



THE SWEEP



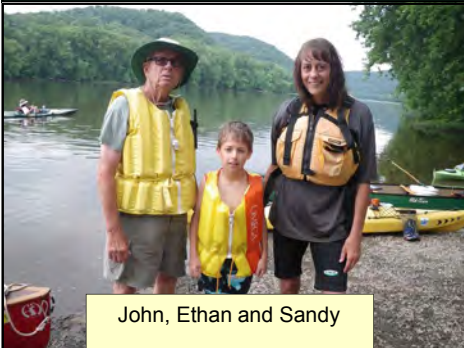
Newsletter of the Keystone Canoe Club of Berks County

P.O. Box 6175 Reading, PA 19610

July-August 2011

www.keystonecanoeclub.com

JOHN KETNER'S JUNIATA TRIP



John, Ethan and Sandy



John Ketner's Juniata Trip started at Greenwood Access on the Juniata River Friday evening at Pitman's Campground. Seven of us camped with John and Ethan his grandson. Pitman's Campground is right next to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Access No.16. It is a nice campground with fire rings and picnic tables at all the sites.

Saturday June 25 began at the Muskrat Springs PFBC Access No. 26 with 17 boaters gathering. The boats were all launched by 11 AM and the trip commenced. John Ketner with Sandy Powell guided the group with their previous experience on the Juniata and with John's stories of previous KCC trips.

Lunch was at the Thompsontown PFBC Access No. 22. It was a leisurely lunch and a great opportunity for all to become acquainted with one another. The return to the river was uneventful and the trip to the Greenwood Access was nice with some young gentlemen water fighting the entire way. They were soaked. We arrived at our take-out about 3 PM. The river was running fast at a water level of 3.94 ft at the USGS Newport Station.

Saturday night, the hungry campers enjoyed a Potluck supper. Bob and Charlene Lang, Tina Ehrig, Michelle Hnath, and Brian Swisher provided salads, chicken, ham and green beans, bread, and other delicious foods. John prepared his famous Peach Cobbler and Bud O'Hare provided vanilla ice cream for the cobbler. We all really enjoyed the great food.

Sunday June 26 started at the Greenwood Access No 16 with ten boaters. The put-in was at 9:30 AM with John Ketner and Sandy Powell again as lead boat. The trip to the lunch take-out at Howe Township Park was without incident after running some riffles just past our put-in. We had two canoes and four escorting kayaks. Friendly conversation continued with John providing additional notes on the river conditions from previous trips.

The water level was high enough to cover rocks and make for a fast and easy trip. Three boaters departed at the Howe Township Park to return as scheduled to the Reading Area. The last seven boaters continued to Amity Hall PFBC Access No. 2 arriving at 4:00 PM after running the ledges downstream of Greenwood Access No. 6. The ledges were running fast but were navigated without incident. The water level was high enough to make for a pleasant paddle.

Special thanks to John Ketner, Sandy Powell and Brian Swisher. Brian Swisher contacted several outfitters and found that river right was the best route through the ledges. John and Sandy used their previous knowledge of the river to make it a great paddle.

--Bud O'Hare

KEYSTONE CANOE CLUB

Meetings: 7-9 pm, 4th Tuesday most months. June, July, Aug: Sunday picnics
Meeting place: Muhlenberg Township Recreation Building*
***CALL FIRST TO CHECK LOCATION!** 3025 River Road, Reading, PA 19605

From Rte. 222 North bypass, go to the junction of Rte.12. Continue straight onto Rte.12 East for approx 1.5 miles, cross the Schuylkill River. Take the River Road exit immediately after the bridge. Turn right onto River Road. Muhlenberg Township Recreation Building is approx 1 mile on the right. The building is at the top of the hill.

From Rte. 222 South continue onto Business Rte. 222 South. Continue to Rte. 12 exit. Proceed west on Rte. 12 for approx 1 mile and take the River Road exit. Turn right onto River Road. Muhlenberg Township Recreation Building is approx 1 mile on the right. The building is at the top of the driveway .

OFFICERS FOR 2011

PRESIDENT:

Tina Ehrig (610-334-7606)
foxmum145@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT:

Joanne Novak (610-678-4892)

SECRETARY and TRIPS COORDINATOR:

Sandy Powell (610-857-5687)
powelljb@comcast.net

TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP:

Bob Novak (610-678-4892)
bobnovak@att.net

PUBLICITY:

SWEEP EDITORS:

Tina Ehrig (610-334-7606)
foxmum145@aol.com
Veronika White (215-300-1445)
veronika.white@comcast.net

PROGRAMS:

Tina Ehrig (610-334-7606)
foxmum145@aol.com

DIRECTORS:

Mark Cholewa (610-370-0223)
mcholewa@ptd.net
Jim Showalter (484-269-6513)
N3TJN@comcast.net
Jackie Trate (610-777-8937)
jlstormflower@yahoo.com

ACA INSURANCE COORDINATOR:

Tina Ehrig (610-334-7606)
foxmum145@aol.com

WEBSITE MODERATORS:

Steve Ball (610-689-5705)
ball@dejazzd.com
Larry March (610-823-1482)
walterm1@msn.com
Tina Ehrig (610-334-7606)
foxmum145@aol.com

A Note from the Editors:



I love those hazy, lazy days of summer and all the paddling opportunities they bring. Please remember to check the message board on our web site for impromptu paddling or biking trips. The list of all KCC paddling and biking trips is also posted there. Some great weekend trips are scheduled every month through October.

There are three events coming up soon in July. Biking and boating on the Delaware River and Delaware Canal is described on p. 4. There is much more to this trip, which you can find on the message board.

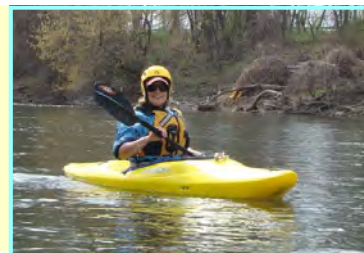


Another event that is coming up on Saturday, July 30th is the Boating Workshop for the public. It is sponsored by Berks Parks and Recreation and will be held at Blue Marsh Lake, Church Road access. The last two years we held similar workshops at Kaercher Creek Park. We had a great time explaining our various kinds of boats and gear, then participants had a chance to try out our boats on the lake. Members were generous in bringing boats and in allowing others to paddle them under supervision. We hope you will come out again and help explain and demonstrate boating safety to the public.

On Sunday, July 31st, we will have a club picnic at Blue Marsh Lake, State Hill Launch Area, 1-4 PM. Joanne Novak is in charge. Please call her if you wish to attend and get all the details. We will have a Swap Meet during the picnic. Members can bring used gear, boating clothing, boats, biking stuff, etc., then lay it out on the sales area with your name and price. Sounds like fun!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Making Memories to Share



Years ago, I remember watching four adventurous kayakers descending the various drops of Great Falls of the Potomac. They scouted, climbing up and down the huge boulders to get good views of the flows and hydraulics below. I gasped as the first boaters paddled out toward the edge of the waterfall and over, their boats almost vertical, to be swallowed up in the onrushing waters, disappearing in the mist. Their boats were sent flying like toys, and it was difficult for me to imagine the deafening roar of the water and the pounding their boats and bodies must have been taking until they reached the quieter waters below.

Another time while sea kayaking on Chesapeake Bay, our boats seemed about to be swallowed up by wind and ocean, as we fought to keep the boats from broaching on the good-sized waves. It was tough to keep the bow from 'pearling', or diving, and even tougher to break off the fight and head for shore. That was an interesting trip, as later on, my boat wound up being hijacked by a local landowner, but that's another story.

Wind and lightning have been dominant factors for club members on other trips: the Little Schuylkill River, even the Tulpehocken Creek. Adventure can turn to tragedy when suddenly a lightning bolt strikes or strong winds send tree limbs crashing down behind a boat. Even a campground sometimes isn't entirely safe, as evidenced by the recent accident at Bull's Island Campground, where a tree came down on a campers' tent, killing a man and severely injuring his wife.

When we get too confident or full of pride, Nature has a way of reminding us that we are all pretty small and insignificant. "The river will make you humble," a trusted friend comments. And that's certainly true, whether playing in the wave at Kelly's, exploring the sometimes stormy Chesapeake Bay, or even just boating in the familiar waters of our local rivers and lakes.

One thing I've always admired about boaters is that even though they respect the water's power, most boaters keep their sense of humor intact, at least to some extent, when they endure a nasty swim or awful weather. They will share those memories and savor those stories around the campfire sometime. "It's all part of the adventure," says Jim Hartman. It's the shared experiences within the group that generate the common memories, the stories and jokes, and the camaraderie.

One very enjoyable shared experience this year was the Juniata trip, led by John Ketner. It had a nostalgic feel, as this was one of the trips taken by the club from years ago that John remembers and wanted to share with his grandson, as well as with newer KCC members. This was a trip that a number of club members 'pulled together' on: scouting the trip, writing directions, contributing to the potluck supper, helping each other with boats and tents, paddling with John and certainly enjoying John's stories told around the campfire. Did you hear the one about how John coaxed a floatplane pilot to unexpectedly deliver ice cream to a group of Scouts camping in Algonquin in Canada? We enjoyed hearing that one, and lots more besides.

We can't control the forces of Nature, but you can be proud to be part of a special club that can cooperate to provide wonderful experiences for its members. Not everyone can match John's juicy peach cobbler, made in a Dutch oven heated by the coals of a campfire. No one expects dramatically delivered ice cream the way John (and Bud at the Juniata potluck supper) did it, but no matter what kind of a trip it is, it's satisfying to know that you had some part in helping others and letting the great times roll.

Thanks for your help over the years which has made our events and trips possible. Many thanks for your good humor, and the wonderful memories of fun times that we will always treasure and share wherever we are.

— Tina

Meet Michelle Hnath—By Sandy Powell

My first impression of Michelle was that she was a really strong paddler as well as a nice person - that vision of her has not evaporated over the past several years that I have gotten to know her. Michelle goes on many club trips and outings and often brings her husband Steve and their children Brianna (15) and Sean (13). Michelle describes herself as a "water bug" and has lived on the Schuylkill River near Cross Keys for twenty years. She lived there before the demise of Felix Dam so she remembers when you could paddle up stream from her house as well as listen to the motor boats running up and down the river.

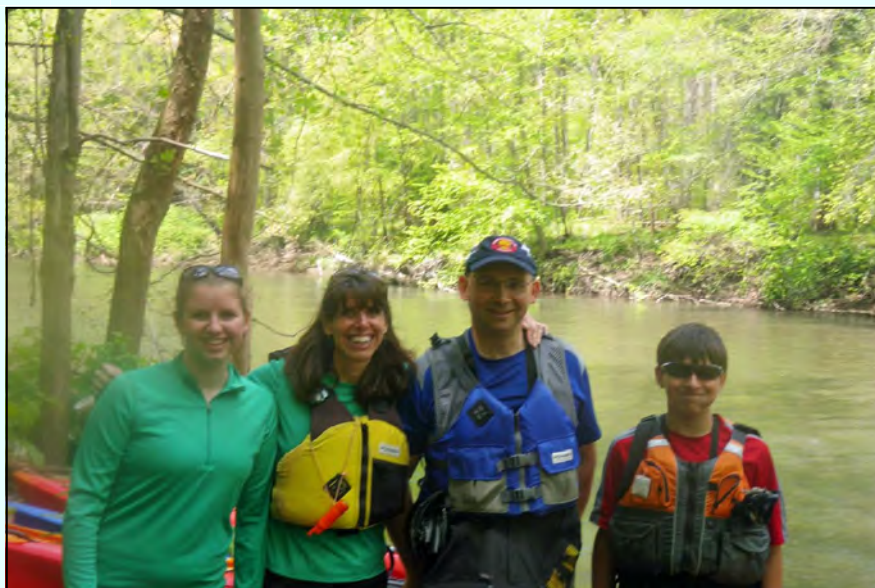
Michelle hails from Bucks County (Southampton) and went to school at Albright College. She majored in computer science and math (one of those left brain individuals). Michelle met Steve at Albright College (yet another left brain person) who was majoring in computer science. Many years ago

they had a canoe and believe it or not - Steve paddled the canoe to his favorite fishing hole while Michelle lounged in front of the canoe reading a book. Doesn't sound like her today. They also had a motor boat at one time, apparently one that was not that reliable. They spent many an afternoon stranded on the river. One time Steve had to tow the boat himself by climbing into the mud and pulling it.. One can certainly jump to the conclusion that Michelle was reading a book while Steve was pulling the boat.....

Michelle started paddling seriously seven years ago after recovering from a life-threatening brainstem bleed. Brian Swisher (a member of the club and a friend of

hers through work) got her into a kayak. Her first time out in a boat was slow going due to her recovery but she persevered and look at her today. She just finished the Schuylkill Sojourn (112 miles in 7 days) and has just raced in the Regatta this past spring. She heard about the Keystone Canoe Club when she and Tina Ehrig (both new boaters) met while they were both attending a KCC kayaking class. She later joined the club with her family.

Besides paddling, Michelle runs the family software business. She is a Girl Scout leader and also bikes, hikes, and dances (she dances two mornings a week). Her husband Steve is a Computer Storage Specialist and System Administrator for Reading Hospital. In addition to paddling, Steve is a Boy Scout Leader, and likes to hike and backpack as well as garden. Her son Sean paddles



as well as plays soccer, is a Boy Scout, runs track and plays sax in concert and Jazz bands. Her daughter, Brianna is a Girl Scout, dances (ballet and Jazz), plays flute, and performs in school musicals. How does this family have time to sleep?

It is wonderful to see a whole family like the Hnaths paddling together on a weekend. There aren't too many things that teenagers and adults have in common - but boating puts them on the same playing field. You guys will have many memories to share in the years to come. I am sure I will see you soon on one of KCC's trips. See you on the river. — Sandy Powell

Boat & Bike Weekend on the Delaware River— Leader, Brian Swisher

This coming weekend, July 9th-10th, we will be taking full advantage of the mighty Delaware River, with its canals and bikepaths. Saturday, July 9th, will be a paddle day, meeting at Washington Crossing State Park parking lot at 9:30 AM. We will paddle up the canal, portage about 100 yards, and paddle down the river, totaling about 4 1/2 hours plus stops. On Sunday, we meet again at 9:30 AM at the same parking lot and will be biking up the Delaware and Raritan Canal Trail on the NJ side. We will cross the river at Lambertville/New Hope and bike down the Delaware Canal Trail on the PA side. We'll cross at Washington Crossing bridge to get back to our cars. The bike trip is about 16 miles long on hard-packed gravel, and should take about 2-3 hours.

*Much more information, updates, and maps are available on the club's website, on the message board. This is a new trip, filled with special surprises. Call Brian if you're interested in going!

PINE CREEK BIKE TRIP

June 4 & 5



The Pine Creek bike trail follows the scenic curves of Pine Creek and the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon.



Back Row: Jim Powell, Christine and Don Hart
Front Row: Tina Ehrig, Nat White, Larry March, Sandy Powell



Christine Hart PHOTOGRAPHY

This photo was taken by Christine of a rattlesnake, one of eight we saw along the bike trail.

WATER SAFETY FESTIVAL

The Water Safety Festival was held on June 11th, 2011 at the Dry Brooks Area of Blue Marsh with many local organizations participating. Visitors could learn about use of flares, CPR, search and rescue by dogs and horses, workings of the dam and the rescue helicopter, and of course, learn how to wear a life jacket while boating.

Organized by Larry March, members of Keystone Canoe Club helped support Blue Marsh in their efforts to keep people safe on the water. One of the more enjoyable parts of the day was participating in the Water Safety Search for the kids. We contributed great prizes which the kids could choose, and asked them questions during their 'search.' Members also served as safety boaters while the public tried out boats, mostly through 3-D Rentals.



Front row: Jean Butkus, Tina Ehrig, Chastity, Larry March. Second row: Dylan, Lynn Zimmerman, Penny Zimmerman. Third row: Joanne and Bob Novak, Greg Wojcik, Chris Buhrman.



Joanne asking questions for the Safety Search. This young man got it right!

Nantahala Outdoor Center



Russ relaxes near the Nantahala River.

We were running the Mongaup River at the end of the 2010 season. The Mongaup tumbles off a New York mountainside above Port Jervis and needs Hydro plant releases to be runnable. This day was a “two turbine” release and a solid Class 3 run. The veterans say it’s a step up in difficulty over the Lehigh Gorge.

I have been paddling for 3 years but still consider myself a novice and was running the Mongaup with friends who were of equal ability, or so I thought. As we ran the wild mile at the end, I realized my so-called “equal ability” friends had passed me by. They get a lot more river days than I, but it bothered me none-the-less.

I’d heard that the Nantahala Outdoor Center’s Kayak School (NOC) in western North Carolina provided some of the best paddling instruction available and began to ask around. I was surprised by how many friends had been there and praised it. Convinced, I made the call to NOC.

The five day group training looked good but the Counselor thought 4 days of private, guided instruction would be a better experience. I reached for my credit card and the deal was sealed.

Sunday, May 1st at 6 AM, I’m loaded up with a creek boat, a play boat and enough gear to sink a barge. Nine hours and five state line crossings later, I’m on the Smokey Mountain Parkway and descending into the Nantahala Gorge. Clearly I was no longer in Berks County.

The mountain peaks soared and the creeks I passed looked steep and menacing. I was admittedly nervous. Arrived at the NOC, found my check-in packet, located my cabin, unloaded gear and went for a walk. The Nantahala (Nanty) River cuts the NOC in half with buildings on either side. Restaurants, a rafting center, kayak shop, general store, paddle school, an office building, and a whole bunch of cabins make up the complex.

It was late in the day but several kayakers were on the river. I watched three paddlers playing in a hole that I later learned would become the site for the *Freestyle Nationals* in 2012. They were throwing loops and doing tricks in this massive hole, tricks that I’d only seen in videos. Now I was really nervous.

The next morning I met my Instructor/Guide. Andrew was 32 years old but has been an ACA instructor 15 years. My own Son is 33 so this was kind of weird. Within minutes I began to feel better as his professionalism became evident. We talked an hour about my skill and experience and began a plan for the week. We’d begin on the Nanty

which he assured me was within my skill level and then progress up thru more challenging water later.

We begin with an 8 mile shuttle to the put-in, unloaded our gear and saddle up. I’m in North Carolina, it’s May, the water should be warm....right?? Wrong !! Water temp 48 degrees.... The Nanty never gets much above 55 since it’s fed from the bottom of the reservoir. “This water hasn’t seen daylight in 9 years” he says and he’s right. “It’s running 1000 CFS today, a little beefier than normal,” he also says. Any more good news Andrew??

We slide in and paddle across to an eddy. I’d already told him my roll was OK, but Andrew says, “Show me your roll.” My stomach knotted.... “Yikes, like right now?? In this freezing water?” “Yep, right now,” he said, “because you are going to get flipped here today....more than once in fact. Let’s get some practice in NOW. “

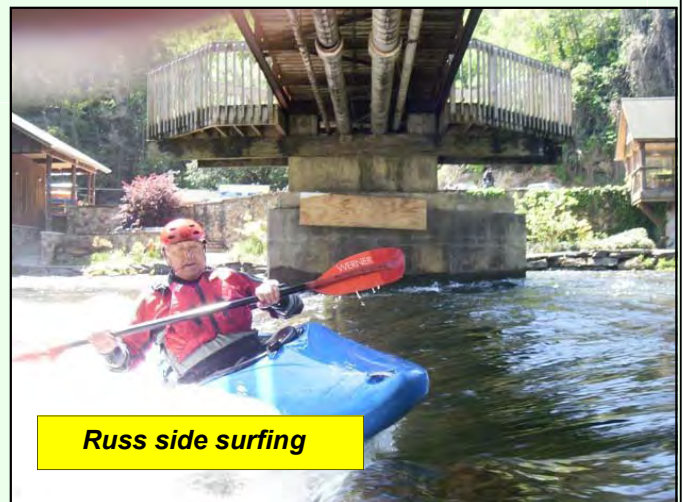
I set up, flipped and rolled. “Not bad, try it again.” ...I followed instructions. Four times I followed instructions. I’m glad I did because three minutes later, in Patton’s Run Rapid, I flipped. Now I’m talking to myself. “Come on, Scar ..the first rapid you’re upside down” ... what kind of day was I in for???

The Nanty’s rapids are separated by long wave trains so you don’t get much of a break. Let your guard down on the calmer sections and you’ll be counting fish before you can blink.... Trust me, I know this to be true. I learned that Nantahala is Indian for “River of Noon-day Sun”. Those Indians knew their stuff ... On this sparkling day I don’t think we were in sunlight for more than 30 minutes of the 5 hours we were out there.

I got my rhythm down eventually and began to have fun. With each rapid my confidence grew. We were having a blast. The rapids were piling up behind us, I didn’t want the day to end. Andrew was guiding, teaching, drilling, and sharing river lore. It was all good.

I was getting very comfortable when Andrew said, “The last two rapids on this section are the toughest.” “Bump Rapid is coming up,” he said. (I thought he was joking.) He said that someone actually hung an orange highway sign over the river.. “*Bump Ahead*” it reads. The name stuck I guess. “Line up with the sign,” he instructed...“Punch it straight and hard because it’s a nasty hole at this level.” Nasty Hole ?? ...GULP.... That wasn’t in the brochure??

Andrew, about 200 feet ahead of me, slides under the *Bump* sign and falls off the face of the earth I see him fly nearly vertical a second later and he’s gone again. OMG!!



Russ side surfing

You can't really tell how deep a hole *Bump* is until you are 10 feet away, looking right down into it ...it's probably only a 6 foot drop but it looked like 100 to me. I went down into the hole and up onto the backwash. I'm paddling hard but I slowly get sucked back into the hydraulic and the fun begins. I was 'getting worked' pretty hard. On my third roll attempt the current rips my paddle away. OK, the fun is over... I pull my spray skirt and I'm swimming. First of the day.

We collect gear and make for shore quickly as the Nantahala Falls is only 200 yards below us. "It's a solid class 3 rapid," Andrew said as we walked down river to scout the falls. It looks like a solid class 6 to me. The three lines he was pointing out amidst the chaos and the 12 foot drop were hard to see. "Enter it angled to the right" he said..."slide across below the top hole and bounce off the pillow, you'll glide through like butter. Or you can power down the middle. You have to punch the top hole, but carry some speed because you'll need it to get you through the curler at the bottom... Oh yeah, he says, the third line is leftDON'T GO LEFT."

Did I forget to mention there are 50 people at the falls filming the action? It provides lots of entertainment for the non-paddling guests. My nerves are firing on all cylinders.

We walk back upriver, climb into our boats and go...., He leads me in...I'm angled as told, intent on the first line and my plan to go through it "like butter", but I get way too close to the hole at the top and it pulls me in... instantly I'm side surfing... I hang onto my brace for 10 minutes ... It was probably 10 seconds. Finally the hole spits

me out kind of backwards.... A quick bow draw and I'm straight again...down into the maw and I'm paddling hard to get that speed I'll need.... I hit the curler, it's huge and slaps me hard in the face ... I shake the water from my eyes and then I can't believe it ...I'm through. The crowd cheers for the boaters who make it thru the Falls and they did for me too and I didn't GO LEFT.

Sitting in the eddy below the falls I am tired, excited, elated, and I now realize- thirsty. You can actually see the Outdoor Center from the bottom of the Falls. We drifted down the last quarter mile and under the pedestrian bridge, surf the wave there for a few minutes and take out. Slow Joe's Riverside Cafe is 5 paces from the water's edge. Minutes later we are chilling out on the deck, enjoying a beverage, and recounting the day's adventures.

Andrew lays out a plan. We will run the French Broad, Pigeon, and Chattooga Rivers over the next three days ...stories for another time. I am pumped up beyond words.

I'm not sure I'll be a lot better paddler after four days of instruction but I've rediscovered the obvious. Kayaking's about fun and not about who's better. I can't wait to get back home and enjoy river days with my friends. So they're better than me at least I've got someone to throw me a rope or help retrieve my gear because as Andrew reminded me.... "*Sooner or later everybody swims*".

--Russ 'Scar' Scaramastra

The Little Schuylkill River Trip—May 8th

On May 8th, Brian Swisher, the Hnath family (Michelle, Steve, Brianna and Sean), Christine Hart, Mark Cholewa, Bud O'Hare, Jim Powell, Joanne and Bob Novak, Tina Ehrig and myself set out on the Little Schuylkill River. The Little Schuylkill was running 2 foot 8 inches at the Tamaqua gauge. There were a couple of scratchy parts but most gravel bars had enough water so that there was no need to walk or hit rocks. It was a fun level. There was a submerged log on river right on the first mile (the right hand side of the river) which reached out and snagged two of our party and dumped them into the river. Easy to do, especially if there is a large group.

The section is a class I - II and very pretty. You put in just north of New Ringgold and take out in Port Clinton (about 1 ½ miles). This is a great river to take you to "the next level" of difficulty and a great way to work on your whitewater skills. Several weeks later, Christine, Bud and I ran the same section at 3 foot 4 inches on the gauge which washed out all of the rocky areas and added lots of wave trains. That was a fun level too.

Some highlights of the trip included:

1. Watching Michelle's family all paddle together - what a great way to spend the day with your kids.
2. Mark swimming after his boat during lunch - you gotta watch those boats at all times or they misbehave.
3. Christine getting some great shots of the scenery and wild life - she is always at the right place at the right time.
4. The weather - definitely the weather - after a wet spring it was great having a sunny warm day on tap.
5. The camaraderie and team work that happens on all of the KCC trips. I can't think of a better group of people to accompany me on a river run.

See you on the River!

— Sandy Powell



From the Mountain to the Sea: Todd Bauman's Fundraising Adventure

On June 28th, Keystone Canoe Club held its meeting at Hawk Mountain's visitor's center. Todd Bauman presented a program about his successful trip to Delaware Bay, 'From the Mountain to the Sea.' The purpose was to raise funds for the educational programs at Hawk Mountain. Todd actually raised \$11,000, which was more than originally expected. Keystone Canoe Club contributed \$100 of that sum.

The program was very interesting and included highlights of his stopovers and the wonderful people he met along the way. Todd chose to make the trip in December, by canoe. Although most of the trip above Philadelphia was uneventful, serious problems were encountered below the city. It was difficult even finding a put-in below Fairmont Dam, for instance. At that point, Todd snapped on a spray deck created by his girlfriend for his boat. The spraydeck worked well, preventing most of the waves he encountered later on from entering the open boat. It may have saved his life later on, as the boat had no air bags.

Todd had his problems with the cold. At one point, the water froze on top of the spraydeck. When he reached Delaware Bay, he had to deal with wind-whipped whitecaps and the difficulty of staying on course for the marshes of the New Jersey shoreline. He had a tough time finding places to stay overnight, because the land was so low and wet. To avoid some of the wind, he paddled mostly at night when the wind was calmer. That decision led to other problems, such as finding sites suitable for camping. Todd did encounter some curious residents who were helpful once they understood what he was trying to accomplish. Nighttime visits to homes along the marsh became understandably dicey when he came stumbling off the boat to knock on doors!

Then there was the problem of the Salem nuclear power plant. When he paddled too close at night, Todd was ordered to come ashore and was threatened with arrest. Everything in his boat was searched and tossed on the wet beach. The guards finally believed his story, but by then his gear was wet. He was allowed to take his wet gear, leave and continue paddling, but that night was a cold, miserable experience.

As the weather turned increasingly cold and windy, Todd continued paddling toward Cape May lighthouse, which he could see blinking in the distance. When he encountered three huge black shapes escorting him, just underwater beside his boat, he couldn't determine if they were sharks or dolphins. Creeped out by that experience, cold and wet, Todd headed for shore. After two hours of paddling in the stormy dark, now unable to see the lighthouse in the fog, Todd finally called it quits. He even tried dragging his boat up the beach toward his goal, but it kept filling with sand and water from the surf, making it impossible to move.

After swimming in his dry suit across an inlet, Todd finally was blessed with a stroke of luck and managed to meet his girlfriend who was waiting for him somewhere in the tidal marshes. Communication over the last few days had been tough, with two cellphones disabled from the wetness. The weather brought an end to the trip, with Todd stopping eight miles from Cape May Point. Considering the problems, it could have been much worse.

All in all, however, Todd's fundraising effort for the educational programs at Hawk Mt. was a huge success, and a credit to Todd's courage and perseverance.

— Tina

Skills Clinic

On June 18th, KCC member Greg Wojcik presented a Skills Clinic at Dunbar's on the Lehigh River. Participants were Jackie Trate, Larry March, Bob and Joanne Novak, Jim Showalter and Tina Ehrig.



Greg explains how the throw bag is used.



The group had fun practicing defensive swimming and use of the throw bag.

Schuylkill River Sojourn Luncheon June 6th

KCC volunteers Joe Sieck, Bud O'Hare, John Ketner, Larry March, Angie Purcell, Christine Hart, Henry Koehler, and Tina Ehrig set up tables at Kerper's Landing and served the food to 123 Sojourners. They ate almost everything!



Joe and Bud made awesome lunch tables.



John helping at lunch.



Hungry boaters during the Schuylkill River Sojourn.



Hard-working Volunteers!

TRIP REPORT – A-TEAM in the Potomac Highlands 5/15-21/11

The following trip report was written by Jeff Wartluft of the Lehigh Valley Kayak and Canoe Club. In the interest of sharing information about trips and having fun on the water, here's his report on the Seneca Creek/ North Branch of the Potomac trip. Some of the participants are members of both KCC and LVKCC.

Participants: Dennis Skillman, Wes and Linda Evans, Jeff Wartluft, Tim Wright, Herb Stermer, Steve Felder, John Robson, Tony and Linda Baroni, and joined by Pat Werley, Brent Burke, Chris Buhrman, Greg Wojcik and Bill Smith on Sunday the 15th.

We drove to Robert Craig Campground, Elk Garden, WV on Saturday 14th and set up camp. We met with Brent, Pat, Chris, Greg, and Bill from the Lehigh Valley Kayak and Canoe Club for the paddle on Sunday. Rain all night... good, we'll be more certain of adequate water levels the remainder of the week for the destined upper tributaries of the Potomac. The possibility of low water has been haunting me.

Sunday the 15th was a scheduled release from the Jennings Randolph Lake on the North Branch of the Potomac River. After breaking camp we met Wes and Linda (motellers) at the take-out in Bloomington, MD during the shuttle. Rain threatened but it was a great day on the river. Rapids were mostly continuous class II and III with some large waves and holes. The water was clear for the 5 mile trip... always a plus for me. Then the drive 1.5 hours South to establish ourselves for the rest of the week near Seneca Rocks, WV; Wes and Linda were in Yokum's cabin and the rest of us were in the Seneca Shadows Campground. We set up camp.

Under threatening rain Monday, we scouted and decided to run the Smoke-hole Canyon on the South Branch of the Potomac. This is the next valley East of the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River (North Fork for short) where we were camped. As feared, the waters were low in the streams we wanted to paddle. The rain must not have reached these valleys. It was an

exciting run thru rapids demanding split-second maneuvers. We decided that this would be a level of 1 or 2 inches above minimum.

The scenery was just short of spectacular with cliffs along the river and mist hanging in the hills and mountains. At one point we paddled into a cave-like entrance in a cliff face and came out another. This run was about 5 miles. At the beginning was the very interesting Chapel Rock Slide rapid, a clear class IV. The cliff on river left has dropped 2 huge boulders into the middle of the river since



I paddled this 15 years ago. All the water rushes around the left side of the boulders and the cliff sticking out from the left diverts the current sharply to the right. For added interest, a large tree lays over the top of the boulders with its branches right over the 5-6 foot drop. We all ran it successfully, some in nice form and others like me in sloppy form. My new (this was this boat's first real rapid) XL 13 saved me from going over. It turned out that we could paddle under the tree branches at this level. The take out was at a low-water bridge. Hey, two good days on the river. Eight of us paddled today.

That night it rained hard all night long as well as all day Tuesday. No one wanted

to paddle in a continuous rain, not to mention the possibility of levels changing due to flooding. So most of us opted to go on a commercial tour of the Smoke-hole Caverns. All the local rivers were up in the trees and running fast. We knew there would be no paddling that day and possibly the next. My tent was in a puddle and our dining fly came down with the soft ground. Our table and seats were totally wet now. I went to visit my daughter in Winchester, VA. It rained again during the night. Tony and Linda Baroni arrived and pitched camp in the rain.

Wednesday Linda Baroni woke up and had terrible pains in her back so Tony took her to the Petersburg Hospital. We helped them break camp and they drove back home, Linda with a sciatica problem. I returned to camp in time to see Tony and Linda and help them break camp. This was the low point of the week. There would be no paddling on this day either. Even small Seneca Creek was too high to safely paddle. Herb, John and Steve went to scout the conditions of the South Branch at this flooded level. It was an interesting exercise in viewing what not to paddle – they were impressed. We had thought of doing the Smokehole Canyon again, but certainly not under these conditions. John left for home today.

On Thursday Seneca Creek was down enough that we were lured into running the last 3 miles of it and continuing down a 9 mile, more gentle section of the North Fork. In setting up the shuttle, we left a car at the mouth of Seneca Creek in case. Good thing we did. It took us 3 hours to run the last 3 miles of Seneca Creek. This was an adrenaline rush with continuous action and very few and small eddies. Things were going well for about 2 miles.

Then right after a sharp right turn the current narrowed along the right bank and rushed right around two vertical trees. In a flash 3 of our 7 boats were over, with a canoe broached in fast current against the downstream tree. Fortunately all 3 paddlers were out of their boats. The paddlers got to the far bank. There was a canoe and a kayak downstream to rescue the 2 kayaks but only one kayak paddle. There were 2 canoes still upstream that went to work on getting the paddlers to the other side of the creek via throw rope, and getting the canoe unbroached. This whole process took about an hour and we were all a bit unnerved. One rescuer got slightly injured coming down the bank of loose rocks and tore his pants and wet suit bottoms. We felt good about the paddlers being safe and about the teamwork that was shown in the rescue efforts.

The following rapid was a solid class IV so we portaged that one and the next one too. There were tricky holes at each one. I took out at a church just downstream from the first class IV. The portaging was rough and I just had my swimsuit on. Wes bandaged my leg, bleeding from so many cuts from briars. It turned out we were not too far from the confluence of Seneca Creek and the North Fork. The car parked there was good foresight as we

were all tired and a bit shook. We paddled this smaller creek first because it would be the first one to go down in level and may not have been high enough to paddle for very long.

Friday the North Fork had gone down significantly and we decided to paddle the cruiser's 9 mile section starting from Seneca Rocks (mouth of Seneca Creek). In the 50's - 80's this section was the downriver race at the Petersburg Whitewater Weekend, a beautiful class II section of the North Fork. This day the water had cleared up considerably from the chocolate mess it was. It was still running high which changed the class from I-II to II-III. Even though cloudy, it was a pleasant run with no particular difficulties. There were sizeable waves and holes, but they were mostly avoidable. After 2 days of not paddling and one with some difficulties, this day helped us iron out the wrinkles. We did the 9 miles in 2.5 hours including lunch time. Herb and Steve left for home and were not with us. After paddling, Tim went back to MA.

All along I had been telling the group that the 5 mile Hopeville Canyon on the North Fork was my number one choice of section to run in this area, more for the scenery than the rapids. This is the section

immediately below the 9 mile cruiser section. This was our choice for the last day, the same day we would be driving back home. The level was down even more. We learned that at the Seneca Rocks Visitor Center (only open Fri-Sun this time of year) there are computers where we could look up river levels - there is no phone service for several miles around Seneca Rocks. The recommended level for Hopeville Canyon is 5-7 and it was reading 6.1. And the sun was shining for the first time this week. I was really glad that we got to paddle one of my favorite WV runs. The Canyon has spectacular scenery, mostly in the way of cliffs down by the river and up high on the mountains. However, a paddler can't afford to be looking at the scenery too much, for the rapids are up to III+. We scouted just one rapid. This last day on the river was special - We were sorry there were only four of us left to enjoy the sunshine, rapids, scenery and camaraderie.

In our pocket of possibilities from this center of operation were the neighboring Cheat River tributaries. They will have to wait until some time in the future.

— Jeff Wartluft



2011 CALENDAR- KEYSTONE CANOE CLUB

*If you're interested in a trip, e-mail or call the leader first to get the details.
Events are rain or shine, but we may cancel for lightning storms.*

JULY

- 9th&10th- Bike & Boat– Delaware River, Delaware Canal- Leader: Brian Swisher**
**30th- Boating Workshop for the Public– Berks Parks & Recreation. Blue Marsh Lake, Church Rd.
1-4 PM. We need volunteers!**
31st- Club Picnic– State Hill Launch, Blue Marsh Lake. 1-4 PM. Leader: Joanne Novak
We will be boating on the lake and will have a 'Swap Meet.' Bring your used gear to sell!

AUGUST

- 13th- Schuylkill River and Schuylkill Canal Loop– Lock 60 Park, 6 PM. Dinner at Iron Hill,
Phoenixville. Leader: Sandy Powell**
20-21st- Pinelands trip– Tidewater, Mullica and Great Egg Harbor River. Leaders: Larry, Tina
28- Picnic at Pecquea, Lake Aldred (Susquehanna River)- Leaders: Rich & Gloria Otto

"Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. And today? Today is a gift.
That's why we call it the present." Babatunde Olatunji



KEYSTONE CANOE CLUB
P.O. BOX 6175
READING, PA 19610