

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

Spring 2015

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

The paddling doldrums are just about over and already inspired members are agitating for ice breaker trips. (Ron Knipling headed to Passage on March 8). Please if you get a chance, come to the meeting on March 11th and view Ron's pictorial of a trip to the Smith River in Montana. Ron, Will Greene and Ginny Deseau paddled the Smith last summer and a combo of all their pictures will be presented. Other members have done this trip in the past so it will be interesting to see a different perspective, at least from two of them (Ginny ran it on the earlier trip). Hope you all considered leading a club trip this year; contact Bob Maxey for signing up.

Rick

BRV Ski Trip to Utah, February 2015 by Josephine Cox

Keith and Bob organized a ski trip with options for downhill and cross-country skiing for a total of 13 participants coming and going in three waves through February: Bob Maxey, Keith Merkel, Al Cassel, Wes Mills, Bill Money and his sister Ann (who did mostly downhill skiing for the first part of the trip); Glen and Jo, Jenny and Kim, Ned Howenstine, Carrie Singer and Ernie Katz joined for the second part of the trip. This trip report covers the second part of the trip in Brian Head and Bryce Canyon after Ann and Al had left. Keith had booked a group house right on the slopes of Navajo Mountain and eleven of us settled in with pizza and beer (well, this was a BRV trip!). Most of us headed to Cedar Breaks National Monument on the first day via a road which should have been perfect for XC skiing but turned out to be icy and treacherous. Nonetheless, we all persevered and were rewarded by a spectacular amphitheater. Keith on his snow shoes was probably the most efficient since the rest of us were struggling to keep snow from sticking on our skis or dealing with icy conditions. Kim bent his ski pole somewhere along the line (maybe something to do with the

fact that he's used to a single blade?).

Wes, Carrie, Jenny, Kim, Keith and I were convinced that there had to be some good XC conditions so we volunteered for Burt's Road on the second day which again was icy but some of us managed to get up to the meadow at



Cedar Breaks National Monument

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Ernie, Glen, Jenny and Kim on the Timber Creek hike in Kolub Canyon section of Zion National Park

UTAH (Continued from page 1)

around 10,000 feet. Again, Keith was the most efficient of all of us on his snow shoes. By day three, Wes, Carrie, Bob, Ned, Keith and Bill had switched to downhill and Jenny, Kim, Ernie, Glen and Jo went to the Kolub Canyon section of Zion National Park (the northwest section). A beautiful sunny President's Day and warm temperatures greeted us as well as a great hike along Timber Creek, though we did not quite make it to Double Arch Alcove because we were on

dinner duty. By all accounts, the downhill skiing was great back at Brian Head.

Tuesday was a dither day, with most of the group downhill skiing, while Jenny, Kim, Glen and I headed through Cedar City, southeast of Brian Head, to

Deer Valley where there was a potential cross country ski area.

Luckily for us, although there had not been much snow, the trails had been groomed at some point and we had some pretty decent XC skiing and lunch overlooking Navajo Lake. Tuesday night was Appletini night c/o Glen and Wes and soon thereafter the conversations turned to reminiscing about old one hit wonders with questionable lyrics and dubious heritage. iPhones were useful so we could sing along....

Since there was little prospect of any more XC skiing, Jenny, Kim, Ernie, Glen and Jo headed off for a slot canyon hike in the foothills of Zion at Kannaraville. We hiked a couple of miles up Spring Creek to the mouth of the canyon and it went on and on with walls about 100 feet tall either side of us and narrowing to about 20 feet. Amazingly beautiful colors, canyon wrens singing and golden eagles soaring above the canyon. In the cold creek waters, surprisingly there was some aquatic life about: water striders, water beetles and even some stoneflies who poked their heads out of their stone casings. On the way back to Brian Head we stopped off at the Parowan Gap Petroglyphs, another amazing site with National Historic designation. The gap is an extravaganza of petroglyphs, a vast gallery of Native American rock art. A pair of peregrine falcons circled overhead and screeched. We also visited the nearby dinosaur tracks — hard to find, but the ones we found were massive — nearly 2 feet in diameter for each footprint.

On Friday we headed back to the



Parowan Gap petroglyphs



Parowan Gap hike with Glen, Bob, Ernie, Bill and Carrie.

petroglyphs with Bob, Bill, Ernie and Carrie to take some photos. We hiked about a mile around the gap with the snowless, barren prairie stretching for miles around us. Since it was Friday night, we investigated the Last Chair Saloon with views of the Giant Steps ski slopes. We sampled a few Utah beers and Ernie celebrated with a large soda.

Saturday the 21st of February we packed up and headed to Bryce National Park. Fortunately we were able to check in early to our lodgings at Stone Canyon Inn, a won-

derful set of lodgings (thanks Keith) just outside the bizarrely named town of Tropic. We dumped our stuff in the three houses and headed off ASAP to Bryce so we could take advantage of the nice sunny day before the impending snow storm. With limited time, we travelled the whole 18 mile route down to Rainbow Point, stopping off at all manner of wonderful vistas. On our return, we stopped off at Sunset Point and even though it was 5.30 we started down the Navajo Loop trail and walked through a wonderland of



Hoodoos at Bryce Canyon National Park

hoodoos and amazing rock formations. Keith, Bob and Wes, who had gone off exploring around the base of Zion, joined us at Rudy's Restaurant just outside the park.

Sure enough it snowed ~8 inches over-

night and Carrie, Wes, Keith, Jenny, Kim, Ned and I headed back to Bryce just north of Fairyland Point — a bit of a trudge through the snow as the temperature were hovering around freezing. We wanted to head north along the Bryce Canyon rim trail, but access was across a barbed wire fence, a challenging effort and a disaster for Ned who fell in the process of crossing the fence. All of us but Keith and Wes headed back along the way we came. Ned was bruised but thankfully no other injuries and we headed back to hot tubs and good food.

Monday the 23rd of February was the last day of my vacation and with more snow overnight Bob, Wes, Carrie, Glen and I headed back to Bryce. We took the same trail that Wes and Keith had tracked the day before up to Fairyland and back over the fence. Then we were rewarded with a glorious sight! A groomed XC trail! We ate lunch and headed off along the wonderful trail — so this is what XC skiing is supposed to be like! Great views from the Rim Trail.

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Carrie, Keith, Wes, Glen and Bill relaxing at Stone Canyon Inn lodging, Tropic, UT.

The Virginia Shoreline Below Harper's Ferry by Ed Evangelidi

Many boaters paddle the Shenandoah Staircase and Potomac Needles and note the old factory ruins in Harpers Ferry and the C&O Canal ruins and occasional old buildings on the Maryland side of the river. Many boaters then take out on either side of the US 340 bridge and have no knowledge of the river downstream of there. The hardy few whitewater boaters and the many fishing boaters that travel to the three takeouts in Maryland below US 340 and before the Maryland Rt. 17 bridge may notice the C&O ruins and heavy railroad traffic on the Maryland side but probably have little to see on the very hilly and wooded Virginia side of the river beyond the active heron rookery in spring on the first long island below US 340 (still technically in Maryland).

One day many years ago I was paddling down the river below 340 and noticed what looked like a straight line gap in the trees going downstream at Short Mountain. I beached and walked around and discovered that there was the

remains of a road there that caused the straight line gap. I wondered why there would be a road there since just about anything of importance was on the Maryland side, including ample room to build roads and railroads. Further research revealed that the factory on the Maryland side downstream of Weverton (extensive remaining ruins are still quite interesting to see) was very prosperous in the 1800's making rasping files and other tools and needed many workers and supplies, so the road built on the Virginia side funneled workers and supplies to a chain bridge that went across the river at the mill site. A few of the rings (roughly the same size as those used at Chain Bridge in DC) that once anchored the bridge are still noticeable at the remaining rapid. (For those of you that don't



spots where it has not washed away in floods.

In order to appreciate these artifacts I occasionally take some hikers on this section of the old "river road". The easy access is at the two end points: Potoma Wayside on US 340 and Georges Mill Road (Rt. 852). If you drive over the Rt. 17 bridge in Brunswick (Rt. 287 in Virginia) to Lovettsville and turn west on Va. 673 you will cross Dutchman Creek (I don't know if it has been boated in recent times) and then quickly turn right at Va. 852 at the micro community of Georges Mill. Follow Georges Mill Road to the end (note the lack of parking here – please park in an unobtrusive spot) and where the road now ends you will see U.S. park signs between the "No Trespassing" signs on either side of the "road" remains. A short distance down this trail brings you to the remains of a furnace [see photo at left] and then the remains of what was a big factory building at the flood plain [see photo above]. I have not researched the history of this ruin.



boat the section, there are three minor rapids in quick succession in this area.) The section of roadway that was built out over the river at Short Mountain is also noticeable in

You will notice that you are just below the third rapid of the rapids in this area. If you bushwhack along the river going upstream you will come to the road remains at Short Mountain and the invisible remains of the chain bridge. The file factory will be visible on the Maryland side. Further along the bushwhack you will see the heron rookery on the island and then the riverside facilities of the outfitter here. You will be trespassing a bit at this point. Since this hike makes sense only at normal low water levels and before leaf out or after a light frost (greenbrier and stinging nettles found here) you are likely to be here in early spring or late fall when there is no activity on this property. Coming here on a weekday further insures easy passage through this property. Then, continuing on, you will pick up the trail for their tubers going under the US 340 bridge. This used to be rough going before they fixed up this area by clearing much tree debris and doing some rock placements. Finally, a trip to the waterfall on Piney Run (a.k.a.: "Crazy Creek") is in order *[see photo above]*. If you visit the file factory in Maryland in mid September, treat yourself to the numerous paw paw fruits on the Potomac flood plain at Weverton/Israel Creek.



AW and NPS Co-host Access Meetings in Harper's Ferry

[posted January 26, 2015 to the American Whitewater website; thanks to Vice-President Mark Wray who represented BRV at these meetings — Ed.]

Earlier this month American Whitewater and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA) hosted a series of meetings and site visits in the Harper's Ferry, WV area. The goals of the meetings were to gather information on river access issues and opportunities, and to gauge interest in the development and implementation of a river access plan. The Shenandoah and Potomac rivers converge in the historical town of Harper's Ferry, WV. Both rivers are popular class II-III whitewater runs that share takeouts after their confluence in Harper's Ferry. Together these rivers are enjoyed by thousands of kayakers, canoeists and rafters, as well as many anglers, sightseers, and swimmers from across the Mid-Atlantic region. Public river access to these important rivers has long fallen through the jurisdictional cracks: the rivers flow between lands managed by three states, three National Parks, numerous outfitters, a railroad company, and numerous private landowners. The river access options have shifted many times in recent years, and limited parking spaces are often overwhelmed by summer visitors. The result is dangerous, frustrating, and challenging access that is not commensurate with the quality of the rivers.

American Whitewater applied for assistance from RTCA in 2014 to help develop a river access plan that would explore solutions across all jurisdictional boundaries. Between January 13th and 15th, AW and RTCA staff met with 18 leaders from the regional paddling community, as well as state and county planners, transportation planners, outfitters, and National Park staff. The meetings were followed up by site visits to over 20 river access sites which we photographed and recorded GPS coordinates for mapping. The information gathered will form the basis for a draft river access plan and highlight opportunities for river access enhancements. We would like to thank all those who attended the meetings and contributed outstanding ideas and knowledge to this project. Next up RTCA and AW will compile the information we gathered and seek feedback from a broader community of river visitors (including the AW members). In addition, we've identified several time-sensitive opportunities for river access enhancements that we'll be taking action on right away. Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved!

Upper Yough Update

[posted February 12, 2015 to the American Whitewater website]

The Upper Youghiogheny River is a classic with a long and colorful history of whitewater boating. Predictable summer releases make this one of the main Class-IV+ playgrounds in the East. The rapids are continuous, technical, beautiful, and intoxicating.

Access to the river has also been a long running issue. American Whitewater signed an agreement in June 2001 with the state of Maryland to manage the Sang Run put-in access on the Upper Yough. However, limited take-out parking overwhelmed the community during summer releases. Over the last few years, American Whitewater worked with the paddling community to raise \$25,000 to go towards a take-out parking lot in the town of Friendsville, Maryland. This "seed money" was leveraged to attract over \$200,000 in grants for the town to complete the take-out facility with additional parking.

American Whitewater has learned that Jess Whittemore was re-elected to the Friendsville, Maryland Town Council. Thanks to Jess's leadership, and support from Mayor Spencer Schlosnagle, the town partnered with the whitewater community to welcome hundreds of river runners to the area for summer releases on the Upper Youghiogheny River. The new whitewater take-out parking area is now complete and ready for action, and American Whitewater volunteers are already planning to help the town maintain the site.

Remember: access doesn't just happen! Be respectful in town and be sure to donate at Sang Run to help AW maintain that site, too!

Montgomery County Bans Styrofoam

[part of the February 2015 "River Update" email from the Potomac Conservancy]

There is nothing that spoils an outdoor adventure more quickly than discovering foam containers and other trash littering the lands and waters you share with local wildlife. In an effort to combat this type of litter, Montgomery County approved a historic ban on Styrofoam containers and packing peanuts. Starting in 2017, the County's retail stores and restaurants will use containers that are made from compostable or recyclable materials.

[However, until 2017 we will still be finding large amounts of Styrofoam in the river, so why not consider participating in a watershed clean-up? We have the granddaddy of them all coming up very soon (see below) — Ed.]

27th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup

April 11, 2015

The Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup has become a decisive catalyst for progress that ignites people throughout the watershed with the Alice Ferguson Foundation's community spirit. The largest regional event of its kind, the Cleanup provides a transforming experience that engages citizens and community leaders and generates momentum for change. Visit fergusonfoundation.org for more information, or contact Kathleen Sengstock, who is coordinating this activity for the BRV.

Final 2014 Cleanup Results

671 sites reporting from Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC with 14,766 volunteers. 288 tons collected (576,000 pounds), including 211,000 beverage containers, 18,600 cigarettes, 35,600 plastic bags and 1,288 tires.

BRV TREASURER'S REPORT
STATEMENTS OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Cash Balance, January 1	\$2,390	\$ 2,940	\$ 1,925	\$ 2,267
Receipts				
Memberships	1,420	777	1,381	973
Disbursements				
Newsletter	282	292	322	188
Xmas Party/Picnic	400	1,262	485	572
Web Site	104	110	110	-
Other	84	128	122	215
Equipment				
Transfer to conservation	-	-	-	335
	870	1,792	1,039	1,310
Cash Balance, December 31	\$ 2,940	\$ 1,925	\$ 2,267	\$ 1,930
Members	102	90	105	73
Conservation Fund				
Cash Balance, January 1	\$ 296	\$ 695	\$ (51)	\$ (26)
Receipts:				
Conservation	399	254	325	216
Flood Relief	-	-	500	-
Transfer	-	-	-	335
Disbursements:				
Conservation	-	(1,000)	(800)	(525)

UTAH (Continued from page 3)

After about a mile we reached the end of the trail. Glen and Bob called it quits and Carrie, Wes and I decided to go back on the groomed trail. Alas, the trail ran out and we were faced with the worst conditions of the trip with no option but to walk on our skis with huge lumps of heavy snow clinging to the skis. All were very tired when we got back to the car, Bob and Glen having waited for over an hour. Back into the hot tub and all was well. Ned cooked our last meal and was lacking tomatoes, so Jenny and Kim sped to the grocery store and arrived just at the stroke of 7 before they shut down for the night, resulting in 6 tomatoes for \$14! Anyhow, a great meal to finish a splendid vacation. Wes, Bill, Keith and I headed back to Salt Lake City and the rest of the group stayed in Utah investigating Capitol Reef National Park and other wonderful locations.

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 4 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 dates to be scheduled in the following months: January, March, May, September and November. 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. In addition to the regular meetings, there is a club Moonlight Picnic on August 1st and a Holiday Party in early December (TBD).

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

2015 BRV Officers: Rick Koller, President; Mark Wray, VP; Bob Maxey, Trip Coordinator; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation.

2015 Board of Directors: Ginny DeSeau, 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, though via electronic mail is preferred; send to fico1@netzero.net. 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 — 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 Summer *Voyageur*:
Friday, June 5th

2015 Membership Roster and Trip Schedule inside