

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

January 2013

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

The winter has been fairly mild again this year and hopefully some nice weekends will present us with decent paddling. I've dusted off my winter shoulder exercise printouts, now actually using them is the trick.

The Xmas party was a success; unfortunately I missed it this year. Bad scheduling on my part prevented my participation. Apparently, I was retained as President along with the board. We will convene the yearly board meeting hopefully this month. Thanks again to Mark Wray for organizing and pulling off this important club event.

The next club event is the scheduled January meeting on Wednesday the 23rd. As yet a topic for the meeting has not been established but I will keep the members updated as to what it will be.

Hope you all get out and enjoy some winter action on the Blue Ridge creeks.

Rick

Patapsco River, December 28, 2012 by Ron Knipling

There doesn't seem to be many BRV winter paddlers these days, and I'll admit that my own old bones feel a lot colder than they used to. I used to camp out on mountain tops covered in snow – but not lately. But if you dress right and pick your days well, winter paddling can be a joy, and can even warm your cockles. Just a few runs will help get you through the winter doldrums.

Two days after Christmas, following a big rain and with central Maryland “black and blue” on the USGS Real-Time Water Data site, I thought for sure I could gather up a bunch of hardy, hot-blooded BRV's for a run on the Patapsco or similar stream. “Intrepid Larry” Lempert was the only taker though, and I was definitely asking myself whether making the run with just two boats was a wise choice. Maybe it wasn't wise, but it was fun! We caught the stream at about 500cfs on the Patapsco Hollofield gauge, which translated to a near-perfect +5” or so on the river. More water would have been nice, but at this level you could run all the rapids cleanly without getting pushed or splashed.

We put in off Old Frederick Road in Hollofield. Going under the Rt. 40 bridge two miles downstream concerned us, since there is continuing construction on the bridge, with signs prohibiting river passage. The warning signs and construction site were there, but there were no workers and no problems getting through. The old Union Dam just below Rt. 40 had disappeared; now it is just an easy Class 2 rapid. Further down

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PATAPSCO (Continued from page 1)

were Class 2 Oella Falls (in front of the old Dickey Mill) followed by the more intense Class 3 Suicide Rapids consisting of several closely spaced ledges. We continued past Ellicott City (with its Class 2+ Doughnut Rapid just below the bridge), and took out along River Road for a total run of about 5 miles. I've been told that some worthwhile rapids continue on to the bridge at Ilchester now that the dam there has been removed. River Road was partially closed, though, so we didn't get that far.

The run was mostly Class 1-2, with Suicide being the only legitimate Class 3. Still, it was good enough action for a 40 degree day! The run took less than two hours so we never got cold – one of the secrets of winter paddling. Larry and I hope to do the Patapsco or similar winter runs (e.g., Gunpowder Falls, Marsh Creek, Passage Creek) in the coming months, but we need more warm bodies out there with us!

C&O Canal Drained at Violettes **by Ron Knipling**

On Saturday December 8, Al Cassel, Carter Hearn, Bob Maxey, and I met to run the Violettes Lock “loop.” The Little Falls level that day, 3.1' or 3,400cfs, makes for reasonably good playing in the Virginia Canal rapids, I think. Anyway, we found the C&O Canal nearly empty below Violettes Lock, making the usual loop run impossible. A volunteer clearing debris along the towpath told us that the Park Service had drained the canal in anticipation of Superstorm Sandy, and that they would not be refilling it until Spring. So we ran a shuttle down to Pennyfield, where there is a nice access ramp down to Muddy Branch about 100 yards from the river. Combined, the four of us have well over 100 years paddling experience in the DC area, but until this day none of us had ever taken out there. I think I prefer it to running the loop. The towpath distance between Violettes and Pennyfield Locks is only about two miles, so one can easily jog or walk the shuttle, if needed.

Help Pass Virginia Stream Access Legislation! **by Kevin Colburn**

[Posted 23 December 2012 to the American Whitewater website]

The lack of clarity regarding the rights of residents and visitors to paddle Virginia's certain rivers and streams has long been an unnecessary source of conflict. Virginians are now ready to change that by clarifying that in Virginia people have the widely supported right to float down rivers. **Thanks to this grassroots effort, a new stream access bill, [SB 737](#), has recently been introduced in the state legislature that needs your support.**

If you are from Virginia, please [look up your legislator](#) and contact them as soon as possible in support of [SB 737](#). Personal calls, letters, and emails are best that describe how you and your family will benefit from this legislation. In addition to contacting your own legislator, please consider contacting members of the [Senate Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources Committee](#).

If you live outside of Virginia but paddle there, please contact the committee listed above, as well as the legislator representing the area that you like (or would like) to paddle in. You can [look up](#) the legislator for your favorite areas. For example, Senator [Stephen Newman](#) represents the Johns Creek area. Be sure to mention that you spend money as a river-oriented tourist.

Blue Ridge Voyageurs Membership Form

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

Annual Dues: _____ \$15.00 (newsletter sent via postal mail)
 _____ \$12.00 (newsletter emailed in .pdf format)

Optional Contribution to BRV River

Conservation/Access Fund: \$5.00 or _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to BRV. Mail to BRV Membership, c/o Frank Fico,
 1609 Autumnwood Drive, Reston, VA 20194-1523.

Name: _____ **Phone w/area code: (h)** _____

Address: _____ **(work or cell)** _____

Email: _____

Please check if interested in: helping with moonlight picnic providing a meeting program
 helping with holiday party leading trips conservation/river maintenance



Say What?

Kim Buttleman and Jenny Thomas caught this amusing sign on Ed Evangelidi's Eastern Shore trip in November, on Laurel Creek, just downstream from the put-in in Laurel, Delaware. It seems that the creek has a number of swing and lift bridges, all posted with this same sign. If anyone cares to call the number and clarify the policy, please let the editor know and he will pass it along to the rest of the club.

For Sale: Mohawk Probe 12-II (12'2") solo whitewater playboat canoe (OC-1). Fully outfitted, foam pedestal saddle with cinch-down thigh strap. Purple. Boat well-used but fully intact and functional. \$375. Ron Knipling, (703) 533-2895, rknipling@aol.com.

About the Blue Ridge Voyageurs (BRV)

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

Meetings: BRV will hold meetings from 7-9 pm on the following dates in 2013: January TBD, March TBD, May TBD, August TBD (Moonlight Picnic), September TBD, November TBD, December TBD (Holiday Party). 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 I-495. Or, from I-66, take the Rt. 7 West exit and go about 0.6 miles west on Rt. 7. It's on the right.

BRV Website: The BRV website (<http://www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org>) provides information on trips, meetings, and other club events.

2013 BRV Officers: Rick Koller, President; Mark Wray, VP; Mike Martin & Daryl Hall, Trip Coordinators; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation.

2013 Board of Directors: Ginny DeSeau, Ed Grove, Ron Knipling, Wes Mills

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 BRVers. 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 accepted in any form: via electronic mail (preferred; send to fico1@netzero.net), on disk, typed, handwritten, faxed or over the phone. 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 BRVers. New information about the river (e.g., new hazards) is particularly important. **Photos** are also published. Send prints to the webmaster or e-mail digital photos to the newsletter editor.

Address changes: contact Frank Fico, 1609 Autumnwood Dr., Reston, VA 20194-1523, (703) 318-7998, fico1@netzero.net. The annual roster will be kept current via updates published in each issue of *The Voyageur*.

Membership applications/renewals: submit to Frank Fico. Must renew by February 15 each year to be listed on club roster and continue receiving *The Voyageur*.



The Voyageur

c/o Frank Fico
1609 Autumnwood Drive
Reston, VA 20194-1523

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Deadline for March *Voyageur*:
Friday, March 1st

NEXT MEETING
Wednesday, January 23rd

LAST CHANCE TO RENEW! If your mailing label says 2012, this is your final issue. Use the membership form on page 3.