each weekend to avoid transporting invasive species to our pristine streams. A simple detergent works fine. Bleach is not required.

For the best performance, until something better comes along, I'd stick with either the Astral Brewer or the 5-10 Tennie.

FACTOID

Total State River Mileages—Ed Evangelidi

According to the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers site (www.rivers.gov) there are 16, 839 miles of rivers in Maryland, 32,260 miles in West Virginia, 49,350 miles in Virginia, and 83,260 miles of rivers in Pennsylvania. Go paddle!

CONSERVATION

See Tire Rodeo under Events.

Pipelines in West Virginia

To see the locations of pipelines proposed or under construction in West Virginia including the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline check <https://tagis.dep.wv.gov/majorpipelines/>. There are eight. The maps include major forest areas and waterways.

To build pipelines, the builders must control sediment run-off. To see aerial photographs of such areas along with maps, see <http://pipelineupdate.org/2018/07/29/industry-standard-noncompliance/> as presented by the Compliance Surveillance Initiative.

ACCESS

American Whitewater at Work for Us

Access issues for paddlers have been on the rise. American Whitewater is one of your best advocates. **When your paddling club is an affiliate member of American Whitewater** (at the cost of \$100 or more (<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Affiliate/view/>), **you can purchase an AW membership at a discount.** The standard individual membership price is \$35, but the affiliate individual member price is \$25. (<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-aw/>)

The National Stewardship Director of American Whitewater, Kevin Colburn, has submitted a letter to the National Park Service in response to an Executive Order asking for ideas on how to expand access to Park Service lands and waters. AW highlighted the Harpers Ferry Parklands. This is a direct benefit to our paddling community.

Antietam Creek Deadfall

Antietam Creek has had plenty of water. This has resulted in undercut banks and new strainer trees. Greg Mallet-Prevost pulled out 14 trees from the eight mile section just below Devil's Backbone near his canoe livery. That section is passable, but the usual island lunch spot is much, much smaller.

The four mile section below that has a tree in Furnace Rapids just above the bridge. Greg has checked the tree. It is now parallel to the flow and has only one very large branch sticking out into the flow.

Another group ran the section above Devil's Backbone (which is a little harder) and reported that there was only one tree that had to be addressed.

Potential Hazard on the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac

As we ran the section of the Potomac from Seneca Rocks down to Hopeville Canyon in late April, we encountered this collapsed bridge. This is an access bridge for reconstruction of a Columbia Gas pipeline. There had been heavy rains two weeks prior to our encounter. Given the intermittent periods of heavy rain that we have had this season, it may be worthwhile to be on the alert for a repeat performance. The condition of the bridge can be assessed by turning left onto the roadway for Yokum's Stables off of WV Route 28 going south. (Barb Brown was actually able to limbo her way under the bridge!)



Access bridge for pipeline work



Downstream view of bridge

Valley Falls Deadfall

Valley Falls on the Tygart consists of two pitches, each with three drops, followed by a rapids further down stream (Hamburger Helper). A tree came down a week ago and protruded into the far river left rapids in the second pitch. It is anticipated that the local fire/rescue crew will work to remove it.

HUMOR

From the Inner Workings of Ed's Brain—Ed Evangelidi

0 CFS = hiking 100 CFS = boating 100 CFS cubed = ice skating

Before I decided to throw out my guidebooks, I took a field test of my new electronics with all of the rivers programmed in. The new to me river started out easy, and the instructions came at me with enough time to go right, left, catch an eddy, etc. I even took a left channel when the program said to go right and, after "recalculating", the instructions came quickly enough to seamlessly continue paddling. Surf spot assistances were great. But now I was about to fully put the device to the test as I was in the hardest rapids, which was coming at me quickly. That's when it said "*low battery...*" Hmmmm.

"Your self-driving program is flawed--that boat dumped me coming into the eddy!"

"No, my program worked perfectly; it got you down the river through the rapids without incident. Of course, I also programmed the boat for humor, and it dumped you when it saw an audience at the takeout."

"What the heck were you doing in that hole? You weren't even bracing!!"

"I was on the phone calling Siri for help."

TRIP REPORTS—Part 2

Packrafts and Packrats: Adventures on the Conway (or State Secrets Revealed in the BRV Newsletter)--May 2019--Court Clueless Ogilvie

"It had rained for three days!" And with those six words--the same six words used to start a 1990 trip report for the same river--another BRV trip report begins.

The Remington Gauge hit twelve feet on that Friday, so there was a ton of water. Our target was the Conway, and our interest was based in part on my vague recollection of a Scott Gravatt newsletter article from back in the day. Rick, Lou, and I have a combined 112 years of paddling experience...and yet somehow none of us had *ever* done the Conway. Rick was in his open canoe, Lou in a new kayak, and I was in my six-pound ultralight Alpacka packraft. <https://www.alpackaraft.com/rafting/>

When we got to the put-in for the Conway at the Route 675 bridge, the river was ripping, with probably a good foot of water. We asked a landowner for permission to put in at a bridge about a quarter mile down from Route 675, and he cheerily told us “*any time*”. The bridge is privately owned, but access was way easier than what was suggested upstream in the guidebooks.



Lou at put-in bridge



In the trees-great level!

Things on the Conway start out fast, and the first stretch is relatively steep (100 feet per mile). A few miles downstream, just below the Kinderhook Bridge, the gradient eases back, but the bigger drops are yet to come. For us, the stretch downstream from Kinderhook was where the party started.

As we got to the first significant braid below the bridge, Ricky went on ahead to sniff things out. Lou was in a slack water eddy on river right and holding his position via a small shrub on the bank. I swung in next to him and grabbed onto his boat. He retorted, “*Yeh, good idea! Grab onto me with your four thousand pounds of blubber--even though I’m holding onto a small tuft of grass as an anchor*”. (Lou always knows how to make you feel good about yourself!)



1st of bigger drops, just below Kinderhook



Nasty on river right. Glad we scouted.

Moments later, Lou was holding onto a souvenir clod of dirt and roots *and* our boats were pivoting out into the main current. Not a big deal, I thought. I just need to grab another eddy or hop out into the shallow water. Meanwhile, Rick, certain that his paddling buddies wouldn't do anything clueless, was still looking *away* from us and peering downstream.



Rick on a typical drop



Rick on one of the bigger ledges

As I drifted towards a blind channel, on an unknown creek, with a fair amount of wood, I had *no* clue just how clueless I really was! I tried to porpoise up onto the bank. This move would have worked fine in my open boat--but there's no weight in the bow of a packraft. So I couldn't hold myself on shore with my "four thousand pounds of blubber" weighing down the stern. (Thank you, Lou.)

Again, I'm thinking, "*No problem, I'll just jump out.*" So I flopped out of my boat and tried to stand up in current that was (duh) faster than I thought. I then awkwardly clawed my way over towards the edge of the creek. The next thing I knew, I was struggling to control my boat. As I held it by the painter, it corked in the current and bounced back and forth against a bunch of small shrubs growing in the riverbed.

At some point, I heard a commotion behind me. I looked back to see that Lou had decided to join the party! Not surprisingly, the outcome was similar. Lou and I shared some intimate moments in the gaggle of saplings before we each whispered a heartfelt goodbye to our boats and ***deliberately let them go!*** As the boats made a crisp turn around the corner and disappeared from view, I was glad that they, at least, had each other.

We were the only party on the river at that point so Lou and I both assumed our boats would be in the Chesapeake Bay by sometime early the following day. With that realization, we began the walk of shame...full of a little hope, but devoid of boats or clues.

For 200 yards, we tromped down along the edge of the river, through some thick growth and the occasional cluster of rose bushes. At that point, I caught a glimpse of something yellow...my boat, tucked neatly up into an eddy! I did a dance worthy of a Capitals Stanley Cup playoff goal-only stopping when I realized that Lou was ***still shorthanded.***



Animated Lou boat shops...



Lou's boat found!

Then, another 200 yards or so later, we spotted Lou's red kayak caught up on the smallest of river bar snags. The river gods were kind. A little ropework and we were back in business, or, rather, back like we were before....

After the trip, I reached out to Scott Gravatt. He still had a copy of his 1990 newsletter. (You can catch his search for the article in episode four of "Hoarders.") Back in the day, Scott had written about a fun trip on the Conway that had been punctuated by a lone calamity. (Sound familiar?) He had written, "*I directed Frank left. The problem was, there was left, and there was far left. As Frank was being ripped to shreds by the huge rose bush hanging off the bank, it occurred to him that maybe this wasn't the line that Kim used.*" So Frank's calamity is forever preserved in Scott's basement.

As I watched my boat disappear around the corner without me on our recent trip, I was comforted by the idea that our Conway Calamity could still be a complete secret. **After all, nobody reads the BRV newsletter, and certainly no normal person would ever save it.**

Hopping down Hopeville Canyon

The West Virginia Week of Rivers was well underway. There had been enough water to paddle some less common runs, but Hopeville is always a treat. It is one of Barb Brown's favorite runs. It was to be a first descent run for Lisa Weed. Nancy Kell had no intention of letting a leg brace (post surgery) deter her. Sheila Chapelle took up the lead, and Pete Chapelle frequently was in the sweep position.

The first major drop could be run on either side of the island because of the generous water levels. Landslide required eddy hopping. Fortunately, there were no canoes wrapped around rocks this year. Lisa negotiated the drop without difficulty. The wave trains on the way to Tree Rapids (sans the tree now) were very bouncy. As folks followed Sheila down Tree Rapids, there was some drift in the line each paddler used. This resulted in one short swim. Assorted lines were taken at the last rapids before the Cabins take-out.

The Chapelle's departed for home. The remainder of the group paddled to the Smoke Hole Road Bridge. Ice cream treats fortified us for the drive over the mountain.



Sheila down to business



Lisa W. & Ron F. surveying the situation



Pete checking out the canyon walls



Barb on a ferry



Sheila & Nancy K. eddy hopping in Landslide



Nancy & Barb surveil Landscape from below



Pete & Barb on their way to Tree Rapids



Ron close behind



Nancy smiling after Tree Rapids



Lisa with determined strokes



The eggs are safe. No predators up here.



Cold Spring. Red Bud in abundance.

BOATING TRIVIA



Once a question has been correctly answered, it will be pulled from competition—so enter early to reach that 200 point total and earn a prize!

1--Name the former town that provides the name for the take-out for two prominent West Virginia rivers. **10 POINTS**

2--Name the person associated with Mountain Streams and Trails Outfitters, who made a land swap with Allegheny Wood Products to obtain control of the take-out property described above. **10 POINTS**

3--Name the river organization that worked with the above person to develop the take-out in exchange for a 20-year non-commercial access agreement. **10 POINTS**

4-6--Match the rivers with the rapids. **30 POINTS**

Rapids: Broken Nose, Calamity, Cheeseburger, Coliseum, Frank Bell, Iron Ring, Jaws, Keeneys (Upper, Middle, Lower), Moats Falls, Pure Screaming Hell, Shoulder Snapper, Whitehorse
Rivers: Cheat Canyon, Cheat Narrows, French Broad, Lower Gauley, New Gorge, Nolichucky, Ocoee, Shenandoah, Tygart Gorge, Tygart Valley, Upper Gauley, Upper Youghiogheny

7—For whom is Sweet's Falls named? **10 POINTS**

8—What piece of legislation will be celebrated at Gauley Fest this year? **10 POINTS**

9—What is a Hullavator? **10 POINTS**

10—Who is the maker of RivrStx? **10 POINTS**

PARTING SHOTS AT THE TAKE-OUT

Need A Rack?

Rack Attack is having a 20% sale on Thule and Yakima racks (not cargo boxes) from **August 24 through September 3.** (<https://www.rackattack.com/> 1-877-432-8301)

Bonus Trivia Question

11—Name the shuttle on which this sign can be found. **10 POINTS**
(Yes, this was seen on a river shuttle on a 2018 club trip!)



And Then a Miracle Happened...

Beth's boat now has new grab loops thanks to Ron Ray, a trip to REI for 10 feet of tubular webbing, and a couple of hours. Ron measures twice before he cuts and is otherwise very precise in his workmanship. He has more tools that you can shake a stick at--including a soldering iron to melt the edges of the webbing and create the screw holes and a power screwdriver with properly-sized bits and which will not strip the threads. And he has screw thread glue! It was well worth the cost of dinner at a nearby pizza pub. Thank you, Ron! All those people who have had to gingerly handle the boat while loading it thank you as well. ☺

Trip Reports in the Pipeline

We are looking forward to some interesting trip reports. We have had multiple trips to the Lehigh and are expecting some write-ups. An Antietam trip brought some folks out of the woodwork, and there will be pictures to document that. The drops at Valley Falls provided some great runs and photographic opportunities. An unexpected August whitewater release at Bloomington may also bring some stories.

If you have idea for a story or article, take a stab at it. The editor will work with you. Trip reports can be short or long. Pictures are welcome. Provide the biggest image files you can. If the file exceeds 10 MB, let the editor know in advance. Remember that those who lead announced trips and those who write a trip report will be eligible for prizes! So if you led an announced trip AND have it's a twofer--two drawing chances!

Please have submissions for the next newsletter ready in the next four weeks.

Programs in Progress

We have several possible programs in the docket including paddling in Alaska, running Nantahala Falls in inflatable pool toys, more footage from the National Paddling Film Fest, videos developed for the anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and drone imagery from Valley Falls.

But because this is a club activity, if you know someone who would be a good speaker, consider inviting them. If you are interested in a topic, it is likely that someone else is as well. The meeting dates can be adjusted to accommodate outside speakers.

We also need folks to help with running the projector and setting up the room.

Webpage

Mike Martin is looking for photos for the webpage. Vanity, vanity, boater is thy name. Dig out those digital files.

Facebook

Help Frank Fico increase participation on the Facebook page. He has structured it so that it is a good way of communicating between club members in setting up activities and reporting on trips.

The Hunt for Trips

Consider what kind of trip/event you might be able co-ordinate. There have been requests for relaxed local trips, trips suitable for children, trips that could be combined with other activities like biking, trips to cypress swamp/marshes, and urban boating with the clean-up of the Anacostia. Check out the dates of the festivals and releases.

If you have an idea, but don't quite know what to do, just ask. Several club members are tremendous sources of information—even if they don't keep all of the BRV newsletters like Scott Gravatt.



***The club is about fun and camaraderie.
It can't happen without YOU!!!***

BRV MEMBERSHIP/ROSTER INFORMATION

Name/Spouse Name:

Address:

Phone: home:

work:

cell:

E-mail address(es) (in order of preference or marked by location work vs personal):

Preferred Boat: K-1 C-1 OC-1 K-2 C-2 OC-2 Inflatable kayak Shredder Raft

Other(s):

Other boat types used: K-1 C-1 OC-1 K-2 C-2 OC-2 Inflatable kayak Shredder Raft
Sea kayak Stand-up paddleboard Sit-atop kayak Other(s):

Preferred boating difficulty level(s) WW grade range: (perhaps by boat type): Flatwater (under what circumstances):

Other types of boating aspects: Cold weather paddling Canoe camping trips Extended trips
Family boating Play boating Racing Removal of safety hazards-gauge painting River
conservation activities Safety clinics Boating for service activities (e.g., safety support for
races/ triathlons, teaching) Other(s):

Availability for weekday paddling: Yes No If yes, times/days:

Other activities that you might participate in during longer trips or with low water or cold
conditions: Biking Hiking Skiing (DH) Skiing (XC) Other(s):

Willingness to lead a trip or clinic (can include limits as to type or location of trip): Other ways
in which you are helping BRV (or another club): Officer/Board member Newsletter
contributor Photos for web Program presentation Social activities Trip solicitation
Other(s):

Ways in which you could help BRV: Officer/Board member Newsletter contributor Photos
for web Program presentation Social activities Trip solicitation Other(s):

Membership in other clubs Benscreek CCA Conowingo Carolina Coastals Greater
Baltimore Mason-Dixon Keelhaulers Monocacy TSRA 3-Rivers Other(s):

QUICK TRIP REPORT

Trip date(s): _____

Trip destination(s): _____

Trip participants: _____

Water

levels/gauge readings: _____

Any access or safety issues: _____

Notable

aspects on or off the river: _____

Photos available: _____

Can be submitted to newsletter editor electronically (brvnewsletter [at] earthlink.net) or via mail PO Box 9513 Silver Spring, MD 20916

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