

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

July 2006

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

It has been a spring with very little about which to write. I do not know what to say. Nothing new here. The drought is very reminiscent of the one we endured four years ago. We survived then and we will survive this one. When I think back to that year, I cannot remember what we did to pass the time when we were not boating. Is that a symptom of something? I hope not. I feel a little bored and a miss seeing my friends. If it stays this dry, we will have to get together for other activities.

At the last meeting a committee of three was appointed to look for new club officers. Many positions will open up on January 1. I forgot who these guys are but please call them to volunteer your services. Being a leader of the BRV is very fulfilling.

Our moonlight picnic is coming up on July 8. Rick Koller, Ron Knipling and Ginny DeSeau have volunteered to organize the picnic. Please come and join us for a good time.

Ernie

Close Call on the Savage by Mike Wevrick

On Sunday, May 28, I ran the Savage River in western MD during the 800 cfs dam release. This is a very fast narrow stream with almost continuous class 3-4 rapids and few eddies (description and photos at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/748>). I had never run it before but felt I had the needed skills. Our group leader was Lee Thonus. Our third paddler was John Guetter, an experienced

(Continued on next page)

2006 BRV Moonlight Picnic

LOCATION: The usual **Violette's Lock/Virginia Canal Loop**, off River Road, north of Potomac, MD.

DATE: **Saturday, July 8, 2006**

TIME: Meet at Violette's Lock parking lot at **5:00 PM**. Canoe/kayak departure at approximately 5:30 PM; return to Violette's Lock approximately 10:30 PM (or whenever you like).

BRING: Food (see below), blanket/chairs as desired, water, bug repellent, flashlight(s).

FOOD: Bring a dish to feed at least eight people, as follows:

A-G: salads, uncooked veggies, fruit dish

H-N: desserts, snacks

O-Z: pasta, casserole, cooked veggies, rice, etc.

Be sure to bring serving utensils for your dish, if needed. BRV will provide chicken, drinks (soda, wine and beer — approximately two per person).

COST: **\$5** for adults, **\$3** for children 2-12 years old, **free** for those under 2.

RSVP: BRV Board members will be contacting all DC-area members. RSVP to your caller or to Ron Knipling at 703-533-2895 by **Thursday, July 6th**.

CAMPING: It is permissible to camp at the picnic site, so if you would like to do so, bring your gear. There are usually some who camp, so you won't be alone.

PARKING: Parking at Violette's Lock is unrestricted, but there is little police surveillance. This has not been a high theft location in the past, but please do not leave valuables in your vehicles!

SAVAGE (Continued from page 1)

paddler who had done the run several times previously.

The plan was for all three of us to run it once fairly slowly, Lee in his C1, John in his kayak, and me in my OC1. Lee would then head home and John and I would do a second run with me switching to my kayak, a Pirouette S. The first run went fine. Lee described all the major rapids as they came up and led the way down. I shipped some water here and there, once quite a lot, but was always able to eddy out and dump or bail.

On the second run we went a lot faster, since we were now both familiar with the river, my kayak did not need to be bailed, and we were concerned about getting off before the water was shut off. We ran everything without problems until about 1/2 mile above the take-out. At this point there is an island, with neither channel completely visible from the top. When we got there, I thought I remembered that we should go down the left, and asked John if that was correct. He also did not clearly remember, and headed down the left channel with me following.

As we came to the bend we saw a pile of wood on the left, but it was still not obvious that the channel was completely blocked. When John saw that it was blocked he quickly landed on the right, on the island. I was further left in a longer kayak and ran directly into the wood pile on the left, wedging my bow between two logs. The kayak was still on the surface and not in danger of being forced under, but it was securely stuck, with the bow wedged and the current pushing the left side from behind. Without really thinking about it, I

pulled my spray skirt and climbed onto the logs in front of me.

Once I was safely out of the kayak, we thought about what to do next. The kayak now had some water in it but was still mostly afloat. I managed to climb down and get my throw rope from where I had clipped it in behind my seat. I then tied the free end to my bow grab loop and threw the bag across to John. He was in a good position to try to pull the kayak straight back out of the logs, but when he tried this it did not budge at all. By this time the kayak had been forced completely under water.

Our next idea was to flag down another group for help. Several guys landed below us and climbed up. They set up a vector pull but even with three of us, this had no effect. Between us we had several pulleys and lots of rope, but there was nothing solid to tie onto to set up a z-drag, just bushes and loose wood. They suggested we just wait for the water to drop, and then they headed down. (Whoever you were, thanks for stopping and trying to help.) We were not sure how long it would take for the water to come down, so we decided to go out to the takeout and come back later. We tried to paddle with me sitting on the back of John's kayak, but this did not work well. I then tried just swimming down, but that was also not great, so I crashed through the bushes on shore, came out to an industrial yard, and walked out. We met up back at the parking lot. We had only my car, and the keys were inside a drybag tied inside the pinned kayak, so there was no way to get into the car.

After a short rest, we decided to walk down and see if the water had dropped. It had, so we walked

down to the industrial yard, crashed through the bushes, and waded upstream to the kayak. When we got there, the kayak was partly out of the water and we realized why we had been unable to move it earlier. The bow was partly folded about 2 feet back from the tip. The force of the water holding the kayak down had wedged the tip very securely. Even with lower water, we had to kick and pry on the kayak and logs to get it free. Once it was loose, we tied another rope to the bow, pulled it out, and dumped it. I then went upstream about 200 feet to find a good place to wade across to the island to get my rope. We then dragged and carried the kayak through the bushes back to the car, packed up, and headed back to Teters. In the end we had no injuries or lost or damaged gear. I was lucky to have gotten out of such a close call without paying a price.

Lessons learned (what we did wrong and right):

1. Wrong: The big error of course was running the left channel without being sure it was the correct one. When I told my wife this story, her immediate comment was something like "If we were running a river up north, we would never run a rapid down a blind channel without getting out and scouting." I had gotten complacent and was not thinking enough about potential hazards other than the rapids themselves. Our first run had gone well, the hardest part of the second run was behind us, and we were in a rush to finish. On the first run Lee had mentioned to look for the island just after seeing a blue building on the left, and to make sure to

Greenbrier River Bike Trail by Bob Youker

The old railroad along the Greenbrier River in the highlands of West Virginia has been turned into a long, multi-purpose trail. Starting on Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend, I biked about 90 miles of the trail with my wife driving shuttle. After driving out to Durbin on Sunday morning I did 9 miles of the more primitive West Fork Trail. We stayed at the Hermitage Motel in Bartow (304-456-4808).

The main trail starts in Cass at mile 79 and I rode down to Marlinton at mile 56 where we stayed at the Old Clark B&B (304-799-6377). The next day I rode to the little hamlet of Beard at mile 38 where the Current B&B is located (304-653-4722). To shorten the last day I did a ride in the afternoon to mile 30. The trail ends in North Caldwell about three miles north of Lewisburg, W.V. The trail starts at milepost 3 of the old RR so subtracting 3 from 79 you get 76 miles total on the main trail with 25 more miles available on the West Fork Trail. The miles between the two trails is owned by the State but has not yet been opened.

The trail was in good shape but bumpy in places and soft chipped rock in other places. It was shady for about 80% of the route. The Greenbrier River is quite flat with only a few riffles here and there. The West Fork had more riffles closer together and looked like fun canoeing if it had more water.

take the right channel. In focusing on the whitewater action, however, I had forgotten this by the time we got back down to that spot. We should have stopped and either scouted or waited for another group to come along.

2. Right: As mentioned, I really did not think before getting out of the kayak. John said later that less than 10 seconds elapsed between when I hit the wood pile and when I was out and on top of the logs. I still think this was the right thing to do, even though it led to the pin. The kayak was jammed solidly, on the surface, and fairly stable, but staying in it would still have meant some risk of being flipped and likely pinned in the sieve underwater and killed. (There was no room to roll.) This would have been even more likely if we had been able to get the kayak loose with me still in it.

3. Wrong: Tying my keys inside the kayak meant that we would have had to hitchhike out if we could not have gotten the kayak out. Luckily it was a dam release and not natural flow. I don't tie my keys to my pfd because my remote control isn't waterproof, but I am planning to have a spare key cut and attach it to my pfd. I also need to get a waist-belt type throw rope.

4. Right: Waiting for the level to drop was the best solution. Trying to get more people and equipment to try to pull the kayak out at 800 cfs would have been

difficult, dangerous, and likely futile.

John has reviewed this and added his lessons learned:

A down side of usually following others down a river is that I don't always internalize the "must make moves." Now I will remember to go right at the blue building, but I need a better way of learning and remembering from the instruction of others, and not simply from my own close calls.

As I went down the left channel, I proceeded cautiously, always looking for places to eddy out if I needed them. When I saw the completeness of the jam, I landed on the island. I should have told Mike to wait until I could give him the "all clear" signal, or make sure he could find an eddy for his longer boat instead of having him follow me so closely.

New Members & Address Updates

| | |
|--|---|
| Ernie Katz erniekatz3@verizon.net | Keith Merkel 13110 Tall Shadows La, Apt. F Fairfax, VA 22033 703-222-6210 H |
| Christopher Kehoe 15971 Charter House La Purcellville, VA 20132 610-952-4470 W christopher.kehoe @gmail.com | Katherine Mull 304 Highland Drive Eden, NC 27288 Katherinemull @yahoo.com |

Lower Cacapon: Extremes of Beauty and Ugliness by Ron Knipling

Ed Evangelidi and I have common life missions: paddle every river and hike every trail. We are making progress. Neither of us had ever paddled the final 12 miles of the Cacapon above its confluence with the Potomac at Great Cacapon, so on May 18 we did. This is not the finest section of the river, although it is described by Ron Canter as a "very scenic" downriver run. There had been a big rain several days earlier and, with Great Cacapon at 3.6' (~1,400cfs), the river was running at a moderate, comfortable level. The best rapids on this section are long, Class 1 wave trains. Some rapids were Class 2. The trip is pleasant throughout (with one exception, to be discussed), and most of the many riverside cottages along the way blended tastefully with the landscape. On the negative side, there were several stretches of flat water where the river slowed down more than I expected at this water level.

This section of the Cacapon is most notable, in my opinion, for two specific spots, one beautiful and the other disgusting. About halfway down the run on river left is Ede's Fort, a small mountain with a 200-foot cliff and rock formation above the river. When we came upon this site, I was awestruck by its majesty and magnificence. Like many of the rock formations in this region, it consists of stratified layers of sandstone. But this formation is far higher than most and has several interesting cantilevered outcroppings at the top. In my opinion, this formation is even more spectacular than other regional favorites such as Blue Rock on the lower Smokehole, Caudy's Castle on the middle Cacapon, and the large unnamed diagonal formation on the Cacapon between Rt. 127 and Wolf

Gap. The slanted flat rocks on river right opposite Ede's Fort are an idyllic lunch spot from which to behold the splendor of this formation.

Afterward I did a little web searching on Ede's Fort. It was never an actual fort, but in 1758 settlers took refuge from Indians there, refusing to go to a nearby military fort. They were captured. Regarding the formation's current status, I was delighted to learn that a conservation easement protecting the formation has been donated to the Cacapon & Lost River Land Trust by its owner, Art Mackwell.

About 1.5 miles further downstream is a huge riverwide dam that is its aesthetic antithesis. This cement monstrosity was formerly used to collect water for a hydro plant further downstream. It ruins a stretch of the river with high shale cliffs on the right in a wide river bend. There is probably a nice series of rapids under the backed up water behind the dam. The water flow over the dam creates a riverwide keeper hydraulic that is a potential death trap as there are no warning signs upstream. Unsuspecting or unskilled boaters caught in the middle or right side of the river could easily be swept over it and into the churning froth. Maybe river safety is like coal mine safety – it takes a few fatalities before safety measures are implemented. Apart from the risk of drowning, the portage on the left is extremely difficult and itself dangerous as you have to climb down the face of the dam above a shallow area to lower boats.

My complaints about the dam notwithstanding, this section of the Cacapon is worth paddling just to experience the resplendence of Ede's Fort.

Amazon Raft Race Seeking Entrants

For 6 years I have organized "The Great River Amazon Raft Race" here in the Peruvian Amazon near the City of Iquitos. Our event is non profit and we have 2 goals: 1)to promote tourism here in Amazonia, and 2) to promote the sport of rafting. All 4-person teams have to construct their own raft from lightweight balsa-wood logs (foreign teams have everything provided). After construction, the teams set off down the Amazon on the 140 mile, 3 day race. The mighty River Amazon flows at a constant 9 m.p.h. We have sponsors who have offered \$3,000 in prize money so far. The race takes place 22nd, 23rd & 24th September 2006. Will you please take the time to look at our website by clicking onto www.iqitostimes.com/raft-race-2006.htm. We invite rafters from all over the world to come here and compete in this unique event, "The World's Longest Raft Race". We can offer all international teams an absolutely fantastic time here in the Amazon.

—Mike Collis, Iquitos, Peru.

P.S. For safety reasons the race is limited to 70 crews, 50 Peruvian & 20 international.

Upper Wills Creek, May 17, 2006 by Ron Knipling

Small streams are the very best paddling, especially when they are lively and challenging. On Wednesday, May 17, Rick Koller, Lou Campagna, Steve Ettinger, and I (all in OC-1s) managed to catch 6+ miles of upper Wills Creek running at a comfortable level several inches above minimum. A big rain in the area had brought Wills out of the its banks two days earlier, and on the day of our trip Wills had fallen to 3.1' (~750cfs) at the USGS gauge below Hyndman. We followed Ed Gertler's Maryland guide to find a put-in a little more than two miles above Glencoe. We then paddled to the village of Glencoe and on to the take-out at Fairhope – a little less than seven miles total. Gertler calls this section Class 2- to 3-, but I would take away those minuses and simply call it Class 2-3. It's a small stream throughout, perhaps a little smaller than Passage Creek, my favorite benchmark, but it does pick up some tribs and volume along the way. In terms of difficulty, Upper Wills was harder than Passage but easier than Gooney Creek. None of us had ever paddled this section, but Rick led the way like he actually knew what he was doing.

There were several creekwide strainers in the first few hundred yards, but I don't recall any after that, except for a small horizontal tree that we removed. The rapids were often squirrely but not especially complex. With a gradient of 61'/mile (and probably more in first two miles), the creek had frequent rapids. I window-shaded my big Whitesell Piranha in one constricted rapid, and Steve had a brief swim later, but otherwise there were no mishaps. There could have been, however, as two rapids on this section are considerably harder and more dangerous than all the others. Both are described well in Gertler's book, so read it carefully before doing this section to avoid running them inadvertently and/or unadvisedly. The jagged ledge under the Falls Cut Tunnel railroad bridge is probably just Class 4 but has a U-shaped hole that could be a body trap. Railroad Cut Falls at the take-out is Class 4+, but with only busted body parts (as opposed to eternal damnation) as a worst-case scenario. We all carried the first and took out above the second.

Upper Wills was a joy to paddle and was also pretty and intimate. In spite of an active railroad track beside the creek and some shabby houses along the creek in Glencoe, it is surprisingly scenic, natural, and clean. Catch it when you can.

South Branch fish deaths leave DNR waiting for answers

[from the Cumberland Times News (CNHI News Service, May 31, 2006)]

— ROMNEY - Federal laboratory reports that may indicate why hundreds of suckers have died in the South Branch of the Potomac River are being awaited by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, a fishery biologist said Tuesday. "We have seen hundreds, maybe up to a thousand, golden redhorse suckers die in the river," said Jim Hedrick, district fishery biologist. "We have reports from people that they began seeing them as early as two weekends ago. Many of the fish have open sores." A crew from the Leetown Science Center, operated by the U.S. Geological Survey, traveled to the South Branch late last week and collected fish and took them to the Eastern Panhandle facility for testing. "They actually need fish that are in the process of dying for the results to be meaningful," Hedrick said. "Right now we are waiting to see what the results are." Hedrick said there were also some other dead fish, including northern hog suckers, a few rock bass and two smallmouth bass. Dead suckers have been reported as far upstream as Petersburg, with heavier concentrations downstream in the popular recreational river. "The dead fish increase in the Moorefield area and even more so as you go downstream to The Trough, Hanging Rock, Blue Beach and Milleson's Mill," Hedrick said. "Because the fish float, it is difficult to determine where they actually died." The biologist said that should other species, especially smallmouth bass, begin to die, additional sampling will take place as quickly as possible. "Right now we have no evidence to point to the reason for the problem, whether it is environmental or associated with spawning," he said. "We have had suckers die in previous years from spawning distress. This is a situation we want to stay on top of."

[If you should see large numbers of dead fish or fish with open sores record the location, time, number, and species (or size and description) and call the WV Department of Natural Resources at (800) 642-3074.]

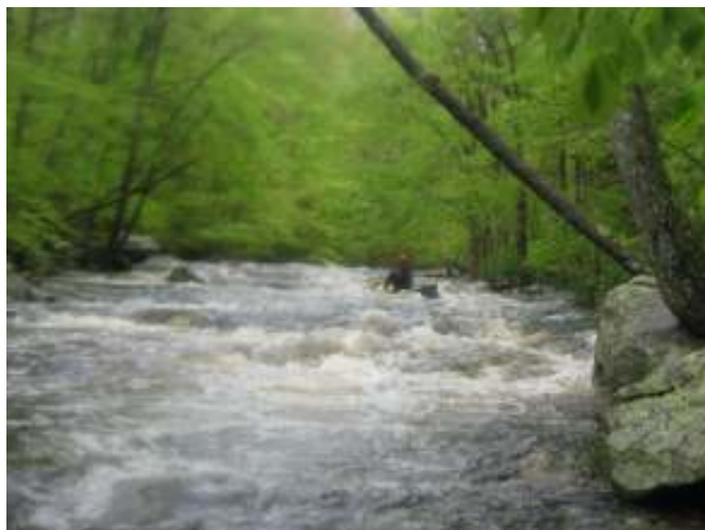
Connecticut Creekin' by Scott Gravatt

Denise called it the Perfect Storm. Low pressure systems, high pressure systems, cold fronts, warm fronts! Whatever it was collided and brought heavy rains to New England on a Friday and into the weekend. Saturday most gauge graphs were a vertical line shooting straight up. Could it be too much of a good thing? Excitement building, we waited until Sunday morning to see where the gauges peaked and what we could run.

We were in touch with a group of boaters who decided to run a river in Massachusetts. With rivers up all over the place, Denise and I decided that we did not need to drive two hours to get to white-water. We were more interested in three rivers in our home state of Connecticut, which we had never done before. We couldn't get anyone else interested in coming to Connecticut to join us, so we were on our own.

The river calling the loudest to us was one we refer to as our "backyard creek". The real name

is the East Branch of the Eight Mile River. Several years ago we noticed this nice little creek about 5 miles from our house that looked like it might be a fun Class II (III?) run, if it just had enough water. One summer day we even hiked along it and imagined the rapids in higher water. The run is described in an old AMC guidebook, but AW does not list it. It turns out there is a USGS gauge on the river, so I started keeping a little history. After a day or so of heavy rain, I would swing by the creek on my way home from work, see if it was runnable, then check the internet gauge. I learned what the ideal cfs is and found that the creek is runnable several times a year. The only problem is timing. This small creek comes up fast, and taking a day off from work on short notice can be hard for me, and damn near impossible for Denise. So years have passed and we've never made it to our backyard creek. But here we were, Sunday morning, boats loaded and looking for a river that we would



Scott on a fun creek 5 miles from home

other, the Natchaug, looked good. These two rivers are small and were flushing out fast, but they would certainly hold through the day.

We actually put our drysuits on in our house! We drove two vehicles to our backyard creek, dropped boats and set up the shuttle. It was great! A Class II brook with a 1/8 mile section that was continuous Class II+. The run is only about 2 or 3 miles long, and is only about 20 to 25 feet wide, twisting and turning through the woods, occasionally coming within sight of a house or country road. It was loads of fun, and very exciting since it was just the two of us exploring an unknown river.

At the end of the run we were smiling and very happy with our "backyard creek"! We still had our drysuits on, boats were loaded, and we still had time in the day, so we decided to do river number two, the Natchaug River (AW lists this one). I knew we could run the best part of this river without doing a shuttle, so we just jumped in the truck and drove 45 minutes north to the river.

You can set up a shuttle on this run and make it about a two mile trip, or you can carry your boat upstream along the river and put in at the beginning of the best rapids. Judging from the internet graph, I thought the river was going to be mostly flushed out and on the low side. Wrong! When we got to the bank our jaws dropped. It was running strong and pushy! The action is about a half mile stretch of intense, continuous, tough rapids, which ends

be comfortable running with just the two of us, and the backyard creek at a perfect level!

I checked the gauges for all three of the Connecticut rivers we were interested in, and in addition to our backyard creek, one

near the small dirt parking area. There is also a superb play hole below the parking area, where local boaters come to park-and-play. Denise and I went with our plan of not running shuttle, and started carrying our boats upstream. As we started walking up the trail, we looked at the raging rapids and debated which parts (if any) we would run and which we would walk, assuming we could get to an eddy to get out!

Lucky for us, there were two kayakers down in the play hole who saw us arrive. They left their boats by the play hole and came walking up the trail. One of them was carrying a throw bag. Hmmmm. Not sure what that means, but Denise and I were very glad to see them. They turned out to be two very nice guys (Bruce and Rob) who knew the river well, and took the time to scout and explain each rapid as we carried our boats up the trail. My opinion is that at least three of the drops were in the Class IV range. When we reached the top, Bruce and Rob agreed to walk along the bank as we ran the river, and get set with the throw rope at each big rapid. This was great news but barely put a dent in the mega-butterfly population in my stomach. I must say that, without Bruce and Rob setting safety, Denise and I might have opted out of running this river.

The first rapid is one of the four which really had us worried. The lead-in alone was enough scare the bageezus out of you, then you crest a huge mound of water before dropping deep into a tor-

rent. The route was on the far side of a large boulder and out of reach of the throw rope. Any rescue would happen after a violent swim. I went first, heart racing and every nerve on edge. I pounded through and somehow made it upright! I eddied behind the large boulder, and could not see Denise until she appeared in the wave train/run-out, stroking for the eddy. She too had a clean run! What a relief! Both of us knew that a flip here would



Scott stroking for an eddy above a keeper hole

have worked on our psyche for the rest of the run. Instead we were pumped up and ready to take it on! Well, not actually. In truth we were scared to death and glad to sit in the eddy for several minutes while Bruce and Rob made their way downstream!

Denise and I continued to hit clean lines as we worked our way down through the madness. As often as possible we whipped into eddies to catch our breath while Bruce and Rob moved down to the next hot spot. The run went quickly and before we knew it we were down to the drop into Diana's Pool. Up to this point the river was about 50 feet wide, but at this drop it chokes down to about 20

feet, and all that water gushes down, dropping about 10 to 12 feet at a 45 degree angle. The lead-in is tough, and assuming you work through that and get to the brink on the best line, you're looking down at a combination of irregular waves and a sort-of tongue, with a stopper wave/hole at the bottom. I thought I had the perfect line, but it didn't matter; the hole at the bottom munched me like a chip with dip!

Thinking back to our walk to the putin, Bruce and Rob did not ask Denise and I about our skills, nor our ability to roll. I didn't say anything, because who want to jinks themselves? As soon as you say "Sure, I have a strong roll", you proceed to swim every other rapid! So I imagine they were a bit concerned when the hole spit me out and they were suddenly looking at the bottom side of an open canoe floating toward

the next rapid! I know I was! With all that adrenaline pumping, I hit a roll and was up in no time, heading for an eddy! Whew!

Sitting in the eddy near the bottom of the drop, I couldn't see Denise until she neared the crest above me. It was a relief to finally catch sight of her and see her in good position. She hit the best line and slammed into the hole at the bottom. As she came through it, she got rear ended almost vertically, and came down at a sideways angle. She braced twice, but it wasn't enough in the swirling run-out, and over she went. She hit a solid roll and in a split second she was back up. Bruce and Rob

(Continued on page 8)

CONNECTICUT (Continued from page 7)

cheered from the shore, happy not to be hauling our sorry butts in on a throw rope!

The final rapid, Michaud's Hole, has three dangerous features at this level. A seriously undercut rock on river left, a river-wide keeper hole, and then a pour-over with keeper potential. Denise had had enough excitement for one day and took a pass. I would have skipped it too were it not for Bruce and Rob telling me it could be done and how to do it. Also, there was a good spot for them to set up with the throw rope should I get stuck in one of the holes. However, I had no intention whatsoever of playing "Side Surfing Scott" in either of these holes!

Again, just getting through the "stuff" to get in position to run the hardest part of the rapid was no picnic. My plan was to get to a small eddy on river right, a little ways above the rapid, and run it from there. My approach to the eddy was off by just a tad, and I was coming in too low, which put me in the very precarious position of almost going into this

ugly rapid backwards! I put everything I had into my strokes for that eddy, and finally felt that wonderful feeling of the boat gliding in. OK, now for the really hard part! I came out of the eddy totally committed to making the right moves and NOT getting stuck in Michaud's Hole. Everything clicked and I rotated the boat for a straight-on hit of the hole, and powered ahead. I made it, but as I went through I could feel the power of the hole wanting to pull the boat back in. What a feeling of exhilaration to be stroking away from that hole and away from the pour-over! Made it!

Denise and I thanked Bruce and Rob profusely, and they congratulated us on our successful runs. Then Denise turned to me and stated unequivocally: "THAT is the upper-UPPER limit of anything I EVER want to run with just the two of us on the river!" I agreed. Then we got back in our boats and paddled down to the play hole where we surfed until we were too exhausted to take another stroke. Some days are just better than others!

New Boathouse Impacts Washington Canoe Club

The National Park Service has released the Environmental Assessment for the Georgetown University Boathouse on the Potomac River. The GU Boathouse will sit in the parking lot of the Washington Canoe Club (WCC) and extend an additional 280 feet upstream. In the 1980s, WCC agreed to a boathouse on the site immediately adjacent because it would be similar in size to WCC and the Club members felt it was important to support boating on the Potomac. What was approved by various officials and commissions was a boathouse of 4,000 to 8,000 square feet. And then something went wrong... Officials within the National Park Service worked with Georgetown University to grow this to a footprint of 19,000 square feet and a total square footage of 35,000.

There is a great deal of information at www.savethecanal.org with links to the NPS website. As it stands right now WCC is being placed at risk because of the EA and has asked our help. WCC is not opposed to a boathouse next door to it, but believes that NPS/GU have not played fair, nor has NPS attempted to reel in the "Taj Mahal" dreams of Georgetown with any meaningful analysis. Indeed the actions of the NPS show how much the powerful folks in DC like GU and are willing to ignore policy to give them a hand.

The EA can be accessed and electronic comments can be made at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?projectID=15645&documentId=1491>

Unfortunately, the EA is flawed in a number of ways, but from WCC's perspective these are the big ones:

- 1) Changing their minds, NPS is now calling for the removal of the fence surrounding WCC. The fence has been there since the 1960s when it was erected at the request of NPS to protect the boathouse which is on the National Historic Registry. The EA also calls for the elimination of WCC's outdoor storage, yet allows it at the other establishments on the river. This will eliminate the WCC Outrigger program, which is one of the best on the East Coast. It will also eliminate WCC's "War Canoe" program which will impact the junior development program. These are both significant impacts which the EA fails to recognize.
- 2) The Environmental Assessment ignored the impact of the new boathouse on the canal embankment under flood conditions. The hydrological study shows the water velocity doubling behind the building, but the analysis ignores this fact. It was this type of scouring of the base of the canal that has caused it to rupture

Upcoming Trips

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|------------------|------------------------------|-----|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| July 4 | DC Fireworks | N | Star Mitchell | 301-530-3252 | starmitchell@verizon.net |
| July 8 | Staircase | I | Larry Gladieux | 703-406-2423 | lglad@adelphia.net |
| July 8 | BRV Picnic | All | Ron Knipling | 703-533-2895 | rknipling@aol.com |
| July 15 | Dealer's Choice | I | Ed Grove | 703-533-8334 | eddyout@erols.com |
| July 15-16 | Lower Yough | I | Pete Dragon# | 703-255-3447 | dragon.pete@epa.gov |
| July 20-23 | Cheat/Yough | I/A | Wes Mills | 703-866-9815 | wesmills1@cox.net |
| July 22 | Lower Yough | I | Jennifer Plyler | 301-445-4815* | Pls98@verizon.net |
| July 24 | Little Falls or Mather Gorge | I/A | Ed Grove | 703-533-8334 | eddyout@erols.com |
| July 29 | Dealer's Choice | I | Jennifer Plyler | 301-445-4815* | Pls98@verizon.net |
| Aug 5 | Lower Yough | I | Jennifer Plyler | 301-445-4815* | Pls98@verizon.net |
| Aug 19 | S. Fork Shenandoah | N | Bob Maxey | 703-823-1439 | Maxey.bob@epa.gov |
| Aug 19 | Lower Yough | I | Jennifer Plyler | 301-445-4815* | Pls98@verizon.net |
| Aug 20-26 | Ontario rivers | I/A | Mike Wevrick | 202-249-1243 | mwevrick@hotmail.com |
| Aug 26-27 | Lower Yough | I | Pete Dragon# | 703-255-3447 | dragon.pete@epa.gov |
| Sept 2-4 | New | A | Ernie Katz | 703-356-7105 | erniekatz3@verizon.net |
| Sept 9-10 | Upper & Lower Gauley | A | Court Ogilvie | 703-528-5185 | courtogilvie@yahoo.com |
| Weekday evenings | Local paddling | N/I | Tom Prunier | 703-527-3163 | prunier@erols.com |

#contact no later than preceding Wednesday to allow sufficient time to reserve boat permits

*please call before 8 PM

upstream. Should the canal breach it would likely wipe the club out. Clearly this would be a significant impact which again the EA fails to recognize.

3) The WCC will sit mere feet from a continuous stream of heavy equipment, yet no analysis was done on what the impact will be. It will likely be significant and could be catastrophic.

4) The EA calls for both a large dock and a permanent pier in the river. The pier is "needed" because the boathouse is ill-designed for the site. Rather than store the boats parallel to the river the public will be forced to accommodate a 40 foot pier. The pier and attached docks will stick out into the river in a manner which would be unnecessary if NPS had wanted to put the public first, and this will have a significant impact on WCC paddlers as well as the numerous pleasure boaters.

Accordingly WCC is requesting either a letter, fax, or submission by electronic link that requests "OPTION D" which is the No Build option because of the potential damage to the Washington Canoe Club and the C&O Canal Embankment from the GU Boathouse. Additionally, an EIS of the entire waterfront is needed so that the cumulative impacts can be understood. For more information, contact Lawrence.Schuette@verizon.net and/or visit www.savethecanal.org.

Letters should be sent to: Mr. Kevin Brandt, Superintendent, C&O Canal National Historical Park, 1850 Dual Highway, Suite 100, Hagerstown, MD 21740-6620, or FAX-(301) 739-5275

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 2006: January 24, March 22, May 16, July 8 (Moonlight Picnic), September 12, November 14, December 9 (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 North exit and go about 0.6 miles north 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.

2006 BRV Officers: Ernie Katz, President; [vacant], VP; Bob Maxey, Trip Coordinator; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation Chairman.

2006 Board of Directors: Lou Campagna, Ed Grove, Ron Knipling, Wes Mills, Court Ogilvie, Joe Sullivan

***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 editors.

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

In this issue...

- Trip reports:
 - Close Call on the Savage (p. 1)
 - Greenbrier River trail (p. 3)
 - Lower Cacapon (p. 4)
 - Upper Wills Creek (p. 5)
 - Connecticut Creeks (p. 6)
- S. Br. Potomac fish kill (p. 5)
- Amazon raft race (p. 4)
- Boathouse affects WCC (p. 8)

Deadline for September *Voyageur*:
Friday, September 1

MOONLIGHT PICNIC
Saturday, July 8