



The Paddle

Spring 2008

www.masondixoncanooclub.org

Business

Message from the President

What a difference some rain makes. We had an above average amount of rain for May and the paddling choices were abundant. Some of the Thursday Night Paddle (TNP) folks finally got to see the Potomac and the Shenandoah at levels above last year's drought levels, not to mention the many creeks that popped up. It has been a fun and safe spring for MDCC.

We started off 2008 with a fun Banquet, which included great food, about 55 MDCC attendees, awards, story telling, and a skit that must be forgotten. Awards went to Vitas Eidukevicius (for all his help), John Navarro (for enthusiasm), Susan Reynolds (most improved), Ericka Hoffmann (enthusiasm and tough gal), Dan Eigenbrode (big boy pants), and Sean Chapelle (for moving up the ladder many notches and helping others). We enjoyed some Bobby Miller highlights of class 5 boating and mountain biking and of course the MDCC DVD highlighting the 2007 paddling season. Thanks to Keith Lefler for arranging his church facility for us.

Pool sessions went off with a minor glitch of the pool closing one Sunday, but we were able to reschedule and get in our four sessions. Sessions were well attended and at least four new folks got their roll with many others fine tuning theirs. Thanks again to Dave Russo, Sylvia Durant, Jim Norton, and Keith Unger for manning and/or organizing the sessions. We hope to return next year. Kudos to volunteer instructors JD Pearl, Ron Shanholz, Chuck Davis, Lisa Cullinane, Tim Potter, Mike Glenn, J Robbins, Eric Vance and the others that helped in the pool and shared their pool time to help others develop their rolling skills.

Once again MDCC members were part of the cleanup in the Harpers Ferry area as part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. Three areas were cleaned: Bakerton beach area, the widspot (route 340), and Sandy Hook to Mad Dog rapids (C&O). The local outfitters cleaned up the wayside at the 340 bridge. Chuck Davis was our focal point for organizing the cleanup with the park service, and the foundation....and beyond.

The neatest thing I noticed this year is the continued enthusiasm of what were last year's newbies as they move on to bigger things and the return of some old timers that just made one day on the river a real hoot (welcome back JohnO and Sasser). With folks signing up for the beginner classes and with the warmer weather, we will see a new group of newbies at TNP and Sunday paddles looking to last year's newbies for guidance and encouragement. And hopefully we will see some old faces back on the water. Maybe the roles have changed, but the rewards of stepping up or giving back are endless. See you on the river!

Didymosphenia geminata (Didymo) found in the Gunpowder John Brognard, Conservation VP Mid-Atlantic Council – Federation of Fly Fishers

Didymo or Rock Snot has been discovered in the Gunpowder River. Didymo has also invaded streams in West Virginia, Virginia, numerous streams in the West and even streams in Alaska. At this time there is no known way to stop the infestation in a stream. We can only hope to prevent the spread to other streams by becoming better stewards of our environment.

In May 2006, EPA Region 8 and the Federation of Fly Fishers co-sponsored an international symposium on an emerging issue, the phenomenon of Didymo. Here is an excerpt from the white paper published by the group: “The diatom *Didymosphenia geminata* (Lyngbye) Schmidt is emerging as an organism with an extraordinary capacity to impact stream ecosystems on a global scale. In recent years, streams in New Zealand, North America, Europe, and Asia have been colonized by unprecedented masses of “Didymo” and its extracellular stalks. This diatom is able to dominate stream surfaces by covering up to 100% of substrate with thicknesses of greater than 20 cm, greatly altering physical and biological conditions within streams. This species is expanding its geographic range in North America and the rate that nuisance blooms are reported by the public and local media are increasing, yet little scientific investigation of the phenomenon in North America has been initiated.” <http://www.midatlanticconservation.org/notices.htm>

http://www.fredericknewspost.com/sections/art_Life/display_travelOutdoors.htm?StoryID=75399

Recommendations to prevent the spread of Didymo:

Do not enter a different stream until all your equipment is thoroughly cleaned with water with a 5% salt solution, rinsing with clean water afterward. A second method is to **thoroughly** dry all your gear. This includes everything from waders, fly and spinning line, reels, swimming suits, boats, canoes and kayaks, anything that can transport the spores.

1. Replace felt sole waders/wading shoes with rubber soles of some type, but remember the upper portion of the wading shoe may remain wet for some time. The spores can live in damp places for several days. Another choice would be to have a second or even a third pair of felt sole wading shoes.
2. If you spot Didymo, report it immediately to the DNR fisheries (301-898-5443) or you may contact me and I will make sure to have it investigated and get the word out.

Clubs in our area are joining forces to build and place cleaning stations along all our local streams. The stations will provide information about Didymo and have a salt solution in a pan to clean gear. We hope to start deploying the stations during the first week of June.

Didymo can literally kill a stream, so my passionate plea to everyone using our streams for fishing, swimming or paddling is to take this scourge very seriously and make every effort to prevent the spread. If you would like to help deploy and/or maintain a station please contact John Brognard at jb@flyfishwebdesign or 301-371-4205 or 301-676-7669.

Mark your Calendar !

For the full MDCC schedule, refer to <http://www.masondixoncanooclub.org/trips.html>

Here are some things to look for:

Beginner White Water Kayak Class

Beginner white water class June 8. If you are interested in the beginner whitewater class, please email JD Pearl. I would need to know that you are interested and what, if any, experience you have had to this point. I also need to know if you need gear and I will do what I can to round some up. I will do a day or evening at Greenbriar Lake on the 7th and the 8th will be a trip down the Antietam. JDPaddle@myactv.net

Practiced Novice/Low Intermediate White Water Kayak Class

June 15. Contact Pete & Sheila Chapelle: chapellefamily@comcast.net

HFOF Festival

The Harpers Ferry Outdoor Festival, Tim Gavin Down River race, and Harpers Ferry Amateur Raft Race will be held on June 14, 2008.. Proceeds go toward some of our favorite river conservation organizations.

The festival starts at 2pm at the Harpers Ferry KOA campground. LOTS OF KID FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES! Live Music from 2:00pm til 10:00p. Featuring [JAH WORKS](#), check WEB site for performance updates. Plenty of Good Food, have a bite to eat while you listen to live music, vegetarian friendly! Huge Silent Auction - Bid on hundreds of items.

For the latest information on any of the above, **The Tim Gavin Down River race**, or the **Harpers Ferry Amateur Raft Race**, go to: <http://harpersferryoutdoorfestival.org/>

Safety Class

A firm date has not been set yet, but a one day class is in the thought process. Contact Jim Norton if interested and refer to the MDCC schedule and message boards for details.

MDCC Picnic

Sunday, August 24th ! Details provided closer to time.

Kayak Highway Recovery Team Report

By Dan E

It was an average morning, our senses somewhat dulled by the mundane job of following accidents waiting to happen all over the country side. Like being a firefighter before fire was invented, or maybe a plumber before John Crapper grew out of diapers. Of course there were still the ones that used ropes, relying on the age old wisdom of knots from the days the earth was thought flat. Our job is so much less with the introduction of straps (other than before cars and kayaks were invented). The rope is our fire and the knott is our Crapper.

I first noticed the kayak do a slight shift to the left and thought “well the earth is not flat, so things shift”. I asked my partner “ Did that kayak shift?”. “nah”, she says handing me a doughnut. Crème filled. I forgot the moment of shift as we ventured off I-70 west and onto I-68 west. We checked again. No shift. Kayak was straight. Should we raise them on the radio? Nah. It was because of the angle and the fact the earth was round giving us the illusion there was a shift.

Seventy miles an hour, left lane is for passing, and then it happened. It was like a yellow rocket being launched from the roof of a Japanese car. Launch debris was everywhere. Immediately I followed my instincts based on years of training, watching CSI reruns, and Speed Racer. I put on my hazard lights as the Kayak Highway Recovery Team was now in action.

I blocked the lane, slowing down to protect the object I wished to recover. I watched in horror (ok, concern) the launch vehicle swerve onto the median, fish tailing, stirring up dust and come to a halt after just narrowly missing a culvert. It then occurred to me this was indeed a mis-launched kayak and needed to be recovered.

Vehicles went around me as I pulled to the side of the road. KHRT does not have authority to block the interstate. I jumped from the red rescue truck, donned my reflective vest, and immediately, without prejudice, went to the plastic missile now helpless in the road with a tractor trailer now in pursuit. It is a known fact that tractor trailers have the right of way even in kayak highway recovery scenarios. I laughed at him, hugged the yellow tub and did a shoulder roll to safety. (A shoulder roll is a maneuver used by professionals to get the kayak over the white line onto the median as fast as possible. You basically jump on top on the kayak, wrap your arms around it and roll: kayak bottom up, your bottom down, kayak bottom down, your bottom up, etc...till safely over the white line.)

I did a quick assessment for kayak injury and saw none. What a relief as all vital signs were intact. It was then brought to my attention that the launch debris we witnessed was called a paddle and must be recovered as they cannot be up the road without one. I adjusted my reflective vest (it is a sign of authority) and dashed to the paddle. It was safely located in the grass, but the run worked off some of the doughnut.

Adrenalin now down, we discussed the inadvertent kayak launching with the launch vehicle’s commander and verified it would not happen again. He quickly advised us in all his 25 years of carrying kayaks, he never launched one. And thanks to the Kayak Highway Recovery Team, he never lost one either.

Follow-up: The launch vehicle commander did in fact have another kayak fall from the launch pad one hour later. It was determined the rope was slipping off the round rack crossbar. The kayak was this time red in color and belonged to a Kayak Highway Recovery Team member, who was then compelled to write this report. Round bar, round rope, round earth, an accident waiting to happen. Kayak Highway Recovery Team. On your side.

Trip Reports A Big Day out on the Kokatahi (Coke-a-tie) Eric Chance

Some things to note about kayaking on the West Coast of New Zealand:

- Kayaking there is fairly new, so the rating system isn't inflated by how hard it was to run in a glass boat 20 years ago. So by New Zealand standards the upper Yough would be rated class III+/IV-, the Blackwater and Great Falls (standard lines) would be class IV.
- There will come a point where you are scrambling through holes in rocks on the river bank and you come to the realization that this is what the river bed is like as well. Geologically, the rivers are very new so there are lots of sieves, undercuts and other fun things like that.
- Most rapids are large bolder gardens. There are very few bedrock rapids, and all of them are in vertical walled gorges.
- Although the limestone gorges are pretty they are also very scary because they make scouting, portaging and escape difficult or impossible.
- In the summer the sun rises at about 5 and it stays light until about 9:30 which is helpful because many of the runs take all day. It also means that even if things turn pear shaped you probably can make it out before dark.
- Last but not least are the helicopters or death eggs as we like to call them, these are the primary mode of transportation into most rivers.

"Since 1996 when Bruce Barnes and I did the first descent and both almost died in Carnage Gorge, the Kokatahi has kicked more guru ass than the spotted guru ass-kicker from planet kick ass." This is how the guide book starts its description of the Kokatahi, and seems an appropriate start to this story since our group knew little about the river other than the brief description in the guide book; only one member of the group had done the bottom half of the run once. Pretty much all we knew was that you don't want to run the last gorge and there is one big dog rapid up there somewhere.

Our group consisted of 8 misfits, Jim from New York, Alaskan Jon, Sam from Australia, 3 Tasmanians also known as probes (Ben, Adrian and Thorpie), Jordan the local boy and myself. Having not paddled with half of the group before and not really knowing what we were getting into, I was a bit uneasy but I packed up an extra overnight bag (just in case) and went along with it.

We met Dando the chopper pilot at 9 at the take out. Like most of the rivers in New Zealand the takeout is simply some farmers paddock next to the river. We flew up 2 at a time, Adrian and Jordan went first and Ben and I went up next. As we were flying up the gorge, I could feel butterflies in my stomach and I began to wonder “oh no, what have we gotten ourselves into?” From the chopper I remember seeing a few very deep dark gorges and a giant sieve pile where the river would disappear here and there. As we got farther up the river gorges widened out into and eventually turned into steep tree covered slopes and the river got steeper more continuous and more bouldery. I remembered seeing another place above the gorges where a long series of rapids lead into a large boulder pile above the gorges.

We landed where a few streams converged and made a large flat rocky alluvial plane with giant mountains all around. I was nervous, I landed and was with 3 people that I hadn't paddled with before and they said that we were going right then. There was a bit of miscommunication before we flew up. Some people wanted to split into 2 groups of 4 so that we wouldn't get in each other's way; some wanted to stay together. It wasn't exactly stated which plan we were going with, but apparently we were splitting up. After I voiced some concerns we agreed that we would go down to where Jordan had started from before and then wait for the other group there, at the time I didn't know how far away that was.

We then proceeded to put on and after about 200 yards of wide shallow rocky class II we were to our first rapid. We eddied out on the left, then one by one ferried to an eddy on the right from which we ran a small side chute into an eddy. The main channel funneled down into a weird sieve thing, so we got out here and portaged and then scouted the next rapid. After looking at it we all decided to run it, the rapid consisted of a fairly long lead in then the main channel went left through a steep twisting drop into a diagonal hole followed by a fairly uniform 4 foot pour over with a nice hole behind it. I successfully ran the main channel while everyone else ran down the right and off a six foot boof.

After this there was about a mile and a half of continuous class IV/IV+ boat scouting. I was nervous through this section because I saw what looked like an unrunable rapid from the chopper in here with a long run in but it turned out to be all right because I never noticed any such drop on the water. We moved quite quickly through this section because the tazzies like to bomb and boat scout. The drops began to get steeper and closer together until what we determined to be a drop named "Cover Shot", a beautiful 12 ft. clean boof off the left. Everyone had quite nice boofs off it but we were held up here when one member of the party tossed their employer's waterproof camera from the top of the drop to someone in the eddy below and the camera sunk. After a quite a bit of swimming around in the eddy trying to find it, we gave up.

The next drop probably would have gone but no one felt like it so we ferried over to river right and walked, from here we walked the next few drops because there appeared to be an unrunable drop around the corner but with no where to stop. After looking at it from the bottom it turned out it was runnable and would be fun but it certainly didn't look that way from upstream. This is where the other group caught up to us. We all hooted and hollered as one by one they boofed off Cover Shot. It turns out they weren't expecting to be left behind and understandably they weren't too happy about it. After some words were exchanged, and Thorpie got some things off his chest, we cleared it up and continued on down the river. Jordan swam getting back into the river and that lightened the mood, since we could all laugh after we pulled his boat back up.

After a short section of boogie water we reached the Big Man Rapid. The general consensus was that it goes but not by me. Ben was the odd one out and after looking at it decided to run it. The lead in consisted of punching through a few holes then a boof of a 5 footer onto a slab on the left. Then the river narrows to about 2 boat lengths wide and the line is to drive all the way left and dry out on the wall of a 12 footer into a narrow, boiling cauldron and then off another 12 footer into the pool below. The interesting thing about the last part of the drop was that there wasn't really a hole at the bottom, there was just green water hitting green water and a small zone in between where it was exploding. Ben had a nice line in the entrance but got pushed to the middle above the main drop. He got a bit of a boof but just went straight off the middle of the first drop, disappeared for a few seconds, surfaced upside down going off the second drop. When he hit the bottom of second drop his boat did some crazy things and got launched out of the water, it looked like he had got ejected but he rolled up all right. Thanks to Ben's probing we now know the drop is clean and good to go for future reference.

Below the big one was a good rapid with a 6 or 8 foot boof through the center of a slot right into a 3 foot boof into an eddy on the right. After this there was another mile or two of steep water where we scouted occasionally. There was one other cool drop of note where the river narrowed down to about 10 ft wide and went of about a 6 foot drop into a big boiling hole, then down a chute. Everyone that ran it boofed over the hole and made it look easy. We stopped for lunch at a beach at the entrance to Carnage Gorge. After a bit to eat we proceeded to drop into the gorge as one large group, with the knowledge that the gorge was currently runnable (Carnage Gorge is frequently changing and has been tending to clean up in recent years.) We ran though some class III rapids, in quick succession. The final drop, before the gorge opened up a bit, looked like another class III drop from the top, but it was quite deceiving. Most of the water pushed left, much harder than it looked like it did. A lot of it went under a finger extending off the left wall that you couldn't see until you were quite close to it.

Everyone came down the right and then got pushed left, going just next to the undercut, except the last guy, Sam. He didn't see the undercut and ran straight into it. He grabbed onto that sucker and climbed on top of it while his boat went under it, then out the other side. Just downstream was a rather large rapid and Sam's boat had its heart set on running it. No one wanted to run it blind and clipped to a sinking boat so we had to let it go. We quickly portaged this rapid and sent Adrian to go find the boat. We got down a few more rapids with no sign of Sam's boat. It was a sad moment when I gave Sam the extra overnight bag I had packed, as well as some additional supplies. I remember him saying "Well, I'll see you in a day or two" and then walking off into the bush. Luckily I saw him about two minutes later and Adrian had found his boat, below the next little gorge. Thankfully there was only one class III rapid at the top of this gorge and then flat water until the bottom. So after some boat assisted swimming and some scenic floating through a gorge, Sam and his boat were reunited.

From here down the river eased up, with a few little exceptions. First was a 3 tiered drop. It started with a diagonal 6 foot kicker into a big hole then a 3 foot ledge almost parallel with the flow, ending in an 8 foot sloping ledge into a juicy hole that flushed out the right side. Below the first drop most of the water pushed left where the second two drops were in fact just one bigger drop into a big boily hole. We could not get to the bottom to see if the left side was runnable so we ran down the right with various degrees of success while Jordan and Sam scrambled up some very slimy and slippery gorge walls to portage and managed to do so much quicker than I thought would be possible.

The next drop of note was about an 8 foot off vertical drop into a hole. Thorpie missed the beaches of Tasmanian so much that he decided to go for a quick surf and swim in the hole. He was back in his boat and ready to go by the time everyone else had run the drop. After a bit of boogie we were to the next portage, where the river disappeared off some big waterfalls underneath a pile of boulders. Ben scraped and plopped off a 20 footer into a pool in a cave, and then portaged the rest. No one else could be bothered with that and just walked the whole thing.

After another short section of boogie we were to the last gorge of the day. The line here is to get out on the left, walk up a creek and then walk along the trail around the gorge for about 15 minutes. The trail went over a metal bridge about 50 feet above the water. Lead by Thorpie, about half the group decided to jump off the bridge and have our gear tossed off behind us, while the other half continued on the trail for another 50 yards to a nice sliding seal launch. I of course had the bright idea of getting Sam, a fellow known for doing a header off a 50 footer in his home country of Australia, to toss my boat off for me. My boat did exactly what Sam did off that drop, go over vertical, land upside down and fill up with water. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the gorge echoed, and boomed as Jon's boat landed completely flat. Once we were back in our boats all that remained was about a 2-3 miles of class II-III water to the takeout. It was a great relief to past everything of consequence and I think jumping off the bridge was an excellent cap off to the trip. We got back to the cars at 6 or 7, excited to have just run a great river, and excited to be off of it.



Ben running the "Big Man" rapid on New Zealand's Kokatahi

WEBSTER WILDWATER WEEKEND RIVER FESTIVAL & RACE: April 4-6, 2008

Ericka Hoffmann

I'd heard Juston talk about Webster Weekend, so I decided that it sounded like too much fun to miss. It didn't take much to talk Sean into it either, so he and Adina decided to make the trip as well. We all took Friday off work and booked bunks at Camp Caesar 4-H Camp in Cowen, WV. The hardest part was deciding what to paddle on Friday. Saturday was the big event on the Elk River at Webster Springs, WV—put on by the Webster County Watershed Association—which included a downriver race. We figured we wouldn't be able to make it all the way out to Webster Springs on Friday in time to paddle out there, so we started looking for something to do on the way. Something that had enough water in it, since we still had not gotten much spring rain at that point. We looked up the various South Branch and related forks of the Potomac, which were sort of on the way. They looked nice, as the Pendleton County scenery is gorgeous. They were also something we could handle without a trip leader and without getting our necks broken. So we kept our eye on the weather forecast and the USGS online gauges, hoping that the rain would cooperate. The river gods were smiling on us, and we got enough rain the day before to bring the South Branch of the Potomac just up to runnable.

SOUTH BRANCH OF THE POTOMAC – Friday, April 4, 2008

Rt. 220 Bridge @ Upper Tract to Eagle Rock, Smoke Hole Canyon, Pendleton County, WV
Level: 2.5'; Class I-II
Paddlers: Sean Caron, Ericka Hoffmann with Adina Caron as Shuttle Bunny.

It was absolutely beautiful. Thursday night's rain brought the level up to above 2.5' just in time. It stopped raining and turned warm just before we put in around 12 noon. We left Sean's car and wife, Adina at the take out and took my truck to just about the nicest put-in I've seen, second to the North Branch (but without potties). On the way to the put in, we road scouted from the cliff above Smoke Hole Canyon. There was actually a wide spot where we could pull over and get out to take a look straight down the canyon from above. We thought we could see wood in Landslide rapid, but hoped we were wrong, or that there was a way to paddle around it. We put in at the cobbly public access beach just below the Rt. 220 bridge, and headed downstream into Smoke Hole Canyon. Over the past 10 years or so, I've looked at this gorge and thought how nice it would be to paddle this; and it was great to be finally doing it. But sure enough, there are two huge logs in Landslide Rapid, the first and biggest rapid on this run, so we had to portage that. Hauling boats over the huge boulders that help form the rapid and give it its name was not fun. I was bummed out because that rapid looks like loads of fun, and is definitely the hardest one on that run. After viewing it from below, we figured we MAYBE could have made it around the logs, but with only two of us on a "first run", and not knowing what was in that bottom hole, we definitely made the right decision to portage and not mess with a strainer. The pretty technical, kind of creek (at that low level) class II rapid just below Landslide was a delight. Sean made me run most of the rapids first so he could get video, which was great river-reading practice for me. The rest of the run was just wonderful, with fun, semi-technical class II rapids, some class I riffles and a nice little water "cave" to paddle through on river left about halfway down the run. There was plenty of wildlife as well. We saw an interesting variety of

ducks that we couldn't identify (Sean looked them up later, and it turns out that they were Mergansers), a few bats (probably either little browns or eastern pipistrelles), great blue herons, kingfishers and several trout anglers who were all pretty nice. At the end of the run I did my first on-river (COLD water) practice roll and came up effortlessly! That made me happy, since I'd worked so hard all winter to get a roll at the pool sessions. We took out at Eagle Rock, and headed for Camp Caesar.

We stopped in Elkins, WV to go to the grocery store and grab dinner at KFC where Adina could get wireless Internet service, since she had some work to do over the weekend. We called Camp Caesar to see if they had Internet access there, and the camp director, Betsy Morris, kindly offered to let Adina use the wireless service in her office in the administration building when we got to the camp. We arrived at Camp Caesar (which is run by the nicest people on the planet) a little after 10 PM, and got Adina set up in the administration building while Sean and I unloaded gear at the Slabside cabin.

ELK RIVER – April 5, 2008 – WEBSTER WILDWATER WEEKEND

County Road 15/3 bridge in Curtin, WV to Baker's Island, Webster Springs, WV

Level: slightly above minimum suggested. About 5 miles. Class II-III.

Paddlers: Juston Sizemore, Sean Caron, Ericka Hoffmann with Trey as Shuttle Bunny.

This was actually the annual race. Saturday morning, we met up with Juston and Trey on Baker's Island for registration, then made our way to the put in. At the put in, the charismatic event organizer made a speech about the river and the run in general. This event definitely has its characters. There was a guy at the put in wearing pink lace ladies panties over his wetsuit. Another guy paddling a shredder wore a jester hat over his helmet. The racers took off in groups—complete with a rifle shot start—starting with the inflatables and ending up with the kayaks. We didn't race, but just took our time and enjoyed the river, and therefore were back at the tail end of the group.

This part of the Elk is a very enjoyable combination of ledges and wave-trains, and is a lot of fun to paddle. At this level, the pour-overs and ledges were fairly friendly, but we had to pick our lines through the ledges and around some rocks. The wave trains are bouncy and pretty good sized. We found some fun waves to play on. We did the left sneak route at Parcoal Falls or "PX" rapid, which was a bit scrapey, but fun. The line I took was much easier than it looked when we scouted it. You just have to make sure you hit the drops right. A couple rapids below PX, I got sideways at the end of a big honkin' wave train and flipped in the hole at the bottom. This resulted in my VERY FIRST SUCCESSFUL COMBAT ROLL! I came up smoothly and it felt great. Juston said it looked "textbook." (I think he and Sean were prepared for me to swim). I celebrated about that for the rest of the weekend. The rest of the run was more of the same: fun ledges, bouncy wave trains and some cool surfing waves. It was a nice step up for me at this time, and I really loved it. We paddled down to the take out on Baker's Island, where Trey was waiting with Lay's potato chips and drinks. In general, it was a really great day on the river, and I will go back and do that one any time there's sufficient water and enough people want to go.

Carnage Highlights: There were several under-skilled paddlers out there, which made for some “entertainment.”

- 1) Newbie Nigel swimming a lot. When we met him, he was hanging onto a rock in the middle of a rapid hollering “Help me!” He gets the award for having the proper gear and giving a good shot at a run that was over his skill level. He ended it up swimming in the Slalom course and throwing the throw rope back at his “rescuer.”
- 2) Cammo-Guy. This dude gets the “What NOT To Do On The River” Award. He attempted to paddle a weird camouflaged rec boat with no skirt or float bags; no PFD or helmet (cammo bandanna); a “tent-pole” paddle with tiny, bright red blades; and a complete absence of boat control. He swam every rapid. His boat would just fill up and he’d step out of it and dump it out. He ran into my ribcage with his bow while I was ferrying over to the appropriate place to run a ledge, then I couldn’t turn because he was in the way and I ran the small drop backward. At that point, I made up my mind to avoid him. His father finally picked him up somewhere in the middle of the run.
- 3) Two guys in Swifties with horse-collar PFDs. It was their first time in kayaks, and they swam a lot. (“We wanted to try kayaking, so we just bought wetsuits...”) They ran PX down the middle without scouting and both had pretty gnarly swims in the big holes. They get the award for “More Guts Than Sense”. Start with some flat water, guys! Open boater Tom from Richmond, VA (who I just ran into again at the North Branch) baby-sat them after they swam PX.
- 4) NOT ME!! Yay!

That night, back at Camp Caesar, was the after race party and awards ceremony. This was held at the camp roundhouse, which is a big round barn with bleachers that accommodates an indoor bonfire. There was pizza and beverages provided by the event organizers. The race winners were given their awards and the door prizes were handed out. They played DVDs of previous Webster Weekends and a slideshow of photos. A pretty decent local bluegrass band provided the musical entertainment, while more “characters” provided the visual entertainment. One of these, “Orange Crush” (I have NO idea!), was particularly amusing. He’s known for getting pretty toasted and acting crazy. Webster Weekend’s court jester, so to speak. Supposedly, he busted his leg last year jumping over/into the bonfire. It rained like crazy Saturday night. Sunday, we all headed home, and according to Tom, missed some very improved water levels on the Elk. But even without that, we had a great couple of days of paddling, and it was a very enjoyable event.



Juston surfing the Elk

Gallery



Sean on the South Branch



Ron & Randy on the Casselman



Sylvia at Squirtland (Harpers Ferry)



JD on the Cheat Narrows



Susan at Bull Falls

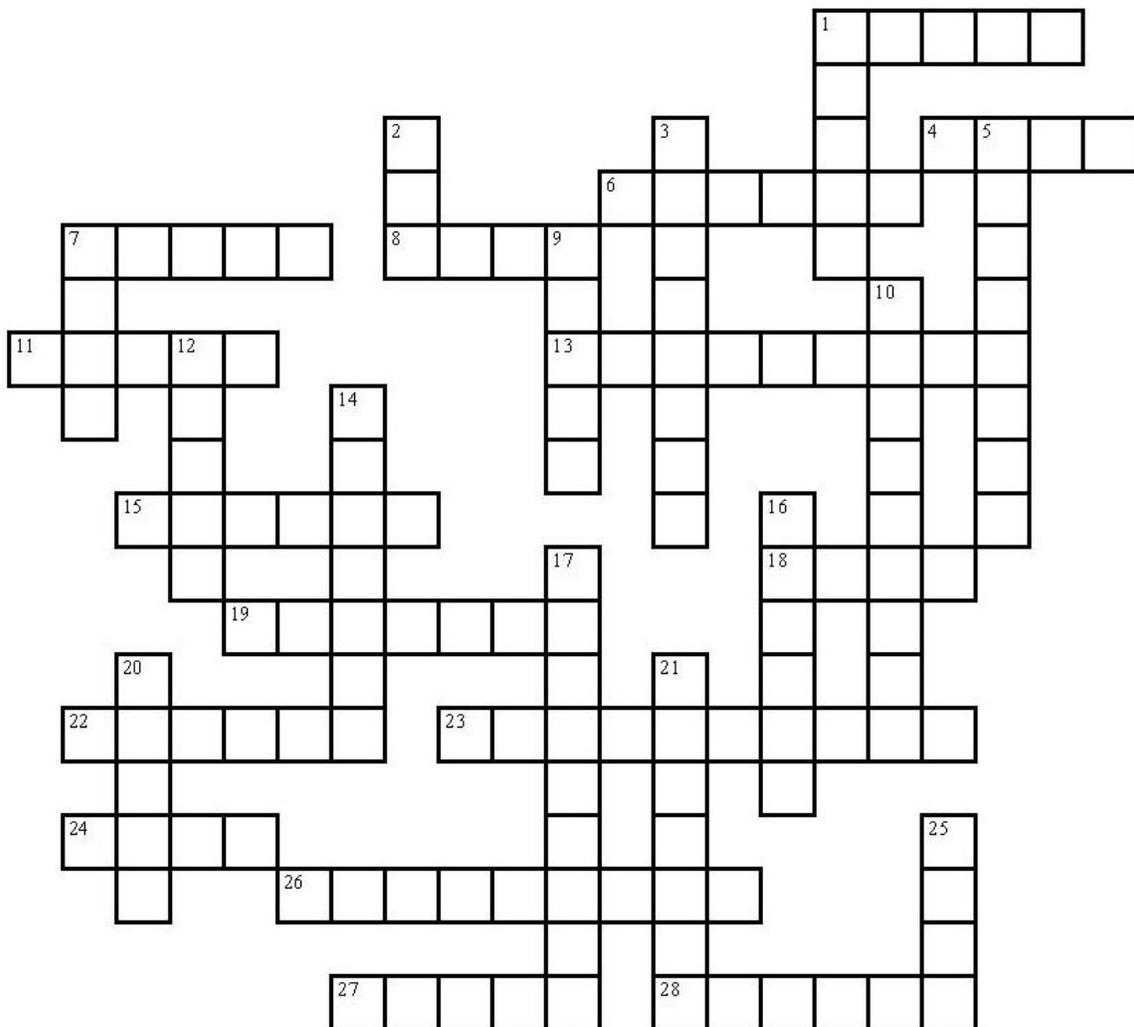


Brenda surfing on the Lower Yough



JohnO on the PO

Paddle Puzzle



Clues next page.

ACROSS

1. A section of a river where the river bed has a relatively steep gradient
4. River phenomenon for surfing on.
6. For protecting your noggin
7. Secures the cockpit of a kayak
8. A paddle stroke pulled inward to the paddler's hip
11. Can be high or low stroke
13. Safety item for swimmer/boat rescue (2 wds)
15. Boaters choice for footwear
18. Important skill for a kayaker to prevent a swim
19. Boaters body armor to keep warm while wet
22. Don't be up the creek without one
23. Rapid on the Potomac near Harpers Ferry that resembles an equine shaped rock formation
24. Water vessel made of rubber
26. Drop on the upper Staircase section of the Shenandoah (2 wds)
27. Sharp safety item
28. Object used to remove water from the cockpit

DOWN

1. Transports water through a landscape from higher to lower elevations
2. Life vest (abr)
3. Material 7, 15 and 19 across are constructed of
5. Creek near a famous civil war battleground
7. _____ is up!
9. H2O
10. Worn to prevent sinus invasion (2 wds)
12. American Indian constructed this craft from a single log
14. Safety device that gets your attention
16. Worn to keep upper torso from getting wet
17. Section on the Shenandoah with a lot of steps
20. Eskimo water craft
21. Section on the Potomac named after a sewing tool
25. A river feature most want to avoid, but can offer play

Refer to next page for solution.

Paddle Puzzle



Solution



Jet Boil and a Space Blanket