

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

May 2007

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

The season is well upon us and while we have had some water, things are still not rockin' like one would hope for spring time. The trees have started to bloom, yet creek season seems to have never really been here. I hope we get some more water than we have had in previous years. I led my first official BRV club trip to Stonycreek PA in March; we had a great turnout and a good time. Since then I have not paddled with any BRV folks. Not that people are not paddling, just we are not aligned in the days we can get out. I hope many of you are getting out and having a good time.

If you are going to get out and paddle, please open up the opportunity for other members to join you by posting your trip on our message board. Sure you might have to vet out someone you don't know very well to be sure they are not a liability on your trip, but in return you get a chance to meet some new people and help strengthen the club by involving more people in club activities. Of course that new person may return the favor by posting a trip for you to join one day. Let's see some chatter out there!

The May meeting will feature Ron Knipling and Bob Kimmel's recent trip to Costa Rica, so come to the meeting and see and hear about their vacation. If time permits, we will have a bonus feature presentation as well.

Jim Pruitt

Whites Creek Equipment Retrieval Paddle -- Thursday, March 29 by Steve Ettinger

I had already scheduled the Thursday Paddle on Wills Creek when Merrill Pearson asked whether we might possibly go instead to Whites Creek, to look for her Werner paddle and Jim Gross' C-1 and paddle, which they had lost on Saturday, in much higher water, when Jim had gotten very dangerously pinned (you can read about this on the MCC Bulletin Board). I was concerned about the amount of wood in the creek that they had found, as well as by the fact that Whites Creek would probably be too low for a clean run, but when Dick Pierce and Rick Tegethoff were willing to make the switch, I agreed. Besides, it's hard for me to turn down the chance to paddle something new. Jim (in a borrowed, leaky boat) and Merrill joined us, as did Rachel Crowder.

Whites Creek is a smallish (25 square miles) stream that flows into the Casselman near Confluence. The sharp overnight drops on the relevant gauges (Bear Creek and the Casselman at Grantsville) suggested that Whites Creek might even be too low to run, but there had been more rainfall on the Pennsylvania side, and we found Whites Creek to be runnable, albeit scrapey. We set up shuttle for a 3.6-mile trip from Listonburg to the next road bridge, at Dumas; it is another 0.7 miles to the confluence, but then we would have had to pad-

(Continued on page 2)

WHITES CREEK (Continued from page 1) dle a further 2.7 miles on the Casselman to the bridge at Confluence (where the Casselman picks up Laurel Hill Creek and then immediately enters the Youghiogheny).

In less than a mile, we came to the spot where Jim had pinned. The offending tree was at least a foot clear of the water, and the boulders that had kept his stern stuck were high and dry as well. I tried to imagine what the spot must have been like with 3-4 times as much water as we had now, but even at this low level it looked like it would be a challenge to get to and free a pinned boat there.

From there on, we kept scanning the banks and woodpiles for any

sign of a boat or paddle. We even walked in vain down a few side channels. Then, right next to an eddy where we serendipitously stopped, Merrill found her paddle sitting calmly on the bank. Alas, Jim's boat and paddle never did turn up; if his boat is ever found, it will most likely be in the Youghiogheny. About a mile from the end, Jim's borrowed boat became so leaky (after hitting many, many rocks) that he chose to carry it, instead of vice versa. And he still beat the rest of us to the take out.

As for Whites Creek itself, it is quite beautiful for most of the way, except where it is lined by houses: at the start, midway at the hamlet of Beachly, and near our take out.

Our gradient averaged 90 feet/mile, so there were few calm spots. Even though there are no major drops, I rate the stream a III because of the length of its rapids. Half a dozen strainers had to be portaged, but the only swims came towards the end in a fast, narrow stretch without eddies, where a low branch flipped Rachel and Merrill, and the shallowness prevented them from rolling. The most interesting rapid is just below there – a complex series of small ledges, where the creek bottom is solid rock.

On the drive home, Dick and I scouted a pair of smaller Casselman tribs – Piney and Flaugherty creeks. The latter looks like a lively target for a rainy day.

Sing for the River, A Collection of River Songs

Retails for \$24.95.

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Sing for the River, A Collection of River Songs offers melody, lyrics, and guitar chords to a variety of popular hits, and classic river favorites. Among the 55 songs are everything from spirituals, such as *Down by the Riverside*, to movie hits, such as *Take Me to the River*, to Arizona folk musician Katie Lee's *Pore Colly Raddy*, to Robert Hunter and Jerry Garcia's *Brokedown Palace*, to J. C. Fogerty's *Proud Mary*. The songs are simplified into a "fake book" format making the songbook great for beginners and easy to enjoy while singing around the campfire. The size, layout, and pen and ink illustrations throughout contribute to a convenient and high quality product. For more information visit www.singfortheriver.com.

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Scottsdale, AZ 85271

THANK YOU!

ABS Canoe Repair

by Jim Pruitt

OK, admit it, if you are reading this article you are probably a bit frugal with money. Need proof? How many canoe manufacturers are still in business? Most of us rationalize repeated repairs to boats by saying things like “well it keeps it out of the landfill”, but we know the real reason: we are just plain cheap. Disclaimer: The repairs I have done below have seen only a little real world testing on my boats, but seem to be quite sound after taking a few good hits and scrapes.

On my Ocoee I have been having de-lamination problems for some time and have tried various repairs, all of which were less than ideal. I learned of a new technique being used in Canada by reading reports on the C-Forum. The basis of this repair is to dissolve ABS plastic in acetone and apply it to the ABS hull. The idea is that acetone as a solvent in the paste applied to the hull will melt the existing hull to provide a permanent bond.

My first test was to apply a layer of ABS on the rear of the hull where there was heavy wear. I applied two thin layers of ABS Goo to create a small skid plate. This seemed to adhere and wear well, so on to the next step: repairs of a more involved nature.

On one chine I had an area about 5 inches around where the outer vinyl and ABS layers were removed from the foam with damage to the foam. I cleaned every thing up by removing the loose vinyl and ABS layers. In this case the repair was built from the foam layer up.

Get a section of black ABS sewer pipe. DO NOT USE PVC pipe as it will not adhere. (This pipe is getting harder to find as ABS sewer pipe is being discontinued due to pipe joints breaking and the resultant problems you would expect with sewage leaks.) Cut into small sections and drop into a mason jar. Cover with acetone and let it melt for a few days. Once dissolved you can adjust the paste thickness with more liquid or solid as you need.

Apply in THIN layers to the hull with a putty knife, the acetone will melt the existing hull and bond everything together. Do not work the paste too much, just apply and let it self level. Be aware that too much/too thick a layer will soften the hull and possibly cave it in. When in doubt, provide support underneath to prevent this, especially if you're applying this to a large section of the hull. Let each layer dry for a day or so before you apply another to let the acetone evaporate completely. It was recommended to remove the vinyl layer before application to get ABS to ABS, although I have been testing areas of direct application to the vinyl with good results as well.

Something I tried on this repair that I have not seen mentioned elsewhere (I got the idea thinking about Esquif and their Twintex Zephyr) was I applied several layers of woven fiberglass imbedded and fully saturated in the ABS repair to add stiffness and make the repair a bit lighter. First this was

tested on some scrap material to ensure the ABS would saturate and adhere to the glass cloth. The resulting repair looks to have good adhesion to the glass and a very stiff repair. Be sure to use a thin enough mix to fully impregnate the glass weave. Also unlike when working with epoxy, do only one layer per day to let things dry out completely. Although a new layer may appear dry in a short time, only the surface has fully dried; application of another layer on top will trap the acetone and it may end up working its way through the hull. Once you have things built back to where they should be, application of Krylon Fusion or other plastic paint will help block UV rays and keep the ABS from getting brittle too quickly.

Another way to “skin the cat” so to speak is to apply a new layer of vinyl to the hull. This can be done to cover your ABS repair or to make a thin and light skid plate to cover other high wear areas, or cover cracks in the hull. You can do this by using vinabond to glue a thick sheet of vinyl to the hull. Sheet vinyl can be found at Reed Plastics or some of the good old-fashioned hardware stores. I have also used heavy grey PVC sheet vinyl from Home Depot which is sold as shower pan liner. They carry large rolls and you purchase by the foot.

Of course, one could just buy a new boat to help keep the few remaining open canoe manufacturers in business, but that's the subject of another story.

The following article appeared in the Roanoke, VA Daily Press, March 5, 2007.

Scientists refine search for cause of Shenandoah fish kills

by Sue Lindsey

ROANOKE, Va. -- With spring approaching, Virginia scientists are planning a more comprehensive attack to find the cause of the mysterious fish kills in the Shenandoah River and its tributaries. State agencies will continue practices of monitoring water quality and testing fish specimens that they've conducted since thousands of fish began dying for unexplained reasons three years ago.

But based on advice from two university professors, scientists will broaden their search for the cause or causes, state Department of Environmental Quality biologist Don Kain said Monday.

Don Orth, a Virginia Tech professor of fisheries and wildlife science, said he also will solicit help from scientists doing research in the valley that's unrelated to the fish kills. "There is something wrong systemically with the whole basin," said Orth, who along with Greg Garman of Virginia Commonwealth University helped state scientists focus their fish kill investigation.

For one thing, scientists will look for compounds such as heavy metals and pesticides and other chemicals that could cause the symptoms of chronic stress that the dead fish exhibited. Many of the fish that died had lesions that resembled cigar burns. Some were intersex fish, meaning they had both male and female characteristics.

Previous tests have focused on nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous, which Kain said are easy to test for. Researchers now also will look for chemicals that are used specifically in the Shenandoah Valley, a largely agricultural area with the highest concentration of poultry and livestock in the state. "We're going to the next level," Kain said.

One study to be examined will be a Virginia Tech colleague's research on arsenic's movement through the Shenandoah Valley soil, Orth said. An arsenic compound has been added to chicken feed for years, he said.

For the first time, state officials will use monitoring devices containing a liquid that attracts certain types of compounds. This will be a way to find compounds that might not show up on regular measurements but would show high concentrations over time, Kain said.

Scientists also will pay attention to water quality before, during and after storms to see what changes occur from runoff. The Shenandoah Valley's geology is unique in that it has a number of cracks and crevices that provide a direct link to the river from inland areas, Orth said. "That forces us to look beyond the pipes and the near-stream effects," he said.

Fish samples will continue to be analyzed for viruses, bacteria and parasites, but Kain said scientists will look for similarities to fish diseases that have been discovered in other areas. Fish kills in the Great Lakes were caused by a virus that Virginia scientists hadn't tested for previously, he said.

Scientists also want to see whether a virus that's supposed to affect only largemouth bass could be involved. "Viruses do change over time," Kain said. "They mutate."

No largemouth bass have been affected in the Shenandoah, where smallmouth bass, redbreast sunfish and sucker species have died. Last spring, northern hogsuckers died on the mainstem Shenandoah River, and smallmouth bass and sunfish died in the North Fork of the Shenandoah and in South River.

In 2005, 80 percent of the smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish in the South Fork developed lesions and died. The kill was similar to one in 2004 on the North Fork of the Shenandoah. A kill last December on the main branch of the Shenandoah affected several hundred fish, mostly hogsuckers.

Previous spring fish kills have begun early in March, but Kain said Monday that no dead fish have been found so far this year. Scientists have no idea where kills might occur this year. "I think the odds are this year we can see a fish kill anywhere," Orth said.

Stoneycreek River by Jim Pruitt

Participants:

Larry Lempert, Kim Buttleman, Bonnie from Boulder Colorado, Jim Pruitt - OC1

Hans Haucke, Jenny Thomas. Lisa Carlisle, Mike Wellman, Marilyn Jones, Joe Randall, Robert Goo - K1

Level 4.2 Ferndale/1150 CFS/2.75 bridge gauge.

Group met at Myersville McDonalds at 9AM. We had a late start to try and paddle during the warmest part of the day as it was still cold up in PA at night. In fact on the ride up there were still a few snow drifts to be seen here and there, reminding us that winter was just leaving in the north. The late start resulted in a couple of basketball fans choosing to take on another run earlier in the day so as not to miss the bouncing balls on TV.

We had one unusual happening on the ride out: a three mile long back up on I-70 due to road construction and lane closures. I have never had this happen to me on a paddling trip before this one. This of course produced some cell phone chatter as to should we ride it out or take alternative routes. After looking at a map, we found that the next exit was past the construction, the decision was made for us.

We put in at the ball field to enable the group to paddle the biggest rapid on the river and add about 1.5 miles to the trip. Nobody had any trouble with the big one and we headed downriver with lots of play stops along the way.

We ran the left side of the island just below the confluence of Shade Creek. I do not recall ever running the left side before but it was a fine run at the level we were on the river.

A brief stop for lunch and back on the river for more play time. With 11 boaters, a few of which were pretty devoted surfers, we took our time getting down the river. No one seemed to be in a hurry, least of all myself as this was the nicest day on the water I had had this year.

The weather was pretty good for the end of March with intermittent sun and a high of 60.

At the takeout, Lisa produced a box of Krispy Kreme donuts much to the delight of the paddlers. She was proclaimed the BRV snack coordinator for life. After getting everyone loaded up the group proceeded to Somerset for dinner to top off the day.

52nd CCA Potomac Downriver Race, SATURDAY, MAY 12th

The 52nd running of the CCA Potomac Downriver Race will be Saturday, May 12th. Due to construction at Great Falls, registration (\$25) is 9 – 10:30 a.m. at Old Anglers' by the stairs and port-a-johns (sorry). Early registration, by May 5, is only \$15. Send pre-registration to Star Mitchell, Co-Race Chair, 8705 Hempstead Ave., Bethesda, MD 20817.

For registration forms and more details, go to canoecruisers.org or sycamoreisland.org

Take-out is Sycamore Island. Participants (racers, land workers, safety boaters) receive a T-shirt, lunch, and awards for the winners. Awards WILL NOT BE MAILED to those who depart prior to the award ceremony.

A shuttle van will be provided. DO NOT bring two cars! Boy Scouts are providing the van and the boys will be there to CARRY boats to the river and out of Sycamore Island. So if carrying your boat is your worst problem, please do join the race!

I need VOLUNTEERS!! Land workers and safety boats are needed. No degrees are needed. So easy, cave-men can do it. Call Star Mitchell, 301-530-3252 or starmitchell@verizon.net.

The following article appeared in the Richmond, VA Times-Dispatch, January 23, 2006.

Kayaker Loved Art, Lived Life “So Fully”

by Ellen Robertson & Julian Walker

When kayaker Karen Abse wasn't in the water, she was usually adding expert strokes to some artistic or community project. “I always called her my hero. I wanted to be like her,” said photographer and close friend Lynda Richardson of Richmond.

“She was a really fine artist — she made these fabulous copper weathervanes. She was an extremely talented kayaker. We played racquetball together. She was an unbelievable mountain climber. She was a volunteer coordinator of athletic events. We refereed soccer games together. She was an awesome friend.” Ms. Abse, who had celebrated her 55th birthday on Thursday, died Saturday in the James River after her kayak capsized and the current carried her under logs and debris during a group river trip.

She had lived in an old farmhouse on 10 acres in Midlothian that housed a studio where she kept her welding equipment for her art.

“You should see her garage,” Richardson said. “She had top-of-the-line mountain bikes, kayaks, open boats for whitewater canoeing — all perfectly situated. She was incredibly organized.”

From 2003 until last January, Ms. Abse had worked on a project basis as special-events coordinator for Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.

“Her uncanny ability to live life so fully makes this an especially difficult loss,” said Shane Tippett, assistant executive director for finance and operations at the garden.

“She knew how to make a party happen. From Groovin' in the Garden to the Gardenfest of Lights, Karen's artistic eye, her ready hand, her passion for team-work and the fun of the moment always shone through. Night after night during Gardenfest, hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands of Richmonders enjoyed the lights she designed and helped set up.”

Always ready to try something new, Ms. Abse was instrumental in starting the only all-woman crew in the annual James River Batteau Festival; she served 17 years as captain of *The Lady Slipper*.

A woman who had grown up around horses in her native Bethesda, MD, she had been a volunteer in Mesa Vista, a therapeutic horseback-riding program for special needs children in the Powhatan County school system and had par-

ticipated in the sport of carriage-driving, said her friend, Margaret Gerdts.

Ms. Abse earned a bachelor's degree at Hartford College, where she was a sculpture major, and had taken art classes at VCU. She started as a weaver and transitioned into metal sculptures. She was former president of the now-defunct But is it Art? cooperative, which had a storefront in the 3100 block of West Cary Street during the 1990s.

Greg Velzy, vice president of the James River Outdoor Coalition and an adventure programmer for Chesterfield County Department of Parks and Recreation, said Ms. Abse was certified to teach canoeing, whitewater kayaking and sea kayaking.

“That's unheard of in paddle sports, to be proficient in all three,” Velzy said. “Of all people, Karen was the last one anybody would expect this to happen to.”

Ms. Abse was Claudia Swanson's paddling mentor. It's important for people to realize how many different lives she touched without ever realizing it herself,” Swanson said.

Club Discount at KayakShed.com

BRV members may use discount code “GrpBRV” when purchasing items at KayakShed.com. Using this code at checkout gets members 15% off on non sale items, not including boats. A link to www.kayakshed.com has been added to the BRV website.

Name the Mystery River:

*Hordes of boaters I attract
For water released twice yearly
You must take a number to surf each wave
But the merchants of Point Pleasant love you dearly!*

(See July *Voyageur* for answer.)

ROSTER UPDATES

Ed Kron
6000 Little Falls Road
Arlington, VA 22207
703-536-7025 H
301-365-5109 W

Michael Marstaller
Lee Prouty
5213 Norbeck Road
Rockville, MD 20853

301-460-7468 H
perrieleprouty@hotmail.com

Craig Rovelstad
10746 Cordage Walk
Columbia, MD 21044
410-730-5594 H
301-952-3153 W
crovelstad@comcast.net

Dave & Carrie Singer
610 Steamboat Run Road
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
304-876-0932 H

Paul Walters
5907 Amber Ridge Road
Haymarket, VA 20169
703-754-1639 H
703-984-5332 W

UPCOMING TRIPS

Date	Trip	Level	Coordinator	Phone	Email
May 5-6	Tygart	A	Keith Merkel	703 222-6210	krm108@juno.com
May 13	South Branch Potomac	I	Clark Childers	703 319-0019	NA
May 19-20	Cranberry etc.	A	Rick Koller	301 864-2474	rkoller@helix.nih.gov
May 26-28	Smokehole Camper	LI	Frank Fico	703 318-7998	fico1@netzero.net
May 26-28	Southern Rivers, hiking, etc.	I	Jennifer Plyler	301 445-4815*	pls98@verizon.net
June 9-10	Cheat/Yough	I/A	Wes Mills	703 866-9815	wesmills1@cox.net
June 9	Lower Yough	I	Jennifer Plyler	301 445-4815*	pls98@verizon.net
June 16-17	Dealer's Choice	I/A	Kim Buttleman	703-802-6521	kbuttleman@usgs.gov
June 23-24	Dealer's Choice	I/A	M. Jones/ M. Wellman	202 686-1531	marilynjo@erols.com, mwellman@gmail.com
June 23	Lower Yough	I	Jennifer Plyler	301 445-4815*	pls98@verizon.net
June 24	Violette's Lock	PN	Kathleen Sengstock	301 649-3917	kathleen.sengstock@mail.house.gov
June 30-Jul 1	Dealer's Choice	I/A	Rick Koller	301 864-2474	rkoller@helix.nih.gov
Jun 30-Jul 8	Smokies with Carolina Canoe Club	I	Ed Evangelidi	304 262-8924	edevange@localnet.com (see Carolina Canoe Club website for info in Ed's absence)
July 4 am	Little Falls	I	Ron Knipling	703-533-2895	rkniping@aol.com
July 4 pm	Potomac Fireworks; 4pm at TR Island		Star Mitchell	301 530-3252	starmitchell@verizon.net
July 14 am	Violette's Lock	PN	Kathleen Sengstock	301 649-3917	kathleen.sengstock@mail.house.gov
July 14 pm	BRV Picnic	All	Club Officers		
July 14	Dealer's Choice	LI	Jennifer Plyler	301 445-4815*	pls98@verizon.net

Notes:

*please call before 8 PM

1 Difficulty Level: Novice (N), Practiced Novice (PN), Lower Intermediate (LI), Intermediate (I), Advanced (A)

2 For all Yough trips, please contact the trip leader no later than Wednesday preceding the scheduled weekend trip. This should allow sufficient time to reserve boat permits.

3 Gus Anderson and Beth Koller will lead a float trip down the Potomac sometime in June or July. It will be a black tie affair with a multi-course dinner. They would welcome help planning the meal.

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 2007: January 10, March 19, May 15, July 14 (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.

2007 BRV Officers: Jim Pruitt, President; Lou Campagna, VP; Jenny Thomas, Trip Coordinator; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation.

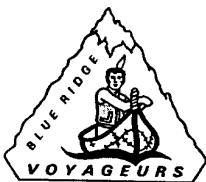
2007 Board of Directors: Gus Anderson, Bill Collier, Ed Grove, Ron Knipling, Rick Koller, Wes Mills

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, June 29

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, May 15