



The Paddle

Summer 2013

<http://www.masondixoncanoecub.com/>

2013 MDCC BOD and Officers

Your 2013 Officers:

John Enagonio, President
Merrill Pearson, Vice President
Sheila Chapelle, Secretary
Keith Unger, Treasurer

Your 2013 Board of Directors:

Earl Baer	Vitas Eidukevicius	Bonnie Watson Wisdom
Bobby Miller	Jim Norton	
Dave Russo	Ron Shanholtz	

Your 2013 Volunteers: (excluding trip coordinators, instructors, etc):

Safety: Sheila, Pete Chapelle
Pool Session Coordinator: Dave Russo
Web Master: Vitas Eidukevicius and Chuck Davis

What's been Happening

Lots of paddling! Lots of water! The message board has been non-stop with local and not-so local trips. TNP has been mostly B2B! The beat goes on! Check the message board often.

The MDCC banquet was a great success with videos, prizes and great food. We honored again those who started the club. Dave Russo was recognized for his Tsar status and leadership in organizing (herding cats) and getting folks down the river. Lots of new folks out there having a great time.

The HFOF Tim Gavin race saw several club members blasting down the river with others there to help the cause by safety boating or working the festival.

The annual cleanup at Sandy Hook and Wayside made our playground even cleaner for all to enjoy. Thanks again to all that helped out.

Name that Rapid !



First to post the correct answers on the designated thread for this (thread titled "Name that rapid" started by DanE) wins something at the banquet. 2003-04 time frame...name the paddler for bonus points!

Mark your Calendar !

Trips 2013

Lehigh River Weekend August 3-4

Mark your calendar for MDCC's August 3-4 Lehigh River weekend. This is a dam controlled Class II-II+ river about three hours away. We'll be camping at nearby Hickory Run State Park and paddling both days. The campground is one of the nicest you'll ever visit and it's fun to paddle a cold, clean river when our local runs are low in the middle of summer. We'll have experienced paddlers along if you or your invitee is new to paddling. Details will be posted on the message board as the date draws closer.

Contact: John Enagonio enagonio@yahoo.com

[Check the message board and schedule for updates on all MDCC events and trips.](#)

<http://www.masondixoncanoeclub.com/viewforum.php?f=3>

Trip Reports (3)

Head East: Two Baltimore-Area Creeks Offer II-III Fun by John E

Here are a couple of creeks within 90 minutes of Hagerstown to catch next time the water rises. The South Branch Patapsco will usually run when we get a tropical storm going up the coast or a “nor’easter,” weather conditions that don’t necessarily juice up the western rivers. The same is true of the Upper Gunpowder, which also sometimes runs in the summer from unannounced dam releases.

The best part of the South Branch is known as Gaither Gorge, and runs from Gaither Road, through Syskesville, to Henryton Road. It usually takes at least two inches of rain in the Frederick / Mt. Airy area to get this one running, and it might run as little as a single day if it’s summertime and the trees are thirsty. From the put-in until Syskesville it is relatively continuous, fun and playful with class II-II+ wave trains and rock gardens.

Like with any small creek you want to be on the lookout for strainers, and this early section of Gaither Gorge is where they tend to pose some danger. The notable rapid in the first couple of miles is called No Way Out. After a deceitful twist and drop you find yourself in a turbulent pool surrounded by large boulders. The water is split into a blind twisty drop straight ahead, and a similar obstacle course to the right which turns out to be a slightly better line. At this point it is too late to portage, and the sight lines are too narrow to boat scout. Hmmm, some of the rocks in the turbulent pool from which you are trying to boat-scout are undercut. So don’t linger--just pick a line and hope for the best! Any way you go you are probably going to leave some plastic behind.

Sykesville is marked by an old passenger railroad station converted to a restaurant on river left. There is a fun right-to-left slide drop here that develops a nice, deep surf hole at higher levels.

The second half of the run is more pool-and-drop in nature. Hopefully someone in your group has by now warmed up to enjoy reading intricate lines and catching eddies, which is the real fun of Gaither Gorge. At normal flows, there are three or four steep drop rapids that entail sizeable holes and fast currents smashing into rocks. Since you are on a narrow, twisty stream these features are not necessarily visible at the entry to said rapids (surprise!)

So maybe you can appoint yourself to shepherd anyone on the trip who does not have the capability to read intricate lines and catch eddies, or just never paddled a creek where it was necessary. Or just leave them alone to see how many times they smash into something, scrape against an occasional buttress of old railroad concrete, or get surprised by a hole. After all, it’s their shiny boat, right?

The put-in, take-out and parking for this run are all easy to find and secure. But like all free-flowing small streams you have to study rainfall and gauge patterns to catch it with enough water.

The Upper Gunpowder (aka Gunpowder Gorge) is a little easier to catch in the summer. It is located just downstream from Prettyboy Dam, an 80-year-old old structure that is part of the public water system for Metropolitan Baltimore. Basically they release in the spring and fall if there is heavy rainfall, and in the summer as needed to send enough water to another drinking water reservoir downstream. While they don’t announce the releases, if the level is up you can usually count on it staying up for a day or two.

So on the positive side you have a direct internet gauge, cold, clean water with a few challenging rapids. On the downside you have to walk several hundred yards on a narrow, downhill trail to get from the parking area to the put-in. Go with someone who knows the run for the first time to help find the right parking areas and trails. If you just run from the dam to Falls Road, you can take out at the Falls Road bridge, leave your boat at the takeout, and walk to retrieve your vehicle from the put-in.

Anyone with intermediate paddling skills will have no problem with this run and should find something to enjoy – short steep drops, a few decent play spots, hard-to-catch eddies. Less experienced boaters should be wary of occasional undercut and wood issues.

The beginning of the steeper, more technical section is marked by a double drop with a strong hydraulic at the end. After “double drop” there is a short pool followed by a triple drop that can be narrow and intimidating for first-timers. There is a trail on the right offering easy scouting of this next section. Whether in your boat or scouting it from shore, make note of the river-right undercut wall after the triple drop.

Each of the next two rapids also has an undercut but they are easier to spot when boat scouting. Unless you are surfing up a storm the technical section of Gunpowder Gorge is over before you know it. But hey, Gunpowder Gorge is all about the walking so why don't we jump on the trail, carry back and run those harder rapids again??

You'll often see fishermen on this run and it's a good idea to steer clear. There has been some animosity in the past.

(Miller Time)

Just Add Water! North Carolina's Toxaway River by The Dogg

The mountains of North Carolina have long been famous for boasting some of the steepest runs anywhere and tons of huge drops. It is a veritable creeker's paradise with a multitude of world class runs to choose from. Combine that with spring rains and you have the stuff that dreams are made of! When it was announced that the Fluid North American team trip would be in the Southeast, I knew that there would be plenty of opportunities for this SIKman fire to off some stouts! After all, you can't find a Coupe De Ville hiding at the bottom of a cracker jack box! What? Who would say something like that?!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5hWWe-ts2s>

At the top of the list of ultra-steep creeks in the Southeast sits the Toxaway River. Known for its humongous runnable slides, it takes steep creek kayaking to the Nth degree! What does that even mean? Only extreme hardcore paddlers equipped with expedition equipment should even consider venturing down into the canyon! It is a remote run and even has a 4.5 mile hike out at the end. The canyon it flows through is so deep that, should you need help, no cell phone service can penetrate down in. You'd be better off with two cups and a string! Ok, enough drama.

This creek is something that I had dreamed about for years, something I had wanted to run with a passion felt deep in the marrow of my bones, the roots of my teeth, fibers in my sinew, the linings of my intestines! Ooo! That's gross! With the trees starting to suck up the groundwater, I knew that we were down to the 11th hour for catching some good creeks before things would dry up. When a mesoscale convective complex hit the region on Friday, it became clear that my dreams of running the Toxaway were going to become a reality the next day. After all, nothing is as powerful as the wish of a young man (well, young at heart at least), except maybe an Apache helicopter. An Apache helicopter has machine guns AND missiles. It is an unbelievably impressive complement of weaponry, an absolute death machine. But I digress. With all the big drops on this run, I figured I'd take a few extra steps to make success a little more certain. With my new Hi N Dry paddle float/rolling aid and a makeshift sponson I made out of bamboo and a Fluid Vaya kid's sit on top, I was assured of clean lines all day long! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4B-JnIFANY>

Joining me for this adventure were Dave Carey, Leif Anderson, Natalie Anderson, Jules Domine, Adrian Kiernan, Mark Taylor, and Dylan McKinney. After a morning spent outfitting our new Bazookas, we were ready for some action. We had just about every color in the Fluid line represented! Leif and I were paddling red, Natalie pink, Dave green, Mark orange, and Jules and Adrian were using the new mellow yellow, called Electrical Banana! It's gonna be a sudden craze! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrbni0tVBZ8>

Since the morning had gotten away from us, we hopped in the cars, put the pedal to the metal, and let 'er bellow! We pulled up at the putin and gazed down at the mayhem below us. I had an expression of wonder and excitement like when Night Hawk first laid his eyes on the Ivory Tower as he flew strapped to a bat! Lo! And so it would come to pass that I would finally put on this fabled amusement park of natural water slides. The run starts with a mega-slide that must run the length of two football fields! It was a fast ride all the way down to a steep slope of about 20 feet into a pool. It was an awesome way to start the run and the fun was just beginning! I figured that the run would have some small rapids that would give some rest between the big rapids but in actuality, there are no small rapids on the Toxaway! This was never more apparent than when Mark said we had an easy drop coming up and to just go right then cut back left. As I entered the slide and headed right, I realized that I was heading for a sizeable drop. I cut back left and launched off a 15 foot waterfall! On any other run, this would have been a scout and a video opportunity! To further drive this point home, the run immediately went down two long twisty slides, both 100 yards each! As I reached what to me seemed like outrageous speeds, I became instantly curious and admittedly nervous about the scary speeds I would reach later in the day when I actually made it to the really big slides!

Soon, we were out portaging around a land bridge formed by a boulder over a slide called Minigizer. We climbed onto the boulder and got in our boats, seal launching about 8 feet into the creek, and continuing down a steep twisting slide. Immediately after, there was a steep slide with a 10 foot drop into a large hole. A couple trees stuck out into the slide and we were unsure of how getting past them would be. The other problem was that running this slide meant that you were committing to running the next huge rapid called Energizer, since you can't portage that rapid on the right. Half of the group opted to skip the approach slide and began the arduous portage up and over a cliff on the left bank. I was extremely nervous about Energizer, as this rapid was the one from videos that I thought looked the most intimidating because of its large curler that threatens to flip you in a narrow trough. Mark Taylor stepped up to the Energizer approach first, was able to stay left to avoid the strainer and blasted through the hole with no problems. After Jules followed with an excellent line of his own, I made my decision to run the approach slide and commit myself to Energizer. After all, I didn't drive all this way to walk around rapids. It is only when we risk greatly that we can achieve greatly! I slid off the bank and aced the approach slide, getting left of the tree and blasting through the hole. We portaged the sieved out upper part of Energizer and put back in at a surging eddy right next to the slide. Mark helped me get my boat in position but the surges of water kept crashing over me and filling my boat. I was putting on my skirt and looked down into my boat to see it half full of water. Not wanting to run Energizer with water in my boat, I hopped out and quickly emptied. I was able to get in my boat quicker this time and got the skirt on before too much water surged into my boat. I charged out into the flow and quickly got up to speed. Soon, the big, scary curler came into view! I pushed my right blade forward and ducked into the curler, becoming blind for a few moments. My eyes cleared and I was flying down the slide, reaching epic speeds! I maxed out at 58.7 miles per hour (using actual VASCAR measurements)! I flew down the lower portion of the slide and blasted through the hole at the bottom. The celebration began afterward with paddle throwing and fist pumps! I was fired up and went back to the top to cheer on the other paddlers as they took on what is one of the most exciting slides I have ever run.

After a quick portage and some cool rapids, we were out scouting Feeding Trough. This slide necks down in an extremely narrow trough with walls that stick up above your head. Throwing a brace in here to keep you from flipping is impossible unless you place your paddle on the rock wall. At the top, there is a curler that will try to knock you off balance and then it is a fast narrow ride to the bottom where two large holes await you! The key with this rapid was having the wherewithal to place your paddle correctly and not get in a position where you flip face first in the side of the trough! I was dubious about this rapid until Jules and Adrian coasted through smoothly. Everyone else followed with smooth lines of their own.

Next up was 40/40, which is made of two 40 foot drops in a row. The first one is a sweet looking cascade but the second one falls 20 feet into a big piton rock and then falls another 20 feet into shallow water. I didn't see a great line through this but I saw a possible line. You could maybe make it but either way you would take a big hit. More disconcerting was the fact that we caught up to Pat Keller, Dane Jackson, and Steve Fisher at this rapid and all three of them walked around it. Watching three of the best paddlers in the world walk around it, didn't do P turkey for the courage I was trying to muster in order to attempt this rapid. After a long scout, I decided to save it for another day. It is good to be brave but also good to be careful, I learned that at my momma's knee. Just because I decided to walk didn't mean that I was safe. The portage goes down a steep rock face more slimy and slippery than that criminal we currently have in the White House! It's true! It's true! I started walking down the slope beside the first drop and slipped about halfway down. My feet went out from under me and I went down, arms flailing like a crazy old man playing knick knock paddy wack give a dog a bone! Huh? What the heck does that mean? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFZhL92W6TE> I tumbled down the rest of the rock face until I hit the wall at the bottom. I was fine but I must say that portaging was possibly more dangerous than running the rapid!

Soon, we were out portaging the upper part of Landbridge, which is a steep slide over 100 feet tall that goes underneath a rock about halfway down. The ballsy line is to set your boat on the rock bridge and seal launch off, falling about 15 feet before landing on the slide and cascading another 50-60 feet! We got in a line and one by one launched off the rock into the excitement below. Finally, it was my turn. There was nothing left to do but pull the pin and toss the grenade! I am not a fan of seal launching at all but the rock bridge was slippery and had a slight down hill slope so I figured it would be similar to running a low volume waterfall. Sure enough, I slipped smoothly off the edge, taking a stroke to keep my bow up and landed flat on the slide. I instantly rocketed down the slide and headed toward the split in the current. I rode the flow to the left and went blazing into the pool at the bottom. Oh yesh! I hadn't smiled that big since the time I called 911 to report a traffic hazard along Interstate 70 that happened to be a cop shooting radar!

The final major rapid is called Wintergreen and it is a humongous cascade of 100 feet. It starts out cascading to the lip of a 20 foot falls that transitions onto a steep slide, heads left and flies down to a pool. As with all of the Toxaway slides, the speeds reached were tremendous and it was a wild ride into the pool. I scouted and took some pictures as each member of our group aced this behemoth of a drop. Finally, it was my turn and was definitely nervous as I paddled up to the edge of a drop where you couldn't even see the tree tops at the bottom! I rode down the middle of the slide and launched off the upper falls, landing smoothly and picked up speed as my boat skipped down the cascade! As I saw the pool approaching, I was so stoked and rocked a Brown Claw that Bryon Dorr would be proud of as I entered the pool!

The run continued with several fun rapids for the next mile or so to the takeout, where we reached the final challenge of the day, the 4.5 mile hike out. I know that a long hike out is not for everyone but sometimes you have to go through hell for a heavenly cause! What? Who says stuff like that! There are two things to remember when undertaking a hike like this: free your mind and your legs will follow and, if you are feeling wimpy and weak, HARDEN UP!

As the miles pressed on, we were running short on light. We completed the hike under the cover of night and a feeling of accomplishment overcame all of us. The Toxaway was definitely one of the most exciting runs I've ever done! There is a lot of hype that goes with this run and it was all merited. There are few runs anywhere that boast as many incredible cascades as this run and I will definitely be back many times. It certainly built a little bird house in my soul. Really? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhjSzjoU7OQ> We had to go out and celebrate this occasion, after all it was Saturday night and that's all right for fighting! We hit a bar for shots of Kentucky Gentleman and, my personal favorite, karaoke! I got up and delivered a horrendous rendition of I Am The Very Model of a Modern Major General, much to the dismay of the crowd. Those who were there would best describe me as singing like an amputee, can't hold a note, can't carry a tune. But that is another story.

I would like to give a special thanks to Leif and Natalie Anderson for the use of their photos. They are both awesome and I wish I had a sweet mullet like Leif's! <http://leifandnatalie.blogspot.com/>

Go here for the online version with more photos: <http://www.exploringelements.com/just-add-water-north-carolinas-toxaway-river-by-the-dogg-video/>



Bobby's view of Energizer and Landbridge

The Next Generation by Bobby Miller

Recently, my wife, Melissa, and I celebrated the first birthday of our daughter, Sahalie. I have seen her grow up a lot in the last year, becoming more independent and capable of doing more challenging activities. We have been taking her hiking for awhile now, I towed her behind me while cross country skiing, and I recently added a bike seat so I could ride with her sitting in front of me. So, I kept hinting to Melissa that we needed to take Sahalie out in a kayak.

Finally, at the Fluid demo day at River and Trail Outfitters, I seized my opportunity to put Sahalie in a boat. During some downtime, I was able to put Sahalie in the large Bazooka with me and head out for a nice flatwater paddle. It was interesting to see how she would react to this new experience. She had climbed around in my kayak cockpit for months so she was familiar with that. She seemed unsure now that we were on the water where the tilt of the boat could shift and where she had daddy's arms paddling around her. She was quiet at first but quickly changed her thoughts and let out her usual shout of, "Weeeeeee!" that she says when she is excited.

Sahalie's first river trip came the next week, again on the Shenandoah. We put in at the start of the lazy tuber float trip that most of the local raft companies use. The run is about 1.5 miles and starts off with some good current and one Class 1 riffle. We attained back up several times to repeat this riffle because Sahalie liked it so much. The splash from the little waves really excited her. The rest of the flatwater to the takeout allowed Sahalie to crawl around in the cockpit and look around. She looked out at this new world of water around her with fascination. Once at the takeout, she splashed in the water and threw rocks, all the while having a great time.

I am hoping to make this trip several times this summer with Sahalie. I'm sure there are other nice flatwater stretches locally that she would enjoy going on too. I look forward to seeing her love of the water grow and am excited for the many adventures ahead with her.



Bobby and Sahalie



Blast from the past. Tim Potter wearing his aluminum foil head gear to ward off alien abduction.

Editor's Notes

Thanks to Bobby and John E for their submissions. If you have an old photo to share or trip report, please send to me. I would like to include older (and new) photos in the newsletter. dankayakbike@yahoo.com

Access issues in Harpers Ferry continue, but the options for getting on and off the river are getting better. Refer to the MDCC message board post for an update. This is a multi-club effort in cooperation with the local outfitters and parks. The take out at Sandy Hook is a "at risk" option and should be considered no longer a viable option. <http://www.masondixoncanoecub.com/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=1270>

Next order of MDCC business will be the BOD meeting in the Fall, which is open to all members. Look for the date on the message board.

Sheila and Pete Chapelle have been providing roll practice and river safety skills practice/training. All members are highly encouraged to take a safety class with several of the multi-club efforts.

Kayaking (ok...boating) is an addiction. Get hooked! Be safe. And write about it and send it to me ! :)

JOIN ! RENEW !

MDCC annual dues have always been \$10.00 per household !!!

Send in your membership dues and forms soon! Go here for the info to do so:

<http://www.masondixoncanoecub.com/MDCC/Join.html>

See you on the river!

Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers



Melius vivit qui remigat

Who paddles lives better