

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

November 2006

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

Another paddling season is coming to an end. Unfortunately, my tenure as President is not. Finding new club officers has been difficult for Bob Maxey to do. We all appreciate his efforts. I would like to thank those people who have volunteered to serve. We all appreciate their generosity with their time.

We will be losing a member of our club this fall. Mike Wevrick and his family are moving to the Boston area. Mike presented many good slide shows of his various trips in Canada. He always had a show when I needed one, and it made my job as President a little easier. I really appreciate his input to the club. He will be missed. I'm sure he will be very at home in the cold weather of Boston.

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 14. I have purchased a DVD featuring globe-trotting kayakers in their travels around the world. It was recommended to me by a kayaker in Atlanta. I hope you will all come and enjoy the show.

The Holiday Party is coming up soon. It is the best-attended function of the year. I hope everyone is planning on coming. We will need volunteers for set-up and clean-up. I hope to see you there.

Ernie

2006 BRV Holiday Party

LOCATION: Dominion Hills Recreation Center —
6000 Wilson Blvd., Arlington

DATE: **Saturday, December 9, 2006**

TIME: 5:30-11 PM

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

A-E appetizer

F-J salad

K-R main meal side dish

S-Z dessert

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

COST: **\$10** for adults, **\$5** 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 Knipping at 703-533-2895 by **Thursday, December 7**.

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help set up and clean up — contact Ron to offer your assistance.

Trip report: U.S. National Whitewater Center, Charlotte NC, Sept. 15, 2006 by David Cottingham

The USNWC recently opened just north of Charlotte off I-85. It's a 300+ acre facility with a man-made whitewater course that is wonderfully challenging and well worth a visit if you are in the area. I joined 3 friends on a Friday afternoon for 3 hours of pure paddling fun.

USNWC is different than any river I've ever paddled. Think of it as an exciting and challenging theme park ride where you control your boat. First, the water flows very fast. Second, the eddy lines are sharp and recirculating eddy flows are very strong to the point that some form whirlpools.

(Continued on page 2)

USNWC (Continued from page 1)

Envisioning the whitewater facility is hard from a single vantage point (see diagram). There are two large ponds, one 21 feet above the other. Six pumps lift 1684 cfs from the lower pond to the upper pond. From the upper pond, the water swirls equally down two approximately 30 foot wide channels – the Freestyle Channel and the Competition Channel – back to the lower pond. The Freestyle Channel is 1,400 feet long (equivalent drop of 79 feet per mile). The Competition Channel is 1,100 feet long (equivalent to 100 fpm drop). Facility operators control the flow and difficulty by adjusting artificial rocks and flippers on the channel sides to create eddies, holes, and waves. When you catch your breath in the lower pond, you paddle to a conveyor belt that carries you **IN YOUR BOAT** back up to seal launch into the upper pond for another run. Think of the conveyor belt as a ski lift. You never get out of your boat.

The Freestyle Channel has 4 or 5 three to four foot drops and one larger sluicing drop into a major wave (called M Wave) below which the water boils and churns making this a strong class III rapid. Most of the others are high class II or low class III. Great surfing waves and friendly play holes allow you to play your way down the channel or run it straight in

less than 10 minutes. This channel was plenty of fun for my group.

The Competition Channel is an intense class IV experience the whole way down. The water is faster with fewer eddies. The eddies boil and recirculate. It starts with the Zoom Flume where the channel narrows and Bernoulli's principle applies – the speed of the water accelerates. It's a pounding series of waves and churning water. After several three to four foot drops, you reach "Carnage Corner" where the channel makes a sharp left turn creating powerful reciprocating waves just above class IV Big Kahuna, a 10 foot drop that ends in a huge crashing wave with very strong eddies on both sides. After studying the Competition Channel, our group decided the Freestyle Channel was for us that afternoon. A few training racers in slalom kayaks and C-1s were about the only hard boaters we saw running the Competition Channel. Of the four plastic short kayaks we saw run Big Kahuna, all but one flipped, got trashed in an eddy, and had to be rescued by the life guard who rolled a ladder down to them. They either hauled their boats up the bank or collected them in the pond below.

To experience USNWC, check out the webpage (www.usnwc.org) and make reservations. USNWC limits the number of private hard boats on the course



at any time. They have 90 minute sessions for \$15 or two sessions for \$25. I went on a Friday afternoon and did two sessions. One wouldn't have been enough, but I was tired after two. Your experience is as challenging, intense, and continuous as you want it to be. In addition to private boaters, USNWC has 6-person guided rafts on the water. They didn't interfere with our fun. It's not like the Lower Yough on a summer weekend where you were dodging rafts all the time. The rafts spent more time on the Competition Course while most kayakers spent most of their time on the Freestyle Course. We didn't see any open canoes there. The channels should be runnable in open boats but they would take on water and likely have difficulty recovering between the rapids which are closer together than on most rivers. USNWC is also building ropes courses, climbing walls, and mountain bike/hiking trails. USNWC has invested over \$35 million for your entertainment. Go try it.

BRV Officers for 2007 by Bob Maxey

Here is a list of your fellow BRV members who have agreed to serve as officers for next year:

President, vacant [Ernie has agreed to continue]
Vice-President, Lou Campagna
Treasurer, Clark Childers
Newsletter Editor, Frank Fico
Trip Coordinator, vacant
Conservation Chair, Kathleen Sengstock

New Board Members: Rick Koller, Bill Collier, Gus Anderson
Second Year Board Members: Ed Grove, Wes Mills, Ron Knipling

I want to personally thank long-serving officers Clark Childers and Frank Fico. We truly could not run the club without them. As you can see, the positions of President and Trip Coordinator are vacant. Gus Anderson and I were hoping to get these positions filled, but we got no volunteers.

Paddling the Appalachian Trail by Ed Evangelidi

Most of you who paddle the Shenandoah Staircase know that the Appalachian Trail crosses over the river on the US 340 bridge. The trail also crosses the Potomac on the railroad bridge at the junction of the two rivers and then the AT follows the left bank downstream until Weverton (it then crosses sporting Israel Creek). The trail then regains the ridge tops and doesn't dip its toe in a paddleable stream until well into Pennsylvania. But with the familiar Harpers Ferry area, most boaters have a start on checking off seeing parts of the AT from an unusual but pleasant vantage point of your boat. Many of you have also seen the familiar white blazes down south while paddling the Nantahala, French Broad and Nolichucky (at the usual take outs).

I'll give you a few more places that you might have seen the trail from your boat: heading north in Pa., the trail crosses the rarely up East Branch of Antietam Creek, Conococheague Creek (up a reasonable amount in spring), Mountain Creek, and then the often up Yellow Breeches, Conodoguinet, and Sherman creeks. You can get frequent paddler points on the Conodoguinet as the trail stays along the creek for a good ways. Even further north but still quite local, you can virtually always paddle under the trail on the Juniata and Susquehanna Rivers. Further along, the trail crosses many other easy to reach and familiar creeks and rivers, including the vaguely Staircase-like Delaware Water Gap. [*Familiar perhaps because the river cuts through the extension of the Blue Ridge, but it's all flatwater — Ed.*] Some of you may have stumbled upon the trail while paddling the Balcony Falls section of the James. So, never mind that the trail is above you and not under you, go tell people that you've paddled a piece of the Appalachian Trail.

Other familiar local long distance trails/rivers intersections are the Allegheny Trail segment along the entire right bank of the Cheat Canyon (high up the bank) and along most of the sections of Glady Fork (trail also crosses the Big Sandy at Rockville). The Tuscarora Trail crosses the class 4 Meadow Branch twice in the Sleepy Creek area and crosses the Potomac in Hancock.

Happy hiking — or whatever floats your boat.

Upper Rapidan After Ernesto by Ron Knipling

On Saturday, September 2, Bob Kimmel, Will Greene, Doug White, Brad White, and I (all paddling OC-1s) caught six miles of the Upper Rapidan above Rt. 230 for fast small stream run. Following three weeks with little rain, 3+ inches from the remnants of Ernesto had fallen throughout the area on Friday. At the time of our put-in Saturday mid-day, the Rapidan was running at ~425cfs at Ruckersville and ~1,900 cfs (~3.3 on the gauge) at Culpeper. When we arrived at the Rt. 230 takeout, the stream appeared to have just barely enough water to paddle. It didn't look much better as seen from the road driving up to our put-in at Graves Mill at the intersection of Rts. 662 and 615. It is possible to put in two miles further up Rt. 662 at the SNP boundary, but there wasn't enough water. From creekside at Graves Mill, members of our group were visibly sullen and dubious about the level. But once on the creek, everyone was all smiles. The creek was running at just 2-3" above minimum, not juicy but enough to enjoy without scraping. There were many



Brad at the Upper Rapidan put-in.



Ron on the Robinson.

tight and closely spaced Class 2 or 2+ rapids and just enough micro-eddys that the group could stay together. Although there were plenty of overhanging trees and other potential strainers, for the most part dodging and ducking them was part of the fun. Only one place about two-thirds down the run required a boat exit and carry. The most beautiful scenery was seen while looking back toward the SNP mountains to the west. Near the end of the run an old defunct dam was runnable down the middle or, preferably, via a circuitous route through a right-side breakout. In all, this was a fun and beautiful intermediate-level mountain stream, and a first descent for most of us.

Afterwards, Bob, Will, and I needed more action so we headed north to the best section of the Robinson near Rt. 231 and Criglersville. The Robinson was running at ~600cfs on the Locust Dale gauge at the time, and we had about +6" of water. At this level, it was a continuous Class 2+ pleasure; we danced down four miles and happily called it a day.

Strickler Knob Spur Trail by Ron Knipling

An anonymous trail builder has recently completed a spectacular new spur trail to Strickler Knob in the Massanutten Mountains near Luray and the Rt. 211 Massanutten Visitor Center. Strickler Knob is the rugged promontory at the south end of Middle Mountain that dominates the skyline north of Rt. 211 as you drive to the west through Luray. It is named for Abraham Strickler, an early pioneer who established a plantation and settlement called "Egypt" at the eastern base of the mountain circa 1730. The best map of the area is PATC Map G (Massanutten Mountain – North Half), although the spur trail itself is not yet on any published map. The hike begins at the Sco-



Ron atop Strickler Knob.

thorn Gap trailhead on Crisman Hollow Road four miles from the Visitor Center. Follow the Scothorn Gap Trail up the mountain about a mile to its intersection with the Massanutten Trail, and then continue straight across and up the Massanutten Trail another

half mile to the top of Middle Mountain. The magenta-blazed spur trail begins there and proceeds south along the ridge top for one mile to Strickler Knob, a site with several magnificent rock formations and lookouts. Along the way are other rock formations and scenic vistas to the west and east. A small campsite is found about halfway, tucked in amid the slabs of Massanutten Sandstone. Much of the spur trail is over bare rocks and the last section requires non-technical rock climbing, somewhat like Old Rag Mountain. When dry the trail is not dangerous, but when wet it is slippery and potentially hazardous. At the knob itself, the

panoramic views include the southern Massanutten, South Fork Shenandoah River, Page Valley, and the Blue Ridge. The entire round trip hike is about five miles and takes 3+ hours, including time to savor the splendor and exhilaration of the final redoubt.

North Fork Shenandoah Above Edinburg by Ron Knipling

I had always turned up my nose at the North Fork Shenandoah as a paddling stream but this year discovered a very nice section of the river above Edinburg. On Wednesday October 18, a stunning Indian Summer day, Ed Evangelidi and I put in on the river near the village of Hawkinsville on Rt. 698 about a mile above the Rt. 707 bridge, and paddled eight miles down to its confluence with Stony Creek in Edinburg. This section is scenic and bucolic throughout, and has about 30 rapids, including some long rock gardens and a few Class 2 ledges. The river was running at about 300cfs at Mount Jackson just upstream, which translated to about +2" on the river. Some of the rapids looked like they could get interesting in higher water. We saw many birds, most notably a pair of bald eagles that preceded us all the way down the run, lighting from their perches as we approached and soaring downstream to another tree. These eagles had almost as much white as black feather coloration, and were really quite beautiful. The highlight of the trip, though, was Club Dub. "What is Club Dub?" you may ask. It is a nudist colony (!!!) located on river left around the last sharp turn in the river above Edinburg. We were looking for a lunch spot when we saw their rocky beach and Tiki bar with party decorations and five waist-high Easter Island stone head sculptures. There were no people there but on the bar was a half-full bottle of schnapps beckoning us to stop in for a drink. We toasted the day, the river, and Club Dub, and then noticed their sign saying *Club Dub's Nude Beach: No Cameras or Clothing Beyond This Point*. Thankfully, Ed did not comply, but as we sat and ate our lunches we fantasized about the nude parties and lazy days that had been enjoyed there, and made plans to come back for another drink at the Tiki bar on a Saturday afternoon next July.

You are Invited to a West Virginia Rivers Celebration

Please join us for food, drink and fun to celebrate the great work of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition to protect and restore the exceptional rivers and streams of the Mountain State. Special Showing: Top films from Bluegrass Wildwater Film Festival!

Fun Activities: Hike or Paddle before the Party*

Party Date/Time: Saturday, November 11, 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Place: The home of Barb Brown of the famous “Lost Paddle.”

Address: 10801 Admirals Way, Potomac, MD 20854

Please RSVP: Fran Hunt at 202-429-2657 or email fran_hunt@twrs.org.

* Pre-party Hike and River Paddle at Swain’s Lock (Lock 21 on C&O Canal):

Hiking Host: Ginny DeSeau 301-251-2978 , Paddling Host: Joe Sullivan 703-759-7174.

Please contact activity host in advance for details and/or to sign-up.

\$25 Initiation Rapid / \$50 Bodacious / \$100 Greyhound Bus Stopper

\$250 Almost Heaven / \$500 Dungen Hotel Wager

(Please cut and mail back with donation if you can’t join us that day.)

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

Address _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Or donate online at <http://www.wvrivers.org/> and click on the link that says “Join Us. “

Help Support West Virginia Rivers Coalition Annual River Raffle

WHAT?

Please help us by making phone calls to fellow boaters residing in West Virginia and in the states surrounding West Virginia. Many of these boaters buy raffle tickets every year and expect to be called by another paddler. This year’s ticket has over 60 prizes. Our top prizes are a Fluid kayak from Upper Yough Outfitters or a boat of your choice from Rocky Mountain Kayak! We need your help for just 3 hours, one or two nights in November. Your time volunteering on any of the November dates listed below will help us address the concerns of acid mine drainage, mercury pollution or impaired fisheries in the Potomac watershed!!

WHEN?

6:30pm to 9:30pm

November 8th (Wednesday) and 9th (Thursday)

November 13th (Monday), 14th (Tuesday), 15th (Wednesday), and 16th (Thursday)

November 27th (Monday), 28th (Tuesday), 29th (Wednesday), and 30th (Thursday)

WHERE?

American Rivers’ NEW office:

1101 14th Street NW, Suite 1400

Washington, DC 20005

CONTACT PERSON

Joe Peabody (jpeabody@wvrivers.org) or (304) 637-7201 for sign up.

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: _____

Add me to the email list for:

 _____ **Novice trips**
 _____ **Intermediate trips**
 _____ **Advanced trips**

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: _____ **(w)** _____

Email: _____

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

Potomac Conservancy vs. Potomac Riverkeeper *[an email response contributed by Bob Youker]*

Mr. Youker, thanks for your email.

In brief, Potomac Conservancy focuses on issues surrounding non-point source pollution. These sources include farms, forests, and developed areas. We help implement land protection techniques (conservation easements and best management practices such as riparian buffer tree planting and fencing cattle out of streams) and produce demonstrations of sound practices such as rain gardens and native landscaping.

Potomac Riverkeeper focuses on point source pollutants, which are those that come from a readily identifiable source — wastewater treatment plants, power plants, or mines, for example. Because these sources are usually regulated by law, Riverkeeper uses legal means to identify and punish violators.

The two organizations work together on many efforts, as we consider our strengths to be complimentary and not in competition. You can find additional information about Potomac Conservancy on our website, www.potomac.org. Thanks again for your interest.

Christine P. Iffrig, CFRE, Director of Development and Communications, Potomac Conservancy

Upcoming Trips

Nov. 4-5	Tohickon	I	Courtney Caldwell	703-802-0155	cccaldwell@lnc.com
Nov. 11-12	NJ Pine Barrens	N/I	Ed Evangelidi	304-262-8924	edevange@localnet.com
Nov. 24 - Dec. 3	Eastern VA/NC area	N/I	Ed Evangelidi	304-262-8924	edevange@localnet.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 2006-07: November 14, December 9 (Holiday Party), January 10, March 19, May 15. 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 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 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:
 - Nat. Whitewater Center (p. 1)
 - Up. Rapidan & Robinson (p. 4)
 - N. Fork Shenandoah (p.5)
- Appalachian Trail rivers (p. 3)
- New Strickler Knob trail (p. 5)
- WVRC support events (p. 6)

Deadline for January *Voyageur*:
Friday, December 29

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, November 14

RENEW NOW for 2007: If your mailing label says 2006, use the membership form included on page 7.