

THE VOYAGEUR



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May 2012

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

[Due to technical difficulties, Rick's column didn't quite make it into this issue. Here's his email from last week advertising the meeting program. — Ed.]

On May 8th at our scheduled meeting we will hear from Natalie Warren and her trip to Hudson's Bay. It sounds like an interesting presentation. See the email from Natalie below for more details.

Rick

Hello! My name is Natalie Warren and last summer I was one of the first two women to paddle the 2,000 miles from Minneapolis to York Factory on Hudson Bay, an 85-day expedition following Eric Sevareid's route from *Canoeing with the Cree*, and an old Hudson Bay Company fur-trade route. I am writing a book with my co-expeditioner, Ann Raiho, and we have been presenting on our trip since we got off trail in September. We have presented for groups of over 300 people, including our presentation and the 2011 Canoeopia in Madison, WI, and we will be in the May issue of *Canoe&Kayak*. Our website is www.hudsonbaybound.com. From there you can link to our blog and you can find us on Facebook.

WV Week of Rivers 2012

by Beth Koller



Ron Ray was super-organized this year. By January, he had already collected commitments backed by money for most of the rooms in 5 houses in Canaan Valley from April 21 through the 29. Folks started arriving Friday evening. Others drove directly to the Bloomington put-in on Saturday morning. Despite the paucity of rain, turnout was good.

Over 100 folks paddled the North Branch of the Potomac! Among those present were the "seldom seen" Gus Anderson and Larry Gladieux as well as regulars such as Jo Cox and Glen Johnston and Marge and Jim Pruitt, who have homes in the area. Despite air tem-

The author at Calamity on the Cheat Narrows on Wednesday of the WV Week of Rivers. (Continued on page 4)

Middle Section, Shavers Fork of the Cheat, April 27, 2012

by Jenny Thomas and Kim Buttleman

As part of the West Virginia Week of Rivers last week, Kim and I ran middle Shavers, from Bemis to Bowden, pretty much at or slightly below the minimum level of 5.2 feet. Before putting on the river, we were informed by others that it was a Class II/III run for the first few miles, followed by (what they said was “boring”) flat water for the last 5 miles. What we found was a delightful, fun, busy, pretty run consisting of Class III/IV bouldery and creek drops for the first couple of miles, followed by 4 to 5 miles of Class II/III rapids and ending with mostly Class II rapids. (Some of the Class II rapids near the end were proba-

bly there because of the low water level -- perhaps it is “flat” at higher water). The total run was 9 miles long -- starting at the bridge in the little fishing village of Bemis and ending just above the low head dam and bridge at the fish camp in Bowden. (Turn right off of Rt. 33 onto County Road 33/8, then left at

the split onto County Road 5/12, park on south side of road before bridge). The other trip participants included Dick Pierce; Sheila, Pete and Ocoee Chapelle; Ken Dubel and Alicia Jahsmann; John Sills; and Regina O’Donnell.

The river begins with a bang: a Class III ledge, hole, wave train (which most of us decided to run down the right side for the first half, then cut left for the latter part, to avoid the not so obvious holes). The more complicated rapids that ensued were often an eddy-hopper’s delight with, as Kim says, the group doing the “eddy dance,” bopping from one eddy to the next in succession. We scouted one of the trickier rapids that had about a 6-inch wide tongue into a gnarly foam pile leading to a sizeable hole. But leave it to

Ocoee (yet another budding Chapelle boating aficionado) to show us the best line. Rapids in the middle section were easier but similar to those in the first few miles – mostly boulder-style rapids with fun wave trains and maneuvering between holes and pour-overs.

In the lower section, the river became somewhat braided. And, along with the braiding, the river also became quite shallow in places and there were a number of opportunities to get stuck on rocks -- which is what several of us did when an unknowing fisherman

was standing in the only passable route though a small rapid; I am sure that after 6 or more of us got stuck all around him and made quite a ruckus getting off our respective rocks, that the fish were long gone! Other impediments to travel included two river-wide strainers. The first has been in place for a long time and is well known (by others, but not by Kim and I), located at either



Jenny Thomas passes a scenic spot on the Middle Shaver’s Fork.

the 5th or 6th island/braid. The channel to the right clearly has more water (and also contains the mega-strainer around a blind corner) and the channel to the left, where most sane boaters would rather not tread because of its shallowness, should be the chosen route. In addition, within a half mile of the take-out, on a left bend in the river, there is a tree across the river just at the water surface which required a carry. This strainer might not be in play with an additional 6 inches or more of water. Finally, for an extra measure of safety, we got out of our boats about 100 feet above the juicy low head dam and lined our boats to the take out from there.

The extra treat for this wonderful run was the scenery. We couldn’t help but look back upstream at the glis-

Trash Cleanup Trip Report

by Kathleen Sengstock, BRV Conservation Chair

The Alice Ferguson Foundation's 24th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup was held on Saturday, April 14, 2012. I organized a paddlers' trash cleanup trip, meeting at Pennyfield Lock, as I've done in past years.

I had always wanted to do a trash cleanup trip below Violette's Lock. The island below the GW Canal where the BRV holds its annual picnic has needed a trash cleanup for years. But the Alice Ferguson Foundation's annual cleanup was always held in April,

when the river levels are high and the water is cold. I tend to be conservative about where and under what conditions I do boat-based trash cleanups. Boats are considerably more difficult to maneuver when the air bags are replaced with fully loaded trash bags. I don't want to rescue swimmers with hypothermia while their boats, gear, and bags of trash were swept downstream. I also don't want anyone to have to rescue me!

But this year was different. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and both the weather – in the 70's – and the water level – about 3.5 on the Little Falls gauge – was more typical of June than April. So I suggested that we set up a shuttle and run a river trip. My paddling companions liked the idea. So we left a car at Pennyfield and put in at Violette's Lock.

There were a total of 6 paddlers in 4 boats: Barbara Brown in her kayak; Gus Anderson and Larry Gladieux in a tandem open canoe; Peter Seckinger and Shirley Castle in a tandem open canoe; and I in

my OC-1. (One of the reasons I added an open boat to my kayak collection is so I would be able to haul river trash.)

We ferried across the Potomac River and started down the GW Canal. Immediately, boaters began stopping alongside the river whenever they saw pieces of trash. So we paddled, picked up trash, piled it up in our boats, and paddled some more. I got a lot of exercise lifting heavy items. I suspect my companions did as well. By the time we reached the end of the GW Canal, all of our boats were heavily loaded.



The BRV trash collectors pose with fruits of their labor

We stopped at the BRV's picnic island, but by that time there was not much space left in our boats. Nevertheless, I managed to fit an extra bag of trash in my boat, and Gus and Larry managed to fit an old propane tank in theirs. There is still plenty of trash on that island. So if anyone wants to organize another cleanup trip, please volunteer!

After about four hours on the river, we took out at Pennyfield Lock and piled up our trash collection. We collected a total of 11 bags of trash, plus 3 tires, the aforementioned propane tank, a large orange and white traffic construction marker, a laundry basket, a metal sheet, an acrylic sheet, a hose, a large blue tarp, and – quite appropriately – a kayak slalom gate.

Barbara Brown was kind enough to invite the rest of us over to her house for lunch. It's a beautiful house that overlooks the Potomac River. We ate pizza on her deck. We earned it!

tening rapids in a stunning setting. It is truly beautiful. All manner of wildflowers were in bloom too, which added to the finery. It was nice to see John Sills get excited when he re-discovered (from a previous trip) a huge field of blooming Wood Betony (also called Lousewort) along the way. All in all we had a fine day on the river.

WV WEEK (Continued from page 1)
 peratures in the 50s and a water temperature in the low 40s, Gus took advantage of the 1000 cfs release by playing his way down the river. Several members of the Coastals, who seldom run this stretch, were pleasantly surprised. Because it was so brisk, people were eager to take up Joe Sullivan's suggestion to visit the abandoned town of Warnick which can be accessed from the large eddy on the right 2 drops below the play hole lunch stop. The town contains old foundations, refuse, railroad spur equipment, and a community spring. There is a family coal mine with a 3 foot high entrance. The cemetery with graves from the 1800s is actively maintained. Unfortunately, this paddling excursion caused us to miss the woodcock round-up at the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Fortunately, Jenny Thomas made up for this by doing her second annual woodcock dance imitation.

A weather front moved in on Sunday. Although one group went to the Cheat Narrows, the day was filled with biking and hiking for most. Brenda Benner, Kim Buttleman, Dan Eigenbrode, Wes Mills, and Jenny Thomas checked out the wet and rhododendron-filled Pointy Knob Trail off Canaan Loop Road. Meanwhile, Kevin Moore, who is a Maryland forest ranger in real life, led a steep descent from Dolly Sods south into the Roaring Plains Wilderness Area. The group in Kevin's wake included Barb Brown, Ocoee Chapelle, Pete Chapelle, Rowan Chapelle, Fred Dalauro, Karen Egbert, Jon Hitchings, Larry Lempert, and Nikola Spatafora.



The Pointy Knob Trail hiking group at the Canaan Loop Rd. trailhead.

The short day permitted more socialization. Wes Mills started things off by making gin martinis. Later in the week there was competition from Daryl Hall who prepared vodka martinis. (Please note that the nearest gas station now only carries beer and wine. Trailmix, across from Timberline now holds the area's hard liquor license.) This was good preparation for the ensuing Scrabble game. Wes was ready with his new Scrabble dictionary app. (Be forewarned, Frank!) We learned that "alâ," an East Indian tree, qualifies as a word. Jenny Thomas managed to use 2 words with the same pronunciation: "cot" and "qat" (an alternative spelling of "khat", a stimulant) in the same game. Daryl upped the ante by bringing Super Scrabble with its larger board and higher value scoring opportunities. Later in the week, Jackie Ireland shared her fossil collection with participants. She had huge vertebrae and shark's teeth!

Overnight it snowed 6 inches. The day was filled with reading and short hikes. The residents of House

6 hiked a XC trail in Canaan State Park. There were several pranksters on the trip. In one instance, the perpetrator pulled down a snow-laden branch expecting to cover the unsuspecting victim with snow upon the branch's release. As fate would have it, the rebound covered the perpetrator instead. It was also pretty funny to hear adults asking every 200 yards whether it was time to go back. I guess that it was anticipation of the 3:30 PM margarita party. On the same day, Kevin Moore convinced Fred Dalauro, Karen Egbert, Larry Lempert, and Terry Irani (sans unicycle) to hike through the snow to the highest point in Maryland: Hoyer-Crest on Backbone Mountain, a whopping 3,360 feet above sea level! More grit in that group!

At the afternoon margarita party, Wes Mills and Wendy Schmidt served as mix masters. People poured into the house with their empty glasses and appetizers. Fred Dalauro took the cake with his huge tray of spanakopita. The evening entertainment included a performance by the Black Lillies band at the Purple Fiddle and a showing

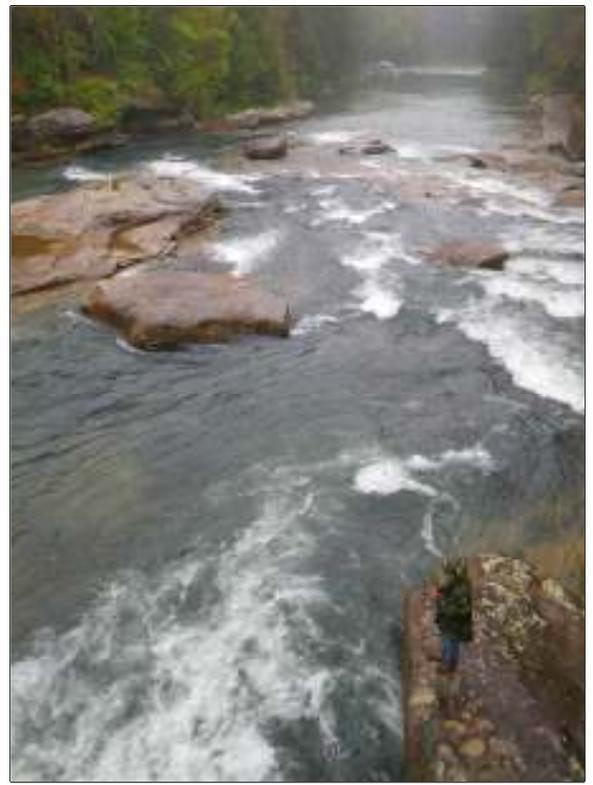
of Deliverance in House 18.

The Tygart watershed offered the best options for paddling. Twenty-four boats put on the Middle Middle section upstream of Audra State Park. Because of the temperature, we cut off 1.5 miles by putting in downstream from the bridge near the Boy Scout camp. The level was 3.1 feet. The river starts out with Class I waves and become progressively more difficult with a major Class III rapids 1 mile from the take-out. There were no major incidents even for the folks who ran the major rapid of the next section that started just below the bridge. Al Cassel and Ed Evangelidi had a leisurely run down the Trough in the Potomac watershed.

On Wednesday, the temperature was balmy. Two separate groups headed down the more difficult Middle section below the bridge at Audra into the Tygart gorge. The

House 21 trip approached epic status. It started at mid-day and didn't end until 8:00 pm. The last car finally pulled into Timberline at 10:45 pm — where, blissfully, dinner was waiting. Jon Hitchings and Karen Egbert in the lead and Peter Bross as sweep magnanimously led 4 first-timers, Merrill Pearson, Fred Dalauro, Ocoee Chapelle, and Larry Lempert, down the run. Several had a strong paddling day; several had significantly less than a strong paddling day. Let's just say that everyone got spanked by the river at least once.

The number of swims due either to operator error or spray skirt implosion exceeded the number of paddlers by a significant



Middle Middle Fork of the Tygart.

margin. There were a number of judicious portages. House 24 (aka the Coastals) had less carnage on their trip. (Whispers indicate 2 swims.) More importantly, reportedly they did witness a nearly fatal pinning of a kayak manned by 1 of 2 strangers who had joined them. Although the boat started to buckle around the trapped paddler, he was able to escape in time. Yet another group headed for the Cheat Narrows, which had risen several hundred cfs to about 1000 cfs. Everyone ran the main tongue—with some stopping to eddy out above the main drop at Calamity Rock while others boated straight through. Jay Herbig had an exciting run as he squirted out of the drop for a distance of 5 feet. Rob Koenen experienced the pull of



Kim Buttleman surveys his line on the Middle Middle on Tuesday.

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WV WEEK (Continued from page 5)
the hole in the drop and had to roll several times.

On Thursday, a group of 11 boats returned to the Middle Middle. The water level had risen to 3.5 feet. There were more places to surf and fewer rocks to hit. The major drop could be approached from either the low water route on the right or the higher water route on the left. Wes Mills was momentarily wedged on a far right line. Beth Koller's eyes were wide open as she looked into the hole below the ledge in the middle of the drop. Peter Bross, Barb Brown, and Ocoee Chapelle undertook a technical run on the lower Dry Fork River with a takeout upstream of Hendricks. Although the water level was low, the scrape factor was minimal and the participants enjoyed a delightful day. Others needing a break from paddling hiked. Dan Eigenbrode and Rob Koenen explored Dolly Sods via



Daryl Hall on the Middle Middle Fork of the Tygart on Saturday.

the Fisher Spring Trail. They came across an old car in which the back doors opened the opposite of the way they do now. Those doors were full of bullet holes. Trees were growing up through the engine area. They had to do several

river crossings, which were disorienting. For a while, they did not know where they were, but they were confident that they were not lost!

The Shaver's Fork of the Cheat was the place to be for boaters on Friday. Two groups ran the Class III+ Bemis to Bowden run. Another small group started at the US33 bridge and paddled about 6 to 7 miles. It should be noted that the shuttle road which travels through the Stuart Recreation Area can be slow going because of the potholes (both wide and deep). The run can be shortened by turning at the first red-brown house along the road. There are several pull-offs along this road before one reaches a 3 arch concrete bridge ~1.5 miles upstream. This bridge is marker to look for the right channel of the river that is braided at this point. Otherwise you will be paddling another several miles downstream. This lower section



Mike Martin on the Shaver's Fork on Friday

Comeback of the Canoe

by Graham Averill, photo by Hunter Davis

[The following is from the 23 February 2012 edition of Trail Post, the on-line version of Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine.]

Dooley Tombras was kneeling in his boat at the top of Triple Falls last spring when he became convinced he was going to paddle off the edge of the earth. Triple Falls is a three-tiered waterfall that drops 125 feet inside North Carolina's Dupont State Forest. Occasion-

ally, a brazen kayaker runs the falls, but nobody had ever done what Tombras was about to attempt. The 29-year old Knoxville paddler was about to bag the first descent of Triple Falls in a white-water canoe. "It's really intimidating to be in a boat at the top of a set of mas-



sive waterfalls," Tombras says. "I've never had that perspective before, where it looks like the world just ends. The tourists standing there were looking at me like I was crazy."

It was just another day of work for Tombras, star of *Canoe Movie 2: Uncharted Waters*, the second whitewater canoe film produced by paddling collective [Amongst](#) (the same group that puts together the popular [Lunch Video Magazine](#)).

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has the flavor of the upstream section, but is much tamer. There are many rapids, none separated by more than 500 yards. There were 2 class II+ rapids, one with many surfing waves that would have turned into a series of 5 or 6 holes in higher water. For some of the hikers in the group, Ed Evangelidi led a trip to Chimney Rock. Rob Koenen brought back ramps to use in salads and cooked entrees.

On Saturday, the 10 AM temperature was in the mid 40s. Two groups went to the Cheat Narrows or the Middle Fork. Others hiked. Amazingly enough, the weather improved as one left the valley. The temperature entered the low 60s and the sun shone until mid-run when it began to cloud up and eventually rain. The level on the Middle Middle was 3.295 feet and

on the Cheat Narrows 1200 to 1400 cfs. There was an additional hazard 500 to 600 yards downstream of the put-in on the Middle Middle: explosions generating columns of water 10 feet high mid-stream. The locals were firing guns into the river! As we passed after making our presence known, the comments were "Good — moving targets!" That line from Deliverance "This river don't go to Ainty" did cross our minds. Rumor has it that although the paddlers of the upstream section were delivered safely, that there were 5 swims, with 3 at 1 time in S-turn on the lower section.

That evening folks got together to share leftovers and empty out refrigerators. (Those who had not had time to cook all the eggs that Merrill Pearson had kindly brought figured out how to transport them

home safely.) By long-standing tradition, House 6 had multiple types of ice cream to offer. Jon and Karen related stories of "dishwasher fish," a poaching method recommended by Robert Dole, yes that Robert Dole. Unfortunately Karen and Jon experienced pulverized fish and aluminum foil that clogged their dishwasher for months afterwards.

After a real soaker of the rainstorm overnight, the following morning one stalwart group headed up to the Stony in Pennsylvania. The morning was otherwise filled with house-cleaning, good byes, and driving. The only major car troubles were limited to Jon and Karen, whose Subaru would not enter drive. Replacement of a fuse allowed them to drive back using front-wheel, but not all-wheel drive.

Upstate NY Creeks

by Alf Cooley

As some in the DC paddling community know, for years I've been laboring under the delusion that I am writing a guidebook on the whitewater (and other) streams of western Conn. and Mass. and those in the adjoining part of NY State just east of the Hudson. This conceit allows me to go AWOL year after year for ten days of "research" in late March/early April when the streams are at their peak from the snowmelt. This year, of course, the brooks are at historic lows (about a fifth of normal flows), but I had my leave approved and my sisters and friends and even my non-paddling daughter from L.A. lined up for riverine adventures. The following is the account of one of these "paddling" days, this in Columbia County, NY, ca. 20 miles SSE of Albany.

Today was spent in the company of Alex B, an enthusiastic 30-year-old environmental scientist totally in thrall of running high waterfalls, of which we must have seen nearly ten. Stu Summer and I ended the day, quite unexpectedly, working our way down a mile's worth of the upper Stony Kill.

Alex was a find of Stu's from NPMB, the New England Paddlers' Message Board; while they'd never met, he proved interested and available on overnight notice to meet us at 10:00 at Stuyvesant Falls, a forty-foot drop, to show me the portage paths around this and other horrors at the end of Kinderhook Creek. I was rudely snapped to attention upon hearing him start talking about having run some of these

drops (there are three K-hook falls over 30 feet), or planning on exactly how he would do so. ("I'd only do this one if I had placed two 'live bait' teams at the bottom.")

So, eyes bulging, we proceeded to the river's mouth, then up Claverack Creek, which reaches the Hudson in a common mouth. Claverack has a set of three dams just upstream, for which I hoped to learn the portage routes. To my amused delight, Stu was soon engaging Alex in inquiries on how to run the top ("a ten-foot boof, followed by an S move down another six feet of rock ledge, avoiding a hydraulic at the bottom.") Later that evening we were able to view on You Tube a descent by Alex and two friends, one of whom indeed got caught in that hole.

Down to the bottom dam -- a 13-footer, which Alex also proposed to run. (We were fortunate that with today's very low water, he wasn't challenged to demonstrate any of this in real time.) Skip the middle dam, said Alex, it is a low-head murder machine. From there we returned to the Kinderhook -- to the 20-foot cascades at Valatie, which he had run repeatedly. Here he showed us the rebar in a tight alternative passage that he intended to remove when this summer's drought made it possible to get into it with an acetylene torch. He, by the way, had a firm working relationship with the gent who owns the water rights to all of these Kinderhook dams.

We retired to a restaurant in Chat-

ham, where we palavered over matters aqueous, and where we perceived more clearly Alex's and our difference in outlook: he was interested almost exclusively in "park and huck" whereas we were river runners. P&H? This is boater talk for simply going to a set of rapids, and, I now see, waterfalls, and running them or playing in them again and again. The paddling that we saw as the heart of the sport was for Alex a mere inconvenience between the turbulent highlights.

OK, what next? Stu asked if he knew stuff about the nearby Stony Kill whose bottom stretch Stu and I had paddled in 2008. We were not surprised to hear that he knew it intimately, having played paint-ball in his youth at an empty factory hall on its banks. Up we drove to that place, parked in the wild rose bushes at the side of the big RR line going up the narrow valley, then scrambled down and across it and down again until we were gazing at an extraordinarily beautiful crescent shaped 35-foot waterfall in a hidden glen -- of which, despite having scouted and written the brook up extensively, I was totally unaware. Alex, of course, had plotted a route down featuring a couple of bounces on the way.

After awhile in this lovely place, we walked up past a couple of dams at the Long Factory (a current post-industrial use is by a manufacturer of solar panels) discussing the routes and water levels necessary to pass over them safely. I wondering all the while about whether I would have to reconfigure my entire

COMEBACK (Continued from page 7)

The movie follows Tombras and other whitewater canoeists as they systematically knock out first canoe descents of burly creeks and waterfalls all over North America and Mexico.

Whitewater canoeing was relatively popular until the early 2000s when kayaks evolved into smaller, lighter, and more stable boats, which allowed paddlers to run more advanced water. Whitewater canoe design didn't progress as quickly. Open boats were markedly slower and less maneuverable than kayaks. Whitewater canoes nearly became relics of a bygone era.

"Suddenly, it was much easier to run hard whitewater in a kayak, so everyone abandoned their canoes," says Tombras, who's been paddling whitewater in a canoe since the mid 90s. "People were fleeing the sport. All I ever heard were stories about people ditching their open boats."

Luckily for Tombras and other die-hard open boaters, the paradigm shifted again two years ago, when Canadian canoe manufacturer Esquif developed the L'Edge, a shorter, more stable canoe with a radical rocker that allows a skilled canoeist to run hard whitewater almost as easily as a kayaker.

With the original *Canoe Movie*, which was released in 2010, the Amongst it crew wanted to introduce the world to whitewater canoeing, detailing its history and some of the key players in the niche sport. With

Canoe Movie 2, Hunter Davis, one of the owners of Amongst it, hopes to show the world exactly what can be done in an open boat.

"Anything you can do in a kayak, these guys can do in a canoe. You can run class V. You can run waterfalls," Davis says. "With *Canoe Movie 2*, we want to blow the doors off of adventure canoeing. We want to show them running these huge drops, and show that they're not just daredevils throwing themselves off of waterfalls. They're making big, beautiful moves just like a kayaker."

In the process of filming *Canoe Movie 2*, Tombras and his cohorts have notched out first descents all over North America, including 40-foot waterfalls in Mexico and wilderness runs in the Carolinas' Jocassee Gorge. One of the most impressive first descents has to be Road Prong in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It's a skinny tributary of West Prong that's accessed from the Chimney's parking lot. It's only runnable after a massive rain, and by all accounts, it's the steepest river ever run in a canoe. The Road Prong drops 750 feet per mile with no necessary portages. By comparison, the Green River, arguably the most famous steep creek in the country, drops only 300 feet per mile.

"It was scary," Tombras says. "To be honest, I only ran it because the film was rolling."

While the new boats are more maneuverable on the

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guidebook to accommodate the weird preferences of the waterfall fraternity.

Alex declaring that he should head home for a nap (after a late date last night), Stu and I headed up the Stony to show Stu how its course ran. Finally lodging at its top next to the NY Thruway, we looked into the stream, and of one accord decided that we must wet the bottoms of our boats at least once today. So, having previously determined that the bottom of the Kinderhook (325 sq. mi. catchment) was the only possible paddle in this dry weather, here we found ourselves at the top of one of its tributaries (10 sq. mi.). This doesn't argue well for the whole structure of my guidebook which seeks to give paddlers the catchment areas so they can choose their brooks wisely!

Off we went, thankful that Alex could not see us now, as we scraped over small gravel bars and carried over fallen logs in a tiny twisting stream through the woods. After an hour of this labor, we cried halt, dragged the boats across a field, and Stu with paddle in hand walked up the highway, catching a ride on the second try. Sitting with the boats by the roadside, I also was offered rides in the wrong direction by two concerned drivers. Reunited, boats and paddlers returned to the Summers', arriving home by five.

Elk Festival Weekend

by Ed Evangelidi, photos by Beth Koller



What if they canceled a popular festival?

After 15 years of Elk Fest paddling/racing/drinking/mountain boating unmentionables, the fest organizers agonized until the last minute but decided to cancel the fest as there just was no water anywhere near Webster Springs. The lodging organizer called Mike Martin to ask whether we would still be coming out there with no water. Mike responded that we BRV'ers were not a fickle sort. But we were few in number.



The Friday paddle "on the way out" was out of the question as the usual paddling locations were bone dry and somehow the alternate paddle locations did not attract interest. Friday night was a typical boater night: drink lots of beer & dither. More beer & more dither. Saturday morning showed that lots of other boaters were showing up from all over the East Coast, but still way below normal numbers, and were going to paddle even if it was the Atlantic Creek, down from the Atlantic Ocean after the drought. The best choice was the New River, not quite 2 hours away and at a healthy level. I think all of the put ins at the river were well attended. Saturday night included the usual music fest which was not cancelled. A new brand of legal booze aptly called "Moonshine" from Virginia made the rounds. Sunday split the group with some driving to the upper James River basin and some driving to the dam released rivers along I-79. Not quite what we expected, but a good time was had by all.



Balcony Falls of the James River, Sunday of Elk Fest Weekend (top to bottom): Dave Cooke; Courtney Caldwell; Wes Bryden helps a stranded recreational boater to safety.

Upcoming Trips

May

May 12	57th Annual CCA Downriver Race	LI to A	Star Mitchell
May 12-20	BRV/MCC Smokey Mountains Trip	"Class 3/3+"	Richard Hopley
May 18-20	2012 Annual Benscreek Canoe Club Whitewater Rendezvous		
May 19-20	Bloomington Releases	LI/I	Instigator Needed
May 25-28	7th Annual Teeter's Base Camp trip	LI to A	M. Martin, D. Hall & C. Caldwell
May 25-28	Smoke Hole Camper	PN-LI?	Frank Fico
May TBA	Stonycreek Basin/Dealer's Choice	HI	Instigator Needed

June

June 9	Dealers' Choice		Rick Koller
June 23-24	Lower Yough Workout & Cheat Canyon First-Timers		Charlie Duffy

July

Early July	Western NC Week of Rivers	N-HI	Ed Evangelidi
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Also of note (from Mark Wray):

The Reel Paddling Film Festival will be at the ACA HQ on June 9th. See link below.

<http://www.reelpaddlingfilmfestival.com/tour-schedule/tour-schedule-2012/details/140-ameri-can-canoe-association.html>

COMEBACK (Continued from page 9)

water than the older models, they're no lighter. Esquif's L'Edge comes in at 70 pounds, and canoeists often have to carry on their shoulders for long hikes if they want to bag the more remote rivers in the region. For the Road Prong descent, Tombras had to lug his boat up a hiking trail that gained 1,000 feet in elevation before he could dip his paddle in the water.

Beyond the added weight, there are still some performance limitations to open boating. Canoeists still only have one paddle and they still have a big hole in the top of their boat, so they're always going to take on water. It's a trade off, according to Tombras, who never once considered abandoning his canoe for a kayak.

"I like the added challenge and the aesthetic value of running a river in a canoe," Tombras says. "It's like telemark skiing or fly fishing. Yes, it's harder, but that's part of the beauty."

More paddlers are drawn to the aesthetics of canoeing now that the boat designs have caught up to kayaks. Canoeists are now able to style big drops and tight creeks as well as most kayakers, pushing the limits of what people thought was possible in an open boat. More often than not, those limits are being pushed right here in the Southeast.

"There are small pockets of open boaters all over, but the Southern Appalachians are a mecca," Davis says. "The guys who are pushing the sport are doing it right here in our backyard."

The majority of *Canoe Movie 2*'s footage was shot on Southern creeks, and it wasn't just a matter of convenience. According to Tombras, Southeastern rivers are ideal for open boating.

"It's the geology. We have drop and pool rivers, where you can run a big waterfall, then recover in an eddy and dump the water out of your boat before moving on to the next big drop," Tombras says. "In the Rockies, though, the whitewater is more continuous, so if you're in an open boat, you could easily get beat down for a mile of nonstop whitewater."

As for Davis, he's excited about being able to show off some of our local rivers in a cutting-edge film like *Canoe Movie 2*.

"You see a lot of adventure films set in places I'll never get to go," Davis says. "New Zealand looks amazing, but I'll probably never get to paddle there. But I know I can get to the West Prong, which looks just as amazing, and I've never seen a film like this set there until now."

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 2012: January 24, March 13, May 8, August 4 (Moonlight Picnic), September TBD, November TBD, December 8 (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.

2012 BRV Officers: Rick Koller, President; Mark Wray, VP; Mike Martin & Daryl Hall, Trip Coordinators; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation.

2012 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 BRV'ers. 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 BRV'ers. 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 July *Voyageur*:
Friday, July 6th

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, May 8th