

THE VOYAGEUR

MARCH 1990



Newsletter of the Blue Ridge Voyageurs

A voluntary association of paddlers from the Washington Metropolitan Area

Hot Line: 425-7645

Greetings from the President - March 1990

The next meeting is 7:00 P.M., Monday 26 March 1990 at Pimmit/Tysons Library.

At the next meeting we will be voting on the By-Laws revisions distributed at the last meeting.

For the Program I am going to show Bud Fakoury's film of the Chattoga IV. Roger Corbett led this BRV trip to the Smokies. The Best action is the Chattoga IV. It was one of the first major BRV trips. I'm having the 8mm film converted to video so we can review some of the best action shots I've seen.

Scott Gravett says the after meeting meeting was a success. We'll do it again. Note that tea and soft drinks are included in the price.

Thanks to Frank Moritz for organizing the terrific Ski/Hiking trip to the Canaan Valley and Rusty Dowling for coordinating the Saturday night buffet/party. There were forty or so there for the skiing and hiking. More later.

Bob Maxey has put together a good assortment of trips for us. The updated list is provided in the back. Also, call the Hot Line for the latest updates. Jeff Fisher works hard to keep the Hot Line current and up to date for us.

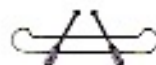
Peggy Lawson has suggested that we have a Earth Day project. We can discuss this at the meeting.

Ohlipyale State Park sent me the new regulations for using the Lower Yough and the Loop. We are providing a excerpts as they apply to Canoes. If you need an official

letter for a large group, let me know. Long gone are the days when Chester Summitt, Bob Wells and I would do the Yough and sleep on the first platform of the Firetower or roadside park picnic table, (no tents and no vans and paddling Grumman Aluminum Canoes).

I have a new gadget that is also a safety item. It is a 3-Band Weather Radio, that is tuned to the NWS. It worked well in Canaan Valley and W Va. Every five minutes we had the latest Weather forecast! They also broadcast the River stages. In Alexandria Va., area, I receive the station in Manassas, for mountain forecast, and Annapolis for the Bay forecast.

The AWA magazine has an interesting article about Prijon's Topolino. It is a short (7'3") rounded hull kayak. They are built in Germany and popular with the advanced kayakers, (but I couldn't get them interested in C-1's).



Ski Weekend notes to follow:

The Ski weekend was a huge success. The weather was cold enough for skiing but okay for lot of hiking, led by the Lawson Legions. The Kniplings did Hopeville canyon on the way up and Ron gave new meaning to 'running the shuttle'. Others repeated the trip on the way back home. Some Condos were adjacent to the to the Timberline Ski slope so the skiers could walk out onto the slopes. There was a steady procession of Hot Tubbers between the Condo's. Thanks to Rusty Dowling for organizing the Saturday night party buffet. On the way home, several of us hiked the Seneca Rocks trail. Thanks again to Frank and Rusty for all their work organizing this trip.

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Seneca Creek Campground

I drove by what used to be the Seneca Creek Campground. What a sad sight to see. The '85 flood left huge boulders the size of desks strewn about. We had many fine evenings camping there. It had only a water pump and out house which kept out the riff. Somehow, restoring this campground there or nearby up the valley would be a worthwhile project. -- Wayne Sellin

Editors note: Copies of the new Yough rules will be distributed at the March meeting.

CUB RUN and PASSAGE CREEK

Sunday, February 4, 1990

by Alison Phillips

The day dawned clear and bright, not at all like the predicted snow! I was looking forward to my first creek run.

Ron Knipling, our fearless leader, Will Greene, Doug and Brad White (all OC1s), and my Kayak and I met at the Cub Run put in to find the gauge at 4". Cub Run lived up to everything the word "Creek" conjures up in my mind. Namely - Tight, Technical, and very scrappy!!! We made the run with only 1 swim, me, and 1 easy broach (I got out and pulled the "creek" kayak off the rocks). The only major rescue was of an orange ice chest that Ron carted out. Ron and Doug kept assuring us that a few more inches on the gauge made this a great run. After taking out at the beautiful dump, we drove to Passage Creek and I had time to wonder if I was going to be sacrificed to another set of River Gods.

The Passage Creek Gauge was at 1" and we hoped it wouldn't be too scrappy. This is a truly beautiful run. There's a nice Class I-II warm up and then a series of II-III ledges. Ron & Doug set up ropes at 2-Turn, and everyone made it except Ron's throw bag which was left on the rocks. We portaged the dam on River Left with no problem. Be careful when the creek starts braiding around several islands. We took the right route and it was the wrong route. There are several barbed wire fences and snow fences, as well as natural strainers on this route. Try going left. After

at least 15 portages, we met up with the main channel and made it to the takeout. We performed the last rescue of the day on the shuttle back to the cars. Ron's throw bag survived and is doing well.

North Branch, Bloomington Run 2-17-90

Accepting predictions from two of our most reliable government agencies, the National Weather Service and the Corps of Engineers, fifteen BRVer's and friends journeyed to the North Branch of the Potomac in February for a day of "fair skies and upper 40's" on "850 cfs" being released from the Randolph Jennings Dam. What we got at the put in was overcast, windy, snow flurries and a temperature of 34 degrees and dropping. The water looked lower than usual for 750 cfs, much less the 850 announced by the Corps. Four members of the group had a sudden attack of maturity and decided to enjoy the winter wonderland from their vehicles, the rest opted to paddle anyway. After arranging the shuttle to have all of the cars at the take out, we donned enough polypro, wool, thermax, goretex, neoprene, nylon, synchilla, avilastic, and every other material known to water-proof and insulate the human body to fill a couple of paddling shops and got on to the river. Out of consideration for the raw conditions and the three or four first timers in the group, we engaged in a minimum of playing and had a quick and uneventful trip. Survivors included Howard Hume, Tom Snyder, Leo Slakey, Johnny and John Robert Moscarelli and Barnaby Peters in K-1's, C-1er Dave Garrity, and Maxine Dunkelman, Bob Dempsey, Craig Carscallen, and Will Greene in OC-1's.

This trip was made more pleasant for me by two things that didn't happen. The decision by some of the group not to paddle was respected and they were not subjected to a lot of silliness about "wimping out". The second thing was that those who did elect to go on the river had the skills and gear to do so, and I was not forced to make a decision about whether someone should paddle or not. Most of us have been on trips early in the season where the presence of badly prepared boaters meant multiple rescues. These can drain a lot of energy and warmth from the rescuers and take the fun right out of the day. Thanks to a good group, I think we had the best time possible on such a day.

Will Greene

Buffalo Creek Remembered

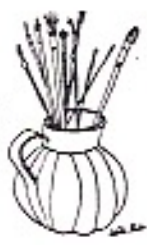
I walked to the back porch and saw my neighbors running and screaming. I heard one say "the dam." I then came running through the house and told my wife to head for the hills. When I got to the living room I saw the water rolling by the window. I knew then there was no way out of the house, and all hope just vanished. My wife started crying and praying. I saw a housetop going by with a friend of mine on top. Then I heard a big crash and saw the big wave of water coming with houses and trash on it. There was nothing we could do but watch and pray for the best and wonder how long our house would stand. I saw four or five of our neighbor's homes go by. I tried to think of a way out, but there just wasn't any. The water was thirty or forty minutes passing, but it seemed like it would never pass. Then finally it was gone and left a dead body lying on the hood of my car.

At 7:59am on February 26, 1972, Buffalo Creek Dam, a makeshift Pittston Mining Company dam built of slag (coal waste) at the head of Buffalo Creek, a tributary of the Guyandotte River in Logan County, WV suddenly gave way, releasing 132 million gallons of debris-filled water and mud into a narrow, heavily-populated, 17-mile long valley. The one million tons of liquid, mud, and debris created a churning maelstrom that ravaged the valley, which for most of its length is only about 100 yards wide. One hundred and twenty-five people were killed. Of the 8,000 residents of the valley, 4,300 were left homeless. After the flood, survivors from the formerly tightly-knit community were crowded into trailer camps that were likened to "concentration camps." The result was a collective trauma that deepened the scars of the original disaster. Everything in Its Path by Kai T. Erikson (Simon and Schuster, 1976) tells the story of the flood, based largely on interviews with survivors.

As for myself, every time I go to Buffalo Creek I start to cry because it is like visiting a graveyard. I left there crying after the flood on Sunday and I wake up all through the night crying. I can see the water from the dam destroying my house, clothing, furniture, cars. We lost everything we had saved all our lives in a very few minutes. I can see my friends

drowning in the water and asking for help. I will never be the same person again.

When I think about the flood, the first thing that hits my mind is the water. It just looked like a black mountain going down that hollow, and there was houses on top of it. A big tank blew up right on top of it, a gas tank from the trailers that was up there. It just blew up completely. You could see fire in those houses and everything. There was a big transformer sitting down there close to where the old ball diamond used to be, and it just ripped out and crumbled those big steel beams just like you was twisting them around. And the wires! Electricity was shooting up the mountain, those wires were going bzzz, bzzz. . . . One mass of ugliness was all it was to me, the water and houses and the gas exploding and the electricity lines buzzing and things like that. Crashing sounds. Everything was completely out of control, and the sound of it, you know, was just a roar, a heavy roar.



Capital Crescent Trail Clean-up and Hike/Rally

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail is sponsoring two events this spring to promote the establishment of the proposed hiking/biking trail. On Saturday, April 21, there will be a trail clean-up from 9am to noon. On Saturday, May 5, from 9am to 2pm, there will be a hike and rally along the route of proposed trail. The event will begin at 9am in Bethesda at the intersection of the Georgetown Branch railroad with Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues. For more info on either event, call the CCCT office at 234-4874 or Sally Stevens at (h) 301-990-6858.

Kitzmiller assault team: Mike Stinebaugh and Barry Freeman are hot to paddle the Class 3-4 Kitzmiller section of the North Branch this spring. They'd like to hit it at the 4.7 - 4.9' water level, and they are often able to paddle during the week (especially Wednesday and Thursday). If you'd like to join them, give Mike or Barry a call.

2 kids PFDs: Adjustable for ages 2-6; \$10 ea, both for \$15. Ron Knipling, 533-2895.



Delight on Muddy Creek

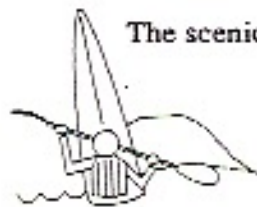
March 3, 1990 by Tim Chandler

Level: About 4 inches

It *isn't* muddy, it's crystal-clear! On a beautiful Saturday just a little on the chilly side, 8 intrepid kayakers (no open boaters!) tested their mettle against the ferocious Class II rapids of Muddy Creek, PA. It was one of the nicest trips and nicest streams I've been on in many months. Hmm, I guess it's the *only* one I've been on in many months! But it was a great trip and a delightful stream. And only about 2 hours from the D.C. area!

At the put-in were Barnaby Peters, Tom Snyder, and Bob Maxey paddling plastic K-1's; Zofia Kosim and Tim Chandler paddling elegant glass boats; and Alison Phillips, Cahill Converse, and Salil Khakar who all forgot to bring kayaks but instead brought large, red, oddly-shaped craft they called "AQ's" and "T-Canyon." They managed to keep them afloat the whole trip but fell 'way behind once we got to the Susquehanna, due to their poor forward speed, like paddling red refrigerators sideways. They claimed it was because they were drinking beer offered to them by a passing motorboatist. Sure, Cahill. Everyone knows power boaters are not dumb enough to drink alcohol while boating. It spoils their aim. But I digress...

We put on shortly before noon. Both access points at the put-in are gated and locked, so vehicles must be parked on the shoulder of the road to unload. Fortunately there's plenty of parking at the downstream Susquehanna take-out. Anyway, all the plastic boats decided to run the 7-foot dam just above the normal put-in. The glass boats declined - it looked scrappy and besides, the plastic boaters were just showing off. At 4 inches there's no mean hydraulic anywhere at the base of the dam, and it's still plenty deep enough just about everywhere. Just to the right of center is where they all came over, lemming-like, as Zofia and I sanely watched from below. The childish display finally over, we proceeded on down the river.



The scenic beauty rivals the best of any small

stream I've been on, especially in the gorge section, with rock cliffs and waterfalls, birds, trees, and all that kind of stuff. There are even several small Class II rapids and waves to play in. Snap Falls is a sheer ledge that everyone ran close to the rock wall on the right, though it appeared it could be run a little further to the left. I guess it's not really a Class II since it's a pretty high ledge and there's fast water in the short pool below that pushes you into the rocks on the right. But it was a Snap for everyone in this group - only one roll here, a quick one, right Tom?

We ate lunch at the Class V-VI Muddy Creek Falls, where the entire stream chokes down abruptly on river left with sheer cliff walls to the left and massive undercut boulders on the right of a narrow 16-foot channel. The water pours powerfully straight onto a nasty-looking jagged rock right smack in the middle of the channel with a narrow tongue to the left into and under the cliff wall. An equally narrow and violent torrent of water goes around the right and into and under the slanting, undercut boulders. Nevertheless, it could probably be run somewhat safely with more water. Yeah, right. This Saturday, everyone chose the better part of valor, much to everyone's relief.

The gradient picks up some after the Falls, with several interesting rapids - two with dangerous strainers to keep one's attention focused. Once past the last rapid a flat stretch ensues all the way out to the Susquehanna, where it gets even flatter, but much wider and deeper. I drafted Barnaby for about half a mile, and Tom drafted me, the three of us in a line, and believe me, it's a lot less paddling effort. At least it was for Tom and me. Barnaby's only comment was to gasp for breath as he pulled us along.

We finished the long flat paddle without incident and then went to the Paper Mill at the intersection of 74 and 851, I think. Their specialty is no beer, and imaginatively named pirogue-like concoctions of dough stuffed with all sorts of dead animal tissue. Really pretty good, and good prices, too.

If you haven't done this one, do it! If you have, do it again! I give it four stars.



1st Annual BRV Canaan Valley Ski
Paddling Weekend, 17-19 February
by Frank Fico

Ron Knipling and I had decided early this week that we would bring our boats as well as our skis to this long-anticipated event. While loading the car on Friday, Bridget and I concluded all ski equipment would be superfluous, since there was no natural snow for cross-country skiing and any open downhill slopes would be too bare or icy to bother with. (Downhill conditions were "machine worked". Translation: all the available snow had been bulldozed into a narrow path down the mountain.) As it turned out, a number of folks went downhill skiing and some of them claimed conditions were at least fair. However, this report highlights the exploits of those of us with enough fortitude to stand up and "just say no" to skiing, hiking and other assorted non-paddling activities.

17 Feb: North Fork Blackwater/Blackwater
River, Cortland to Davis
Parsons: 4.9
Weather: Snow flurries, 30s
Participants: Frank Fico & Bridget
Coghill, OC-2

Saturday dawned sunny but a good 30 degrees colder than the day before. Ron and I had agreed Friday night on a meeting time and place to run the upper Dry Fork, but he called to cancel (read "wimp out"). I made some last minute phone calls to the other houses, but got no takers for paddling. Ed Evangelidi was leading a hike at Blackwater Falls State Park, and graciously offered to run shuttle on the Blackwater above the park. The guidebook* said this was a Class A run for about 8 miles, closing with some Class 3 ledges in the last couple miles before Davis. Bridget wasn't keen on running ledges in her kayak, having used it on a river only once before, so we decided to run it in my Front Royal OC-2.

We attempted to follow the guidebook's directions to the put-in on the Blackwater near Cortland, but found the road blocked by a "no trespassing" sign on a gate. Fortunately, Ed had previously run the Blackwater's North Fork, which flows into the Blackwater

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about 6 miles upstream of Davis, and dropped us off at the put-in bridge for this run. I would never have believed the drainage ditch he identified as the North Fork was a canoeable stream, but Ed positively identified it and confirmed it would have enough water. As we prepared to launch, the gusty wind drove snow flurries into every crevice of exposed skin, and the sun had withdrawn under a frontal assault of scudding clouds, not to be seen again that day. Just when our second thoughts were reaching a crescendo, Ed drove my car off to the take-out, and we were very committed to this dubious-looking stream.

The North Fork portion of the run was unlike most rivers I've done. Its width ranged from 10-25 feet and it twisted in tight meanders all the 6 or so miles to the Blackwater. The terrain was typical Canaan Valley "alpine marshland" with stands of evergreens on the higher ground. The banks were high enough to block the wind except when we turned directly into (or away from) it. A few meanders were so tight that the water had broken through the narrow tongue of land separating the channels. We took these shortcuts whenever we had the opportunity. The Class A rating was accurate, but the current was strong and there were many beaver dams simulating Class 1 ledges. Most of the dams had chutes to run, and some without passages we bumped and grinded over with a burst of speed. Two or three dams required carries, as did a downed tree and two footbridges. Barbed wire fences spanned the stream at two locations. In both instances, we were able to spot them early and squeeze below the lowest strand by flattening ourselves below the level of the gunwales. Caution is essential at pushier water levels however, when the gunwales may not clear the last strand. Being a party of one boat, we were able to surprise deer and ducks as we turned through the meanders.

At the confluence with the main Blackwater, we hastily lunched in the partial shelter of a stand of trees. Once on the Blackwater, the channel widened considerably and the meanders decreased to long straightaways that tended to head directly into the gale. Class 1 rock gardens demanded constant concentration to

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It always seems to be raining harder than it really is when you look at the weather through the window.

-- Sir John Lubbock, *The Pleasures of Life*

negotiate without running aground. Finally, the ledges appeared. Two in quick succession were legitimate Class 3, full of pinning rocks at this low level. We ran them successfully and began looking in earnest for the car. I had told Ed to leave the car upstream of the 12-foot dam I had read about in the guidebook, which is just above Davis. We reached the dam, and still no car in sight. I asked two frozen fishermen (fishing for frozen fish) if they had passed my car driving in, and after some thought, they remembered it about 1/2 mile downstream. Not feeling up to portaging the dam, Bridget and I walked up the dirt road and found my car parked at a bridge over Beaver Creek, a tributary entering the Blackwater just above the Rt. 32 crossing. It would have been difficult if not impossible to see from the Blackwater. Later, a sheepish Ed pleaded not guilty due to temporary snowblindness.

18 Feb: Dry Fork, 1 mile below Harman to Jenningsston
Parsons: 4.9
Weather: Sunny, 50s
Participants: Frank Fico & Al Cassel (OC-2), Ed Evangelidi (OC-1), Bridget Coghill (K-1), Rusty Dowling (K-1)

Sunday was a much more favorable day for paddling and we mustered the largest group of the weekend for this 7 mile upper section of the Dry Fork which nobody had done previously, save for the last mile from the mouth of the Laurel Fork to the take-out. Al had indicated interest in paddling the night before, but only had his Blue Hole OCA and didn't want to solo it for this run. I only had my tandem boat as well, and with Bridget kayaking and Al's wife, Noemi, opting to stay warm and dry at home, Al and I decided to pair up in his boat.

The view of the river driving to the put-in along Rt. 32 was not encouraging. Many rock gardens appeared extra-scrappy to unrunnable, but we decided to give it a try. We used the first bridge below Harman as our put-in, assuming it to be the "Rt. 32 Wayside" described in the guidebook. The first few miles along Rt. 32 were indeed scrappy, but nothing had to be carried, and the water was a pleasant, continuous Class 1-2. We enjoyed a much longer lunch than the day before at the

confluence with Red Creek. While there we noted that a road following the Dry Fork on river left could be used as a take-out for Red Creek, rather than going all the way to Jenningsston. This road, originating off Rt. 32 and crossing the Dry Fork near the village of Dry Fork, continues for about 2 or 3 miles past the Red Creek confluence and could be used when starting above US 33 on the Dry Fork for a much shorter shuttle than taking out at Jenningsston.

After lunch, the river widens and transforms into a pool-drop configuration. The rapids were solid Class 2 and had plenty of water with the addition of Red Creek. We stopped to play at the mouth of the Laurel Fork, which tumbled into the Dry at a much higher gradient and created powerful eddies and currents at the confluence. Rusty was ferrying across the current when she was accosted by an aggressive eddy line, and was over before the rest of us knew what was happening. She rolled up on her first attempt and whooped it up in celebration of a true cold water roll well done. The Jenningsston bridge appeared about a mile below the Laurel Fork and the day's paddle was over.

19 Feb: North Fork, South Branch Potomac, Seneca Rocks to Hopeville (Hopeville Canyon), 15 miles
Petersburg: 2.3

Weather: Sunny and windy, 50s
Participants: Zofia Kosim (K-1), Rusty (K-1), Frank & Bridget (OC-2)

Monday, President's Day, was getaway day, and I was hoping for enough water to paddle Hopeville Canyon from Seneca Rocks, since it was on the way home. Ron and Leslie Knipling had paddled just the canyon section on the way up Friday and Ron estimated about 4 inches of water. (Bridget and I saved Ron from physically running the shuttle when we came upon him on the road that day). After accounting for the Knipling factor and considering we'd had no rain to speak of over the weekend, I knew it would be near zero for Monday.

A bunch of us gazed at the flow from the footbridge at Seneca Rocks that morning and felt the wind gusting down the valley. Zofia was hesitant about taking

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her glass squirt boat, and Bridget was worried about the Class 3 rapids to be found 10 miles downstream where the actual canyon began. After conferring with Ed, the only one of us to have done this run, Bridget decided to paddle tandem with me (whew! I wasn't looking forward to handling the big boat solo in the wind for 15 miles) and let Zofia use her plastic Dancer. Ed decided the wind was too daunting, and once again generously offered to run shuttle for us. We drafted Zofia's friend Mitch and Bert Finkelstein to drive our two other cars to the take-out before their hike, and our party of four put-on about noon.

The opening 10 miles of the run were very pleasant, with fine scenery and Class 1-2 rapids generally having a defined channel to run without scraping too badly. The wind was sporadic, and when it did gust it came from our stern. There is one Class 3 ledge in this section mentioned in the guidebook. It is a 3 foot drop, runnable at this level only on river left, where it is diagonal to the current and forms a fairly potent hydraulic. Because of its configuration, it is difficult to line up and punch the hole perpendicular to the ledge. I watched Zofia drop over into the hole and realized I needed a better angle and more speed to punch it. It was too late to eddy out and my last-ditch attempt to correct the angle only slowed us down. As we passed over the brink, I was paddling furiously forward to try to power us through, thus failing to be ready to brace when we rolled over on the downstream side. Bridget said she rather enjoyed her first swim since last May. Dry suits make you so damn smug!

We stopped for lunch just after entering the deepest part of Hopeville Canyon, where the road climbs away from the river. The rapids were indeed Class 3 in here, complimented by bonus pinning rocks due to the zero level. There were some play waves after the rock garden entrances, upon which an exuberant Zofia tried to entice a tired Rusty, to no avail. The wind seemed worse here in the canyon, or perhaps it was the consequence of getting blown off course that was worse. We reached our cars about 4:00, thus ending our paddling weekend.

On the drive home, Zofia had her

first bowling experience during dinner at the White Star in Wardensville. I'm sure she now envisions the inside of a bowling alley to have rows of those funny-looking arcade machines with the hinged plastic pins!

*For this report, "guidebook" refers to Wild Water West Virginia, by Davidson, Eister and Davidson.

"A Venture Through Maryland" Outdoor Expo Seneca Creek State Park, April 21-22

Seneca Creek State Park is hosting "A Venture Through Maryland -- An active Outdoor Expo" on April 21-22 at the park, which is located in Gaithersburg at 11950 Clopper Road. Local businesses will be exhibiting and demonstrating outdoor gear. Activities demonstrated will include cross-country skiing, canoeing, kayaking, mountain and tour biking, rock climbing, caving, and wind surfing. Many local clubs will be represented. For more info, call the park at 301-924-2127.

Raft guides wanted: Cheat and North Branch Rivers. Training provided. \$80-140 per weekend plus tips. Season begins 3/10. Cheat River Outfitters, Inc. (304) 329-2024.

Tent repair: Zippers, rips & tears, mosquito netting, custom sewing & design. Swift River Textiles. Michael Marlin (301) 933-4493.

Final Warning

If you haven't renewed your BRV membership for 1990, do it now! An "89" next to your name on the mailing label indicates that you haven't paid dues for 1990. In accordance with the new club bylaws, individuals who do not renew by April 15 will have their boats and paddles impounded and sold for scrap. More significantly, their names will be removed from the BRV roster and mailing list. So please, don't forget to renew.





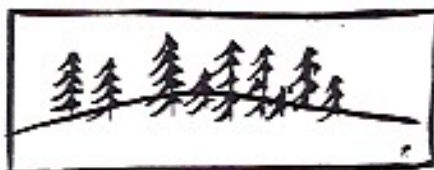
NORTH BRANCH RELEASES



Once again the Corps of Engineers has tentatively consented to schedule four weekends of recreational water releases from Jennings Randolph Dam (aka Bloomington Dam) on the North Branch Potomac River. The dates and flows will be as follows: April 7 and 8 at 600cfs, April 21 and 22 at 750cfs, May 5 and 6 at 850cfs, and May 19 and 20 at 1000cfs. Water will run from 10 am through 6:16 pm each day. We are working to get more water on the first weekends. Conversely, if nature throws us an unusually dry spring, lesser flows may result. Paddlers are advised to confirm the releases a day or two beforehand by calling the Corps of Engineers Baltimore Hotline (301-962-7687), U.S. Weather Bureau River Forecast Center (301-899-7378), or Canoe Cruisers Association Hotline (301-656-2586).

If you have never paddled this river, try it, you'll like it. The North Branch is located in western Maryland, along the West Virginia border, out by the Savage River, site of the 1989 World Whitewater Championships. The release breathes life into a six and a half-mile stretch of Class 2 and 3 whitewater set in a remote and scenic gorge. Comparable to the Lehigh, Casselman, or Nantahala, this is the sort of stream that novices and intermediates will enjoy as a downriver run and more advanced paddlers will enjoy as a playground. If you are unfamiliar with this river, its shuttle route, etc., just show up at Bloomington, Maryland on any release morning and look for cars with boats. Someone will be glad to adopt you.

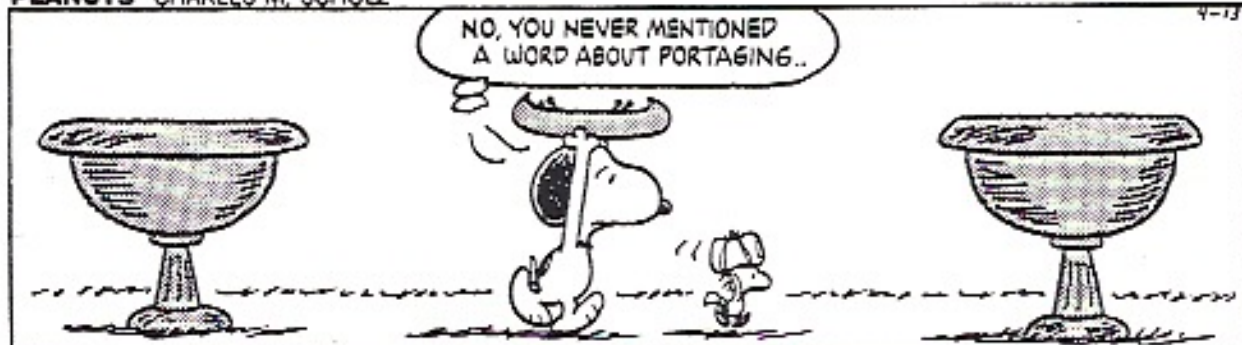
A few additional odds and ends. These releases are the product of eight years of persistent hounding and politicking by a coalition of the American Canoe Association, River and Trail Outfitters, and Cheat River Outfitters, and more recently, the Mineral County West Virginia Development Authority. Mineral County is sponsoring these releases (which means the Corps has palmed off legal and financial responsibility on these nice people). So we cannot urge you strongly enough to go down to nearby Keyser, West Virginia, patronize their restaurants, stores, gas stations, etc., and let your identity as boaters be known. Only if we prove to be an economic asset to the community can we look forward to their necessary support. This and your participation in these releases can hopefully lead to future releases and more of them. If you desire more information on Mineral County facilities, give a call to the Chamber of Commerce at 304-788-2513. Also there are some really nice campgrounds near the Randolph Dam and at Big Run State Park. Unfortunately, the Corps has insisted on passing on their extra costs to the users. We are working to minimize the sum, but paddlers can probably anticipate a \$2.00 access charge to use the Barnum put-in. Also, Westvaco has posted more land at Bloomington. It is likely that people will be taking out just upstream of the arch railroad bridge in Bloomington and parking in the school parking lot. See you on the river.



-- Ed Gertler



PEANUTS CHARLES M. SCHULZ



Upper Catoctin Creek, MD; Friday, Jan. 25
 Frederick = 4.8', Antietam Cr. = 2.6'
 by Ron Knipling

This day started out so raw and miserable that I was sure we'd all be frozen meat by the end of the day. At 6am when I loaded my boat in the darkness, it was pouring rain and about 35 degrees. As I drove away from my house to meet Scott Gravatt and Maxine Dunkelman in Frederick, I couldn't get my heater/defroster working, and could hardly see out the windshield. I was just about to turn around to go home to call Scott and "punt" when the heat came on, saving the day.

The first section of Catoctin Creek described in Ed Gertler's Maryland book begins at Myersville (Harmony Road). But, because of the 1"+ rainfall that lasted all Thursday night, we had good enough water to begin the trip 5 miles upstream near Grossnickle Church, about 2 miles above Ellerton. Actually, the creek is not even called Catoctin Creek at that point. It is called Middle Creek, but it appeared to be the main stem of the Catoctin. (This is not to be confused with the Middle Creek of the Monocacy that is near Emmitsburg, MD.)

We would paddle about 7 miles to the Myersville-Middletown Road, which is about one mile downstream of where Catoctin passes under Rt.70. The first part of the trip was definitely the best -- continuous fast Class 2-3, perhaps comparable to the Covington but with nothing harder than Class 3. The gradient for the five miles above Myersville was 40'/mile. Then it settled down to 20-25'/mile for the last two miles as the countryside changed from woods to open farmland. There were small, pretty farms and country homes all along the way. About halfway down there was a series of 4 cattle fences in a 150 yard-stretch. These slowed us down, but didn't present a hazard. It was a cold day, but we were all prepared for it. We had rain, snow flurries, wind, dark gray clouds, and even some brief periods of sunshine. The day's high temperature was about 40 degrees.

Along the creek we jumped a big fat beaver and a cute little red squirrel. Toward the end we ran a low water bridge through a tunnel that was so tight that our helmets banged against the top as we paddled through it. Max got a special charge out of her first trip of 1990 -- she was zapped by an electric cattle fence! Thank God for rubber booties.

This was a spirited run, but Scott and I scouted some smaller runs on the way home that looked even better. Just above our put-in was a 3-mile stretch of "Micro" Middle Creek with a gradient of 80-90'/mile that looked almost runnable. Another inch of water and we would have been on it. Next time, if there is plenty of water at Ellerton, we'll keep driving up Rt.17 and put in near Wolfsville for what will undoubtedly be a wild ride.

Then we drove up to Waynesboro, PA to check out the East Branch of Antietam Creek, which drops at nearly 100'/mile for a couple of miles through Old Forge State Forest. It looked great, but was 2" below minimum. Finally, on the way back toward Frederick we drove down Rt.550 beside Owens Creek. It looked like a real terror -- but possible. Owens Creek drops at 100'/mile for 5 miles between Lantz and Thurmont, with one mile in the middle at about 150'/mile. All it takes to run it is 1.5" of rain, a ready boat, and a dash of craziness.

Intrepid BRVer Braves Florida Wilds!

Kay Bachman (probably our most senior member) took courage and bent-shaft paddle in hand and went south. No, not to the Everglades. Central and northern Florida has a lot of nice, jungly, winding rivers with black water:

Rapids - Class zero.

Critters - birds (lots of birds), turtles, river otters, manatees (but they didn't show), and one alligator (variously estimated at 8-12 feet) that slid off the bank and under our canoe.

Try it -- you will like it.

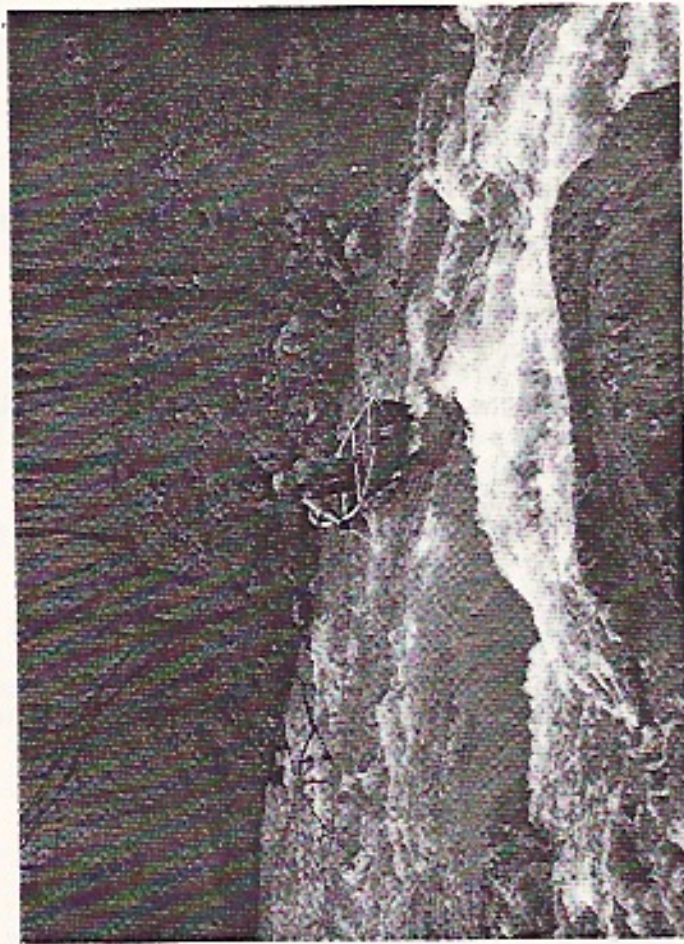
BRV Helps Hearing Impaired Members

BRV is going to try to ensure effective communication with all our members, including the hearing impaired. Starting this year, we will indicate in the roster those BRVers who have teletype (TTY) phones. Please call Tom Snyder (h521-6218) or Maxine Dunkelman (TTY h681-5618) know if you have a TTY phone at your home and/or at your office. Also, at BRV meeting, paddlers with announcements are asked to stand up in front so that hearing impaired members can read your lips.

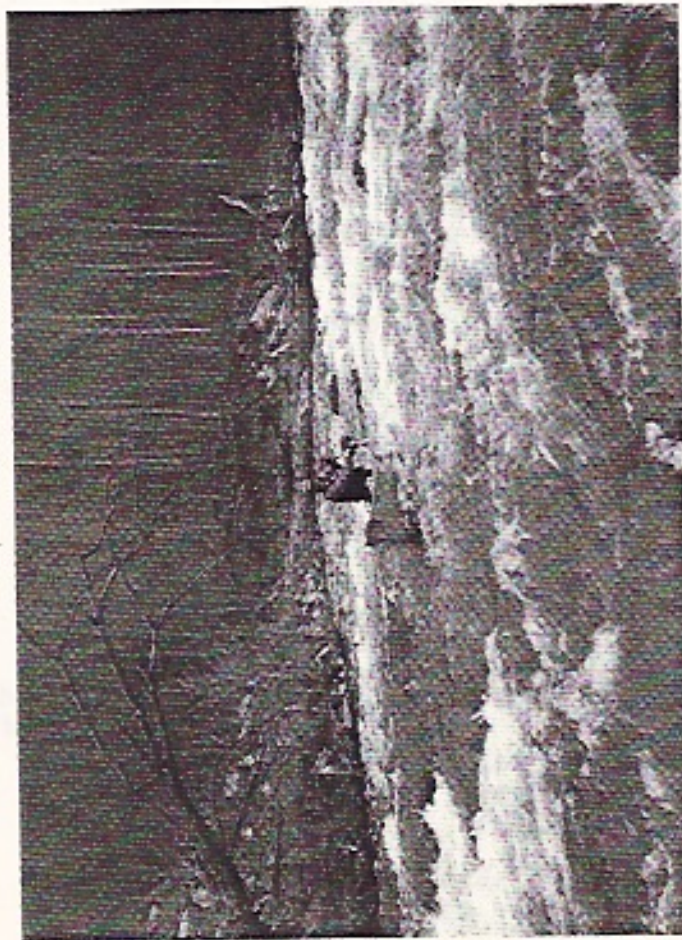




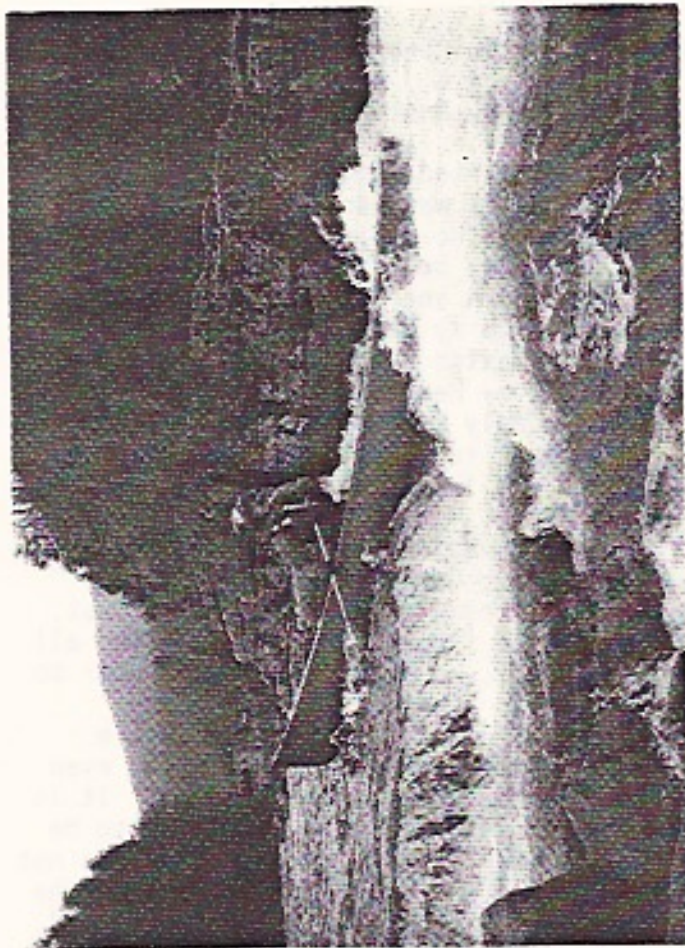
Maxine Dunkelmann near the put-in of Upper Catoctin Creek, MD (main tributary called "Middle Creek")



Ron Knipling in his new Whitesell on Upper Catoctin Cr.



Glenn Gravatt on NF SB Potomac (Hopeville Canyon)



Glenn Gravatt on NF SB Potomac (Hopeville Canyon)

-- Photos by Scott Gravatt --

Hiking Along Area Streams

by Ed Evangelidi

As a speaker and writer on hiking I get calls from people all the time requesting interesting places to go. I usually have no problem telling people where to go. Noticing that many people who call me are paddlers who want to hike near interesting whitewater, I decided to put together a list [next page] of places that combine both interests. Since this is a serious paddling club I won't name names of people who are interested in giving up an occasional paddling day to go hiking. But I will name creeks and rivers (actually, they are already named) with opportunities for both boater and hiker. Incidentally, if you still can't rationalize hiking along a creek, think of it as a scouting trip. If you run into a paddler who recognizes you, just mumble, "I'm scouting the river." Wear a daypack and non-waterproof pants (jeans) and you probably won't be recognized by the occasional boater.

Some of the rivers listed have extensive hiking trails (e.g., Potomac with the C&O Canal Trail, Greenbrier with the Allegheny Trail, and the Lehigh with its towpath), whereas others are hiked merely to see one rapid or two (e.g., High Falls Trail, Shavers Fork, or Broad Run, VA). With the nearby Potomac, think of hiking as portaging the flatwater. From Cumberland the first good whitewater is 120 miles downstream at Harper's Ferry. Then another 40 miles downstream is Seneca Breaks and then another 10 miles downstream is Mather Gorge. So with only 3 portages (170 miles) you can hike along the flat sections and paddle the good stuff.

Some exceptionally beautiful hiking is along Otter Creek (both PA and WV), Gladys Fork (Allegheny Trail, WV), Pine Creek (PA), and locally at the Hoffmanville Gorge of the Upper Gunpowder and along the Mather Gorge Trail. Some areas like Difficult Run, and the Upper Yough can show you some truly crazy Class 6 runs without worrying about having to catch the last eddy. Also keep this list handy for those awful dry days boating is not much of an option.

Canoeing trophies, awards, and gifts:
inscribed miniature and full-sized paddlers and other canoeing-related gifts; Brown's Canoe Works, George and Marilyn Brown, 2235 Mount Hope Road, Fairfield, PA 17320.

HOPEVILLE CANYON (NF, SB Potomac)
February 10, 1990
By Scott Gravatt

Background: For about 11 years Doug and Scott Gravatt have gone on a Winter backpacking weekend. About 1984, Justin joined in. In 1987 cold-weather paddling gear changed the trip to a canoe/camping trip, and avid paddler brother Glenn joined the group.

- Feb. 9: Plans finalized. Cheat Narrows-Sat. Bloomington-Sun. Justin has a date, looks like Dad's going solo.
- Feb. 10; 4:30am: Alarm buzzes (for the 3rd-time) It's been raining, still is.
- 4:35am: Phone rings (You've got to love the sport). Cheat too high? Made plans to scout others on the way.
- 4:40: In the shower, phone rings, Linda is trying to sleep. "No, No, I said I would call you back!"
- 4:45-5:15: More calls; last minute packing.
- 5:20: On the road...late!
- 7:00: Supposed to meet Glenn in Wardensville, but still 45 min. away. Ah! Pat (Doug's wife) agreed?? to be Communications Coordinator, give her a call.
- 7:45: Meet Glenn. The Lost River is below "0". Call Pat (this makes about the 10th call she's gotten, and it got old with the 1st one at 6:45!). Doug is at Seneca Rocks, Hopeville Canyon is low, but runnable. We'll meet Doug at the take-out.
- 9:45: At the Dolly Sods Rd. take-out. All set to go, but Doug's not feeling too good. He wants to go for the Canyon only, skip the first 7 miles. OK, lets go!
- 11:00: Yeah! The annual event is under way! The water is low, but not scrappy. No intimidation no desperate rock dodging, just some nice Class II wave rapids and beautiful mountain scenery.
- 11:30: All warmed up, Scott wants to swim surf. Yeah, look, there's a nice hole to side-surf! Stretch that low brace out: uh oh, water gushing in, still holding, low brace is sinking (I bet this looks impressive from shore, they can't even tell I've got my paddle braced on the bottom!) Flushing out, going all the way over: Will all those hours of practice pay off? Yes! A successful open boat roll! With witnesses! Wait a minute, these are my super-cut-throat-competitive brothers, they'll never admit to this!
- 11:45: Doug needs to relieve himself, but his zipperless wet suit is buried under gear. Houdini would have a hard time with. 20 min. later I'm ready to loan him a knife so he can cut a slit, but I guess he'd rather do that with the suit off.
- 12:30: Let's stop for lunch. But Doug feels (and looks) half dead. He wants off, so we push on.
- 1:15: A short but enjoyable trip comes to an end.
- 2:30: Lunch in Petersburg, at least for Glenn and I. Doug got down about 1/2 a bowl of soup and then went out to his truck to snooze.

Glenn had plans for Sunday, so he headed home. Doug and I drove up toward Bloomington hoping he'd be better in the morning. He wasn't. Sunday morning we took a look at Bloomington, which was running great, and even the Savage was up enough for a low water run. But what Doug needed was a bed, near a toilet, so we called it quits. Until next year.....

Hiking Trails Along Rivers -- Compiled By Ed Evangelidi

Maryland Rivers

	<u>Class</u>	<u>Mi.</u>	<u>Section & Hiking Miles</u>
Little & Middle Patuxent	1-4	10	Murray Hill & Guilford to Savage (loop)
Patuxent	1-2	5	Hipsley Mill to below Rt.97
Northwest Branch, Anacostia	1-6	7	Randolph Road to Adelphi Mill
Rock Creek (MD/DC)	1-3	20+	Trails along most sections
Seneca Creek	1-2	3	Rt.355 to Great Seneca Hwy
Potomac	A-3	184	Cumberland to Georgetown
Patapsco	1-3	5	Johnnycake Rd + Old Frederick to Rt.144 + Old Frederick (different)
South Branch Patapsco	1-2+	2	Gaither to River Road
Gunpowder (Upper)	1-3	3	Grave Run Road to Clipper Mill
Gunpowder (Middle)	1-2	3.5	Prettyboy Dam Rd. to Bunker Hill
Gunpowder (Lower)	1-3	8.5	Harford Rd. to US Rt.40
Little Gunpowder	2-3	1	US Rt.1 area
Fifteen Mile Creek	1-2	14	Green Ridge Trail; Stateline (Old Hancock Rd) to Carroll Rd
Savage	2-3	2	Dam (river left) to slalom site
Upper Yough	3-6	1	Swallow Falls Park Trail

Virginia Rivers

	<u>Class</u>	<u>Mi.</u>	<u>Section & Hiking Miles</u>
Four Mile Run	2-4	5	Along W&OD trail
Cub Run Gorge	2-3	1.5	River right (private land) goes further river left goes to Old Mill Race
Potomac	1-2	1.5	Top VA Canal (end of Seneca Rd.) to bottom
Potomac	2-3(6)	3	Mather Gorge Trail
Bull Run	1	8	Below I-66 to Henderson Rd.
Pohick Creek	2-3	3.5	Hooes Rd. to Pohick Rd.
Difficult Run	2-6	1	Below Rt.193
Rappahannock	1-2	1.5	Kelly's Ford upriver (both sides)
Rappahannock	2-3	1.5	Fall line dam to US Rt.1
Broad Run	2-3	1	Along RR tracks (private)
Quantico Creek	1-3	10	In Prince William Forest Park
Passage Creek	1-3	1.5	Along road or on Big Blue Trail (river right)
James (Richmond)	1-4	4	Parks along both sides in city

Pennsylvania Rivers

	<u>Class</u>	<u>Mi.</u>	<u>Section & Hiking Miles</u>
Muddy Creek	1-5	2	Paper Mill Rd downstream (river right)
Otter Creek	3-4?	1+	Rt.425 upstream
Pequea	1-3	3.5	Martie Forge to Pequea (Conestoga Trail)
Brandywine	1-2	13	Kerr Park (Rt.282) to US Rt.1
Susquehanna	A-2		Varies: lower sections along old canal
Delaware	A-2		Varies: along old canals
Lehigh	1-2+	12	Path river right Whitehaven to Rockport
Tohickon	2-3	1.5	River left in park
Pine Creek	1-2+	25	Pine Creek Gorge Trail (river is 800' down)

West Virginia Rivers

	<u>Class</u>	<u>Mi.</u>	<u>Section & Hiking Miles</u>
Potomac/Bloomington	2-3	2-3	Put-in: downstream river right
Greenbrier	1-3	75	Above Cass to US Rt.60
Pond Run (of Waites Run)	7	2.5	Half Moon Trail to Waites run Rd.
Gandy (Sinks)	?	1	Private
Red Creek (Cheat)		6+	In Dolly Sods area
High Falls Trail-Shavers Fork	?	25	Falls
Laurel Fork	1-2?	17	Wilderness area near source
Glady Fork		17	US Rt. 33 to Dry Fork (scenic)
Otter Creek	4?	11	Lower section is beautiful



BRV Trip Schedule - Spring 1990

-- Bob Maxey

Novice
Intermediate
Advanced
N I A
Key:

Date	Trip/Leader	Phone
March 17-18	Keith Merkel Petersburg Area (I/A)	703-758-0951
March 18	Zofia Kosim Muddy Creek (I)	202-232-0360
March 24-25	Scott Gravatt Lost R. & Trout Run (I/A)	301-774-2648
March 31	Tom Snyder	703-521-6218
April 1	Lower Yough (I)	
April 1	Ron Knipling Little Cacapon (N)	703-533-2895
April 7-8	Clark & Ellie Childers Hot Tub Trip (All)	703-821-1048
April 14	Charlie Thomas Goose Creek (N/I)	703-430-4056
April 14-15	Dave Garrity Laurel Fk. Cheat & Kitzmiller (A)	301-587-1169
April 21-22	Scott Gravatt Dealer's Choice - Savage (I/A)	301-774-2648
April 22	Chester Summitt Cedar Creek (N)	703-534-7027
April 28	Ann Wilcox Antietam Creek (N)	202-328-1811
April 29	Harry Lawson Hughes River (N/I)	301-469-7942
April 28 -May 6	Bob Maxey Central WVa: Cherry, Cranberry, Elk Williams, John's Cr. (VA) (I/A)	703-823-1439
May 5	Marita Menaker Cacapon (N/I)	301-948-8312
May 12-13	Clark & Ellie Childers Cheat Headwaters (I/A)	703-821-1048
May 19-20	Allen Faust Smoke Hole Camper (I)	703-534-3712
May 26-28	Jeff Fisher Tygart R. Spectacular (I/A)	703-978-5150
June 9	Wayne Sellin Dealer's Choice (N)	703-960-4298
July 14-15	Zofia Kosim New River (A)	202-232-0360



Water

White

About the Blue Ridge Voyageurs (BRV)

BRV is a voluntary association of paddlers from the Washington, DC area. Club benefits include: trips for all skill levels (most at intermediate and advanced levels); BRV Hotline for information and pick-up trips; The Voyageur, published 6 times a year; club roster, published yearly in May; Christmas party; conservation projects; moonlight paddles & picnics; big trips to the Smokies, Canada, Europe, and western rivers.

Meetings: In 1990, BRV will hold its meetings from 7-9pm on the following dates: M 1/22; M 3/26; M 5/14; Sat 8/4 (Moonlight Cruise/Picnic); M 9/17; and T 11/20. Meetings are followed by beer and pizza at a nearby pub. Location: Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library on Leesburg Pike (Rt.7) in Falls Church, VA. The library is on the east side of Rt.7 about 0.6 miles south of Rt.495. Or, from Rt.66, take the Rt.7 North exit and go about 0.6 miles north on Rt.7. It's on the right. Patches, decals, and T-shirt transfers with the BRV indian logo are available at all BRV meetings. Prices: patches (\$3), decals (\$2), and transfers (\$1).

The BRV Hotline (703 425-7645) provides information on trips, meetings, and other club events. It provides last minute information on weekend trips. Paddlers looking for others to join them should call the hotline. Leave a message which will be included in updates to the recorded message. The Hotline "Voice" is Geff Fisher.

1990 BRV Officers: Wayne Sellin, President; Scott Gravatt, VP; Bob Maxey, Trip Coordinator; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Ron Knipling, Newsletter Editor; **Board of Directors:** Al Cassel, Peter Fuchs, Will Greene, Mike Marstaller, and Mort Smith.

The Voyageur: Newsletter of the Blue Ridge Voyageurs

The Voyageur publishes information on club events, conservation and safety news, the club trip schedule, and other news of interest to BRV's. Publishing trip reports is a particularly important newsletter function. Trip Coordinators are requested to write up all club trips -- particularly trips to unusual or especially interesting rivers. Trip reports and other articles are gladly accepted in any form -- typed, handwritten, over the phone. Typed "camera-ready" articles are especially appreciated. The desired column width is 3.8"; that's 46 characters 12-pitch or 38 characters 10-pitch. Preferred type format: 12-pitch, single spaced, non-justified. Do not skip lines between paragraphs. For trip reports, try to include the following information (if applicable): names of participants, relevant NWS gauge readings of nearby rivers, description of the water level on the river (e.g., minimum, moderate, maximum, or number of inches above or below "zero"), weather conditions, hazards, difficult rapids, info on put-ins or takeouts, distinctive scenery, and overall difficulty in relation to rivers well known to BRV's. New information about the river (e.g., new hazards) is particularly important. Editor: Ron Knipling, 5059 N. 36th St., Arlington, VA 22207. Press dates: about two weeks prior to meeting dates.

Address changes: contact Tom Snyder, (703) 521-6218.

Membership applications/renewals: submit to BRV Treasurer Clark Childers. Renew by April 15 of each year in order to be listed on the club roster and to continue receiving The Voyageur.

Monday, March 26 Meeting:

Video of BRV's on Chattooga Section IV

Mike and Lee Now Tandem

BRV's Mike Marstaller and Lee Prouty are now in the same boat, running the proverbial "river of life" (Class 3-4) together. They were married in January and are living in Virginia as Mike is selling his home in Rockville. Mike and Lee write to thank all the BRV's who came to their wedding party to share their celebration. Mike says that some of the gift cards got mixed up so he wants to thank everyone for the wedding gifts, even though in some cases he is not sure who gave what! Mike and Lee met on a river trip when Mike was taking a bad swim. Lee threw out a rope and pulled him in.

Blue Ridge Voyageurs Membership Form

White water canoeing is a risky outdoor sport. The BRV is not responsible for any individual's decision to participate in the sport, or his or her decision to run any river or section of river.

-Make checks payable to: BRV
-Amount: \$10.00

-Mail to:
Clark Childers
Treasurer, BRV
6615 Jill Court
McLean, VA 22101

☐ YES, Please renew my BRV membership
☐ YES, Please begin my membership

Please print

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Phone: (h) () () (w) () () Zip: _____

