



The Paddle Fall 2007

www.masondixoncanooclub.org

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Letter From the President

— *Dan Eigenbrode*

So much enthusiasm for this water dependent sport and we have a drought. It didn't stop the Thursday Night Paddle's (TNP) attendance, but certainly created little option for something different for the newly focused to take their skills to another river with a different skill level. Skill levels increased regardless and many (six?) first timers saw some action on the North Branch dam release and celebrated their readiness for the same. Some wet hair, but all big smiles at the end of the day.

We had a slight level bump for the Needles to get to 4 feet and some TNPers for the first time saw how a river can change with level. And in this case, for the best! With watchful eyes, "newbies" as well as seasoned MDCCers, look to the heavens for some much needed rain, with particular focus on the other side of the confluence, for a descent down the Staircase. Hopefully this happens before the bitter cold water of spring melt.



MDCC members did however attend a one day safety class that was not only fun, but very educational. Attendees got to practice

swimming, rope throwing, rope catching, hand of god, wading and other whitewater defense techniques. A most enlightening day for most and great practice review for others. Hats off to Jim and Andrew for putting together an excellent program that was most beneficial to the club. And ditto for JD for putting together a one day paddling class that was attended early on in the season and also of great value to the newer paddlers that attended. I hope both of these classes can continue in 2008 and greatly appreciate the volunteers who help provide/teach upcoming paddlers the basic skills to get them on the river safely and to have fun. It is not only a good feeling to see your own skills improve, but a fulfilling one to see others improve as well.

MDCC had a picnic, and as young Lindsey said (or what I recall her dad said she said), "I rated the picnic a 100. Every paddle should end with picnic." I couldn't agree more. The day started off for some as a family paddle down the Antietam with the takeout at Outdoor Excursions property (thank you Scott Coulter). There MDCC members and their families and friends (50 or so) then enjoyed horseshoes, Frisbees, trick dogs, a campfire with smores, and some great conversation and story swapping. Not to mention the food including dogs and burgers, wonderful side dishes, and a wide range of desserts. Hopefully the annual MDCC picnic has returned to stay.

Well, dry or not the summer is about to end and we are to enter the Fall paddling season with visions of Gauley releases in some heads, and a rare Savage release, all for the more seasoned paddlers. The new talk in town is the ASCI whitewater course near WISP, where one can try their skills at class 2 to class 4 levels without the shuttle. Maybe a Fall North Branch release (or rain) will bring some options to the playing field for the newly addicted folks. Just remember, as the temperature drops, you have to contend with hyperthermia, so make sure you have the proper gear.

I mentioned the shuttle in the last newsletter. How many of you use GPS to get your to your desired destination? A quick story about 2 vehicles heading to Ohioypyle for a 3 day weekend on the Lower Yough with the campground picked out, reservations made and the GPS coordinates in the TomTom. Go where TomTom, the GPS portable navigation system tells you. Caravanning behind Rob's car with the TomTom, I am confused when we make a right well before Dinner Bell Rd, but towards Confluence. Fine, maybe this is quicker, but I thought

the campground was off 381 near Ohiopyle (it is). No problem, TomTom is never wrong.

Enter Confluence, pass 381, hey this can't be so. I question we were talking about the same campground. We pass the old Riversport campground at the Middle Yough and head over the railroad tracks. We continue to a residential area and then head up a narrow, soon to turn to gravel and dirt road. We are going straight up and the headlights are bouncing. This is fun I thought (it was about 11:00pm at night). Talking thru hand held radios; I am again questioning the route TomTom is taking us. TomTom has never been wrong. The road turns mountainous and abruptly stops at a gate with a sign that says "No Motorized Vehicles Beyond this Point". So much for TomTom's shortcut. We turn around and head back to Confluence where we pick up the road that comes into Ohiopyle above the putin. TomTom says turn right. We do. About 2 miles out TomTom says turn right, we do (but I thought it was off 381 on the left). We go back a road for about a mile and the radio chirps, "Do you see a campground". "No. How about we read the directions to Scarlet Campgrounds?" Oh, we turned too soon or too late. In about 10 minutes we find ourselves at the campground one hour later than the scheduled arrival time. TomTom is still convinced we are off course. That is until Rob reads the GPS coordinates on the side of the campsite cashier register and realizes he entered the wrong number. TomTom, with the cute British, female accent, laughs at us.

Hope the road you travel to your paddling destination is both enjoyable and timely this fall. And if you stray off course, make it an adventure. Be safe. Have fun. TomTom out.

Business Notes
2007 Board of Directors Meeting

Tentative date weekend of December 1.

Look for details on the Message Board closer to the date.

We are looking for officers and volunteers.

MDCC Roster

We would like to send out via email a MDCC roster that would include

1. Your name
2. Your phone number
3. Your email address
4. Year of last dues paid

Contact Dan if you DO NOT want your info shared before NOV 20.
dankayakbike@yahoo.com.

Mason-Dixon Canoe Cruisers

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Letter from the Editor:

- Tina Blaik

This season we were plagued by low water levels and e-mail issues however we paddled right through it and seem to be much better for it. If you have sent in a submission that does not appear in this newsletter, please let me know so that we can publish it in the next newsletter.

I am now pleased to announce a new e-mail address for the club newsletter. The critical information for this address and yahoo ID is known by the board for security reasons. To assist in transitioning to this new system, please e-mail MDCCNews@yahoo.com. We can then make you a contact and ensure that you are receiving your newsletter electronically. Thank you for your assistance.

Thank you to everyone for sending in great stories for this edition. This has turned out to be the best newsletter ever!! We could have never done this without your contributions and ideas. Please keep them coming.

Also, if you would like your website address/ My Space/ favorite link, published in the next newsletter, please submit it to MDCCNews@yahoo.com.

Go to this link for a collection of 2007 photos taken by Vitas:

<http://wobey.net/whiteWater/whiteWater07/>

Beginner's Class Trip Report

- Lindsay

My name is Lindsay and I am 10 years old. I have a small Jackson 1½ play boat. I went on an educational trip led by JD on the Shenandoah River which merges with the Potomac River. It was a beginner's class. The other class members included my mom and dad, Susan and Bernie. Silvia and Dan were there to help us. It was lots of fun.



First JD did sand drawings of eddying and ferrying. Then we set off. Once we were on the water we practiced wet exits, Eskimo rolls, bow pull-ups and roles. After everyone was ready we ferried across the river and practiced eddying in and out of the current. We ate lunch and I went for a swim.

After lunch, we went up river and others played in the waves. I stayed behind after attempting to play in the waves and being rushed downstream where I waited with Susan. When the others were done we ran the Needles.

At first it was slow and I was kind of cranky. At the gauge we got an audience and I did bow pull-ups until my knees slid out of the braces and I had to do a wet-exit. With no one, including me, wanting to go to shore, I learned how to get into my boat in the water. (Not too nice to watch but it worked).

When we got to white horse the waves were monstrous!!! I was completely freaked the whole way through because I almost flipped twice.

At the take-out I found a chunk of coal by the railroad tracks. I admit my strong fear of being crushed by a train, especially after hearing how quiet and fast they go and how close the bends were to us.

Overall, I'd say the trip was amazing! I really enjoyed playing "catch the eddy" with Silvia. She is awesome.

I strongly recommend JD as an instructor, just for future reference.

After Lindsey ran Whitehorse, I asked her how she liked it. She replied,

"I was scared! That wave was bigger than I am".

It was quite comical especially given how well she did all day. Anytime we took a break she was in the river. Obviously plenty comfy in water. She showed great control with her Fun 1 1/2. She had no fear and was out in front most of the time, charging ahead.

-JD

Quotes From the Board about this class....

The class was a success. The weather was much better than anticipated. We had sunny skies after all. The wind was little much at times but we had a great day on the river. Everyone did really well. Susan's first time in a whitewater boat had her working on going straight and getting from point a to point b. Keith looked mighty solid in his boat. Constance was graceful and had a great posture in her boat. Bernie worked the river hard and was putting everything to use that we talked about. Dan and Sylvia were a great help in demonstrating and helping coral everyone together, help lead the rapids and provide sweep as well. Thanks to everyone for making it a success.

-JDPaddle

New River Gorge



Dick Pierce Saturday, Sept 1st at Lower Keeney on the New River Gorge. MDCCers represented at the New River Rendezvous were Dick, Jim & Marge Pruitt, Ed Evangelidi, Andrew Petukov and Merrill Pearson. Hope I didn't miss anyone, you know a lot of people overlap clubs.

North Branch of the Potomac: Thoughts from a Newbie

- Ericka Hoffmann

I paddled my first run of the Bloomington Dam Release on the North Branch of the Potomac River Saturday, August 18. What a fantastic time and all-around positive experience! I'm proud to say that I successfully avoided the "freeze and flip" nerve-related swimming (I don't yet have a roll).

I was definitely stepping it up a couple of notches by doing this section of the river. This whole run was a very good test of what I can handle and a great barometer of what I have to learn and work on (besides a roll). I braced a few times to keep from swimming, and punched my way out of a couple holes. I went straight through the hole at the lunch stop. I didn't get over to the left eddy soon enough, so I just

decided to straighten out and paddle through the hole. It was fun, and I made it through just fine (other than getting water up my nose). One rapid was particularly challenging for me. A pour-over caught me off guard, and I hit it kind of sideways. It sucked me in and side-surfed me a bit; but I braced and paddled hard, and got out of it successfully. That same rapid was the site of a bit of carnage with at least four others swimming; and I was quite proud of myself that I was not one of them. Wendy saw that and yelled, "Way to hang in there, Ericka!" After my run-in with that pour over, I reached to bottom of the same rapid, only to find that there was a stray boat (sans paddler) in front of me! I pushed it down river a few feet, and someone (I think it was Christine) grabbed it out of my way. That could have been ugly.



I had a lot of support out there. Wendy was a great "Mama Duck" to follow; a great coach and loads of fun on the river! Her descriptions of the rapids coming up were so helpful. Vitas (who got me into whitewater kayaking in the first place) was also nearby most of way. Sylvia was close at hand a lot too, and had encouraged me to do this one from the start. Dan and Rob made periodic appearances and kept kidding me about how much fun I was having and the "perma-grin" on my face! How could I not grin? It's such a beautiful stretch of the river, and the water is great!

The big, bouncy wave trains and "boogie water" on the NB are incredibly fun. I did have a huge smile on my face the whole day... I was laughing and whooping through the rapids like a kid. Wendy said she didn't even have to look back to make sure I was still with her, because she could hear me! I was definitely out of my Needles "comfort zone", but by the end of the day, I was quite comfortable on the bigger waves, and was having loads of fun. My new favorite rapid is "Top of the World"... WOW! Huge waves! I love that section of the river. When we got to the end of the run, I wanted to go back and do it again. I look forward to the day when I am able to do that run and really work it all the way.

I enjoyed watching the more advanced paddlers out there. Dan, Rob, Sylvia, Joan, Wendy, Jay, Christine, Vitas, and everyone else are all so inspiring to a newbie like me! I also encountered some great people who were fun to meet and watch on the river. Jean is just the picture of finesse and technique. It was fun to be out there with the other first-timers on the NB: Sean, John N., J.J., James and of course Ocoee – who I'm sure will be paddling circles around us "older folks" in no time.

Considering that at the time of the Bloomington Release, I'd only been seriously working on whitewater kayaking skills for two months (since June 9, to be exact), I think I did all right! I surprised myself a bit as to what I could actually handle. But I still refrain from cockiness... it was also quite humbling! It was good for me to do something harder, because now I'll be more aggressive with the easier stuff that I do on a regular basis... trying harder moves on the easier runs. The water has been so low because of the dry weather that I haven't been able to get out on the Staircase, and the Needles section has been pretty low. I am ready to hit the North Branch the next time they release at Bloomington.

Thanks to everyone who advised, encourage and coached me before and during this run! And also a huge thanks to everyone who has coached and instructed me on the river this summer – especially those who taught me how to brace! So many people were very encouraging before the NB trip... it means a lot. Having done it, I know it's not scary, and was loads of fun. I hate to think that I might have missed it. When's the next Bloomington release? I'm there!

Trip Report – 8/25/07
Shepherdstown to Snyder's Landing & Return

- Bob

It turned out to be a very foggy morning on the river, but it cleared up by the time we finished our coffee and got done chatting with the locals and actually put in. Everything up here goes at a little slower pace.

It was a very warm day, so took Steve's shady lead and stayed under the canopy of the trees for most of our paddle.

It turned out to be a really pleasant day. We passed the usual swimmers and ropers on the river, and we saw more kayak fishing than we once did.

Today, we went from Shepherdstown to Snyder's Landing. While the total trip was a good 8 miles long, we had to restrain Gayle from her innate desire to go to Dam #4.

Today's "Rural Family of the Week" award went to a floating grandpa with "either four or five kids" who were floating with him (he wasn't too sure how many he had) who were all floating down the river on inflatable objects, some store-bought and others unclaimed from the constable's repossessed inventory.

We had a substantial lunch at Snyder's Landing, courtesy of Gayle's Caterers, and we stopped in at Barron's Store to see our good friends, John and Renay. We notified them that the "Rural Family of the Week" lives right behind the Barron's Rain Barrel, so it could not get more local than that. We then left the only ice cream store that advertises its location by latitude and longitude, and headed downriver. There was loud rumbling in the Eastern Panhandle, so we headed right back to Shepherdstown.

We knew that we were going to be hit by severe thunderstorms in the

evening, so we timed the trip properly by eliminating the usual stop to Mermaid Beach. Sure enough, after we returned to Shepherdstown and secured our boats to the vehicles, our All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio emitted a series of klaxon alerts worthy of Das Boot being alerted to depth charges. The NWS-mandated 7-minute alert requirement for such warnings was a godsend.

We all made it home okay. In Brunswick, we had a severe lightning storm, wind gusts of 70 mph, penny-sized hail, and torrential rain. Two trees came down beside my SUV, one whose branches bounced off the roof-rack, and whose photos I took (they are on our web site) which will be published in the next issue of the local newspaper, the Brunswick Citizen.

All of the photos were taken by Gayle. I have resolved the prior issue of two photo albums having the same name, and I appreciate everyone's patience.

Still, as always, it was a good day on the People's River.

The photos of the trip have been posted in a photo album entitled "8-25-2007" in the Photos section of our web site at:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Potomac_River_Paddlers/

Ocoee's & Rowan's Lower Yough Firsts -Rowan & Ocoee Chapelle

This is the story of Ocoee's first run down the Lower Yough in a kayak and Rowan's first run down the Lower Yough in a Shredder.

Ocoee - Mom, Dad, Seth, Sean, Rowan and I drove to Ohiopyle.. Rowan and I went to look at the Falls. The Falls was scary. Then we bought our permits for 12:00.

Rowan - The Falls were cool. I inflated the Shredder. It got really big really fast.

Ocoee - We carried our boats down. I carried mine on my head. One of the raft guides said I wish I could have started that young. Then he asked if I had a roll and I said I almost do.

Rowan - I carried Seth's paddle. I pushed Mommy's boat in the water. I helped Dad push the Shredder into the water. Then I climbed in and put my foot in the foot thing. We paddled up to the waterfall and got behind a rock so Dad could take a picture of Ocoee.

Ocoee - Me and Chris got in our boats and paddled up to Ohiopyle Falls. We played around in the whirlpools and it was really bouncy and fun. Sean and Chris seal launched off "Rites of Passage". I followed Mommy down the sneak line at Entrance. I flipped on an eddy line. Seth and Mom rolled me back up. We paddled down to lower Entrance and Mom got stuck on a rock. And I had to lead the rest of the rapid.

Rowan - Me and Dad paddled the rapids. Entrance was fun and it was bouncy. Dad steered and I paddled. We loaded on Ocoee's boat above Cucumber. Me and Dad paddled really hard down Cucumber. Dad told us to smile for the camera and also to get down into the middle of the Shredder. Then we untied Ocoee's boat. Then Ocoee paddled again.

Ocoee- I watched Mom paddle down to see the line at Cucumber. Dick and Tony went right down the tongue. Seth, Sean, Chris and Greg went into the guide eddy. Sean did the hairy ferry. Greg thought he could do the hairy ferry too - so when he went to try he didn't quite make it and flipped right in the hole. And he tried to roll but he didn't make it and flipped back over. Seth came rushing right behind him to try to get him. Then Greg rolled up.

Ocoee cont. - Then I paddled the swirlies at Piddly. I ran the right sneak at Camel and Walrus. Then I got to Eddy Turn and caught 6 eddies. We went down the boof ledge and I cleaned the line. They said

I had a better line than Seth. I did Tony's left creek lines at Dartmouth Slalom. I ran the Frog's Back at Railroad and it was awesome. Seth went up to go run it again. He was getting his boat ready on the Frog's Back and that didn't work so he just went to put his boat in the water. And then he let go of it and it went down the Frog's Back with his beach ball. And he had to run down the Frog's Back and collect his all his gear. Sylvia ran the main drop for the first time and she cleaned the boof. After the Frog's Back Mommy and me ran the line that was like a slot with no rocks.

Rowan – We found two paddles. A C-1 paddle and a rafting paddle. We just looked at them.

Ocoee– Seth found a really good surfing wave. I surfed and did a bunch, a bunch of enders. Sylvia did some good spins. Dick and Greg were going to crash then Sean crashed right into the middle of them. I tried to go inside the cave (in Lower Railroad) but I missed it. Then we paddled the Doldrums. Seth and I were doing Splats and I flipped over and Seth rolled me up. Once I pushed on Chris's bow and he did a ½ bow stall. I tried to pin myself under the Shredder. I rammed Dick's boat. We got to the top of Three Sisters and paddled down the big wave train.

Rowan – I had to get out of the Shredder at Dimple and walk to a flat rock. Daddy ran it but he didn't get to where he wanted to go so he had to drag the Shredder back up the river so there was enough water to paddle. (Rowan is talking about Pete catching the right shore eddy) Then we paddled down. I asked Dad if I had a white bump on my lip because I bit my lip in the big waves. At Dimple there was a raft that got stuck on a rock. And two people fell off. The other people handed them paddles to pull them back in.

Ocoee – I ran down Dimple at Dick's Special Creek Line. I had a better line than Dick and Mommy and Sylvia. I saw a raft go down and do an ender then get stuck on a rock. Then I followed Seth down to lunch stop through the big wave trains.

Rowan – Me and Dad asked Seth if it would be okay if we went into Swimmers. Seth said yes and we went in the hole and surfed it. It was really fun. I had to paddle really hard. We ferried over to the rocks for lunch. We had sub sandwiches and chips and granola bars. And then me and Dad almost surfed Swimmer's again. Then we surfed the wave below Swimmers. Then we caught an eddy and we tried to surf the wave one more time but it didn't really work that time. The back corners of the Shredder surfed in the wave without us paddling and we had to paddle out of it.

Ocoee- I paddled down next to Swimmer's Hole and I got pulled up on shore in my boat. We ate a little bit of lunch. Then Seth, Sean, Chris and I went swimming. Seth tried body surfing with his beachball. His beachball surfed better than he did. I got in my boat and got in line to surf Swimmer's. Seth was in the hole to try to help me be in the hole. Sean was standing below the hole. I got peeled out instead of getting in the hole. I tried to do attainments but I couldn't make it back up. So I surfed the little waves.

Rowan – After Swimmer's me and Dad paddled more. Then my back started hurting. Then Dad laid down in the Shredder. Then Dad made me paddle.

Ocoee- I followed Seth down Bottle of Wine and caught the right eddy tight and everybody was surprised. The waves were huge. Then we got to the Jump Rock and I was scared to jump off. I was supposed to jump off with Seth but I didn't. Sean did a front flip. Then I watched some rafters jump off. I was still scared. I kept walking down to the edge and then went "like no". Once I even ran down and stopped. Then Sean and I held hands and we jumped. Sean let go as soon as we were in the air. It was fun – then Seth and I got back in our boat. Sean and Chris did seal launches off the rock.

Rowan – Dad took pictures at the Jump Rock. Then we paddled down more. We got stuck on a couple rocks. I had to get on Dad's side of the Shredder. Then I had to wiggle and bounce and we slid off the rock. Then we had to switch sides again and we paddled down. We

saw a really big hole. Then we waited for Ocoee and we put his boat on the Shredder.

Ocoee- Tony told us the line at Double Hydraulic. We paddled to the shore eddy. I did the ferries to the eddy better than everyone else. I told mommy it was a good thing I caught the first eddy because there was a really big hole behind the first eddy. It would have swallowed me. It would have flipped me, made me pull my skirt, swim and my boat would have stayed in the hole. Sean, Seth, Greg and Chris ran the really hard left line.

Rowan – At River’s End we paddled really hard. Dad told us to get down in the middle.

Ocoee- When we went down there really huge waves. It looked like the river ended – there was just really big rocks. I kept asking Daddy if I could get down now and we weren’t even in the waves yet. We bumped a rock on shore because we wanted to get the eddy because I wanted to get back in my boat. We spun around and went back out into the rapid – then we caught the next eddy and I got back in my boat.

Rowan – We went to Schoolhouse and we caught an eddy that Tony was already in. The Shredder whipped around really hard and I leaned towards Daddy. Then we went and took pictures.

Ocoee – Sylvia and I were at Baby Swimmers. Sylvia was trying to do some spins. And then she flipped and rolled up and I went in. I did a few enders. Then I went down to Schoolhouse. I did the Slot Move. I was scared before I did it because I thought I might flip. But I didn’t flip and it was fun. Then we went to Swirly Land and mom hit me with her boat and knocked me out of my swirly. I did the boof at Stairstep at My First Boof. Everybody said that it was the best seven year old boof that they have ever seen.

Rowan – I went backwards standing up at Killer Falls. I put one hand way up in the air and I held onto the chicken line with the other hand so I wouldn't fall. I kept standing up holding onto the chicken line. We tried to surf a wave while I was standing up. We went down more rapids. Tony told me that there was a pointy rock with an Indian Face on it and that there was a train car. Then we got out of the water and I got to carry the Shredder bag and the paddles to the bus.

Ocoee- I went down Killer Falls backwards. At first I was scared – but everyone said I couldn't go frontwards – cause I would swim later. Sean, Chris and Seth ran down the boof line at Killer Falls backwards. Then I tried to run the meat at Bruner Run. But the waves were so big next to my boat that I got lost and couldn't find the meat. Then we got out of the river. I carried mine and Sean's paddles to the bus and Sean carried my boat.

Rowan – I unhooked my tag and gave it to the driver. I got to deflate the Shredder. Me and Dad laid onto of it. Then me and Mom got on the bus. It was my very first time to ever ride on a bus. Dad sat next to me. We rode up to the take out and we ate chips.

Ocoee- My boat fit in the very bottom of the new trailer with Sylvia's boat and all the paddles. We got on dry clothes then we went to the photo store and looked at the photos. Then we went to Ci-Ci's and ate lots of pizza and cinnamon buns.

Rowan – I was very cold because I didn't have a swimsuit so I had to wear my wet shorts home. At the photo place we got some candy. Mom rode with Sylvia. Me and Ocoee fell asleep and Dad woke us up at Ci-Ci's but we were hardly awake. I had salad, dressing, and pizza. We ate then we said goodbye to everyone. On the interstate a boat fell off our roof. I woke up. We couldn't find mommy at McDonald's but she was at the Park and Ride with all the wild kitties. Then me and Ocoee went home and went to bed.

Ocoee- It was a really fun day. I want to go to the Lower Yough again. I want to run Cucumber and maybe a few more main lines and if I do really good maybe River's End.

Rowan - It was a really super fun day. I was really tired at the end. My favorite rapids were River's End and Cucumber.

Upper Gauley

This picture was taken on the Upper Gauley on Saturday Sept 22nd. We were jammed solid on a table rock at the very top of the longest, most complicated rapid (actually there are 3 parts too it, all big, twisty, and undercut). After all piling in the front, then the back, then in strategically placed positions, we were finally able to come off the rock and style the rest, all under the expert guidance of Swimmer. Other than that little thrill, we had a great run, smooth lines, and nobody got dumped.

Representing MDCC were me, Andrew, Pete & Sheila C. Also in the raft were MCCer's Swimmer (Steve Revier), Jon & Marisa Walsh, and Chuck, whose last name I don't know. The raft belongs to Mike Sawyer. The picture was taken by Sean Chapelle.



Damn! That water is BIG!

Whitewater Center at Wisp

- JD Pearl

I was fortunate enough to win a free pass to the Whitewater Park at Wisp otherwise known as Adventure Sports International.
<http://www.adventuresportscenter.com/> Check out the video of the course and there are two quick pieces of video that include yours truly.

I say fortunate because, honestly, if I had not won a pass at the Cheat Festival, I probably would not have gone to **this day**. You see, I was skeptical. I have read various things about man-made courses through the years and just never became a believer. I had visions of the elite boaters taking the place over, crowds, lines, and I wondered just how good can a little "culvert" be for whitewater? Well, if they were good enough to give me a free pass before the place was even officially open to the public, then I was in. I went to the boss and arranged to have that Thursday off and off I went.

The drive up was quiet since I went alone, air temperature was about 78 degrees but I was unsure how cold the water may be in late May on the top of the mountain so I went through the normal mental wrangling of what to wear. I settled on sleeveless cotton as a rash guard and figured I could deal with whatever the water was like. Besides, I would be within site of my car the whole time (which beckons thoughts of Paul Marshall at the end of Gooney Creek a long time ago) so I could change if needed.

I arrived and they were expecting a bunch of hard boaters. Only one other showed up other than myself. After a short wait time, they gave us the green light to put on and have at it. I estimate the course to be about a quarter mile long. It has a few permanently formed "drops" creating rapids and a few boulders in the middle of everything forming more rapids but is generally drop- pool in nature. Then there are about four other drops that are created by necking the water down to half the width and channeling it through a concrete flume that drops off at about 20 degrees (a slide of sorts). So all the water concentrates and

goes down this slide ending in the pool below. What this creates is a river feature by way of a hole or wave at the bottom of the slide. It is either hole or wave as they desire because there is a mechanism underneath the feature which can be varied to create the feature they want. Picture a steel plate lying on an inflatable rubber bladder. Pump up the bladder and the steel plate on the bottom moves and alters the feature. I don't know if that is the technology employed but hopefully, you get the point. The course is quite narrow. Again, crowded conditions would make it not fun at all. There simply isn't much room for people to eddy up or gather. There are not many eddys and the ones that are there are moving, recirculating upstream. To coin a term from an old friend named John Harris- The eddys are the dreaded "feeder eddys". The currents are really crazy and the eddys don't help this condition. In thinking about it afterwards, I realized that the bottom of the course is wide open, like the bottom of a swimming pool. There are no rocks, no boulders lining the bottom like on a natural river and therefore there is nothing to impede the flow downstream or up. These conditions set up fast moving currents downstream and allow the eddys to recirculate back upstream. The good news- it is like having a conveyor belt back to the top of the rapid or back to the play wave. The bad news- it is very hard to roll in at times. Due to the fast moving water and narrow channel the course has a BIG water feel to it. It blows the mind. It is only 30 feet across in places and has a feel like the Ocoee or Lower Gauley at times. And that is only a tad exaggerated.

Because of the variable features and the fact that they can control the flow of the water, the course changes throughout the day. We experienced it on the upper two levels of flow and they varied the waves too. When we arrived at the first variable wave on our first run, it was a pretty good sized wave with barely any break to it at all. It was very glassy. We surfed it up there for a while and then moved downstream. There were a couple pour overs and some really crazy whirlpools and then a final drop into the collecting lake at the bottom.

There is a conveyor belt for getting you back up to the top lagoon to put on again but it was not finished yet. We carried our boats about fifty yards and slid into the top lagoon for another run.

This time, they were turning the water up. We got to the first spot and it was a BIG breaking wave. As we played there, they were tweaking the feature by changing the bladder size. It went from an amazing wave to a big frothing hole. It reminded me of Hell Hole on the Ocoee but more uniform and a little tamer. But still BIG and FAST. We played there for a while and had a blast. We were spinning both directions, and throwing an occasional end. As I came out of the feature after every turn I hoped that I was still upright. It often took many roll attempts if you flipped- **see squirrely water above**. On two different flips it took me over five roll attempts to get up and I would be totally exhausted for the effort and lucky to make the eddy.

Finally, I exited the hole, flipped and went through about five or so roll attempts. It was not working and probably getting uglier as it went. Then I impacted a boulder. Did I mention that this place is basically poured concrete? Did I mention that I was sleeveless? That boulder had a surface that felt like 30 grit sand paper and over three months later, I have the sanding marks on my shoulder to prove it. It got my undivided attention and suddenly I had nothing left for rolling so I dropped my paddle to the side and went for the skirt. I was on my back deck and could not reach my skirt. I was quite in need of air at this point. I actually did a desperate doggy paddle motion in order to get my head to the surface to get any tiny gulp of air I could. I found grab loop and pulled. Nothing. I pulled some more. Nothing. Finally I did get the skirt to pop and then found myself still stuck in the boat due to the camera bag some knucklehead insisted on carrying between his legs. It was at this point I again remembered Paul Marshall's famous quote spoken to himself while stuck in a hole at the end of Gooney Creek- "I'm going to die and I am within site of my car". I also thought- "I am on a manmade course - oh the shame".

Well, I finally kicked like a mad man and got that stinkin boat off of my body and was in shallow water and stood up. The yard sale continued on downstream while the guides at the side of the river watched and waited to see if I was ok. I was ok other than the 8 layers of skin that came off my shoulder when I impacted the rock. How many layers of skin do we have? Well they all came off. When I stood

up, I noticed another attribute of the man made course. The bottom surface was also like 30 grit sandpaper. Man I wish we had that kind of traction at all the rivers. Of course this is why you do not want to impact any part of the course. It takes off skin. I collected myself and gear and did go around one more time. BTW- we spent about an hour and a half getting around the first time.

So in summary, Was it worth it? You bet! I would encourage everyone to try it once. It may be best suited for the park and play set. It is amazing when you can get on such consistent features time and time again. It really lets you get it dialed in. For river runners, I have a harder time seeing the appeal but they could have fun too. You can run it many times picking different routes each time. Down the left one time, down the right the next, crisscrossing- whatever. I'm really not sure the appeal to the rafters though. I guess they will be down the course in less than 20 minutes. Someone else will have to comment on the rafting. I sure hope to get back with some boating buds before they shut down this season.

My First Working

- Sylvia DuRant

It was both Jim's and my first time on the Occee River. Both of us were a little nervous (I was more far more nervous than he). Grumpys went fine for both of us, as did Broken Nose. I snuck Broken Nose and Jim got smashed by a couple rafts into a rock wall while in a microeddy, but it worked out ok.

Next we moved on to Double Suck. I had *no idea* what I might be getting into. I followed Guy (of Corn Youth Alliance fame) down and made it through the first part of the drop ok. Then there was the second hole...and WHAM---I was promptly upside down and being worked by a very big and nasty hole. I remembered Guy's words before we ran the rapid....if you get flipped, the second hole is big but it will flush you out in about 5-7 seconds. Ok, I said to myself, I can hang. And I felt fairly calm. 5-7 seconds go by....then 15-20....then

30-40. Hmm, I thought, it's not letting me go. At one point my helmet is being thumped against my boat (little did I know that that was Jim running over top of me—he had no other option, and hey, I guess it prevented him from getting in the hole with me). This is entirely unpleasant, I thought, and I decided to bail and pull the skirt. So, I'm out of the boat, paddle in hand and the hole continued to recirculate me about 4-5 times, finally taking me deep and then letting me go. I rose to the surface and Jim was there, handing me his t-grip holding his paddle by the blade (a risky move) to get me over to the eddy. I was gasping for air and the calm that I had had while in the hole was completely gone. Shortly after that Sheila, Laurel and Occee came by in the Shredder and promptly scooped me up. I was having a minor meltdown to say the least. After 15-20 minutes or so, I was in a somewhat calm state and decided to attempt the next rapid, "Double Trouble." I flipped in a silly area at the top and ended up "forgetting" how to roll, again finding myself swimming through a very large wave train. Sheila and crew picked me up again (thank you Sheila!) and I thought to myself "I don't think I can finish this run." I was feeling very rattled. I got collected in another eddy and pretty much decided to take off the run. Another guy in our group, who had had a few swims and was not having such a good day either, was planning to take off as well. I thought about it some more, and then realized that if I didn't get back in my boat, I might have problems getting back into it later on. So, I said that I would give it a go. The rest of our group agreed to clean up after me if I had any more carnage—very kind of them. And the other guy who was going to take off decided to stay on as well and said to me: "I hope that you made the right decision for both of us!"

So, off we went, and the next rapids, Tablesaw and others, went smoothly. I was very apprehensive going into Tablesaw in particular, but it was all fine and I made it through without issue. And I actually had a great time on the rest of the run. The Occee is a wonderful river.

There would have been no shame in walking off the run, but sometimes it's just best to get back on that horse and try again. Lessons learned: playing in holes can be good as it may give some preparation for experiences like this (I plan to do more of this...), and,

sometimes taking the sneak route is a-ok. I will tell you one thing though...the second hole at Double Suck is not recommended!

The Bottom Moose

- Tina Blaik

On May 26, 2007, after a long ride and a filling breakfast. Jim, Bobby "The Dogg" Miller, and I began working out how to run a shuttle with only one car when we happened upon a local by the name of Matt Dalton. The next moment I was falling in love with a big slide called Fowlersville. You have to do a lean to the left then lean slight right to avoid the big swish and land it. Just when I was getting that hang of the drop, it was time to paddle across the lake to the next drop.

The Funnel was hidden behind a bend. It wanted me and almost got me as I missed the stopping point. As terror heightened on my face I felt myself going down river. As millions of scenarios raced through my head, my paddle raced



toward the bank. Finally finding my self precariously gripped to a rock along the bank, I began to start thinking of how to survive the next thirty seconds of my life partially intact. It wasn't looking good but with the flash of his red cape, Bobby appeared to anchor me to safety. After this event I probably asked when the next rapid was coming every ten seconds. Needless to say that I had no trouble getting out before we got to knife's Edge. Positioned after the drop, I had the best view in the house to watch the boys paddle this craziness with ease and grace. Continuing down the river's placid lakes and mild passage ways, I was just getting my confidence back when I was surprised by formally known as Class 2 nothing, Rib Crusher Rapid took a nice bite out my rib cage and elbow. I don't remember going over just the feel of the being swept down the river at 100 miles an hour into a large blunt rock that had been used as an anvil in centuries past. Another rock attempted to take out my elbow and although I was sporting some beefy elbow pads, I still ended up with a nice bruise and cut on

my upper inner elbow and arm. Feeling a lot like Rocky's punching bag I took a breath of air and let the pain float away with the current. I remember Bobby asking me if I was ok. I replied , "No. But I will be." Just as I was shaking off the pain and had fully returned to enjoying the incredible sensory adventure that nature was throwing down on me, Bobby tells me Double Drop is just up ahead. At first I was really scared about this waterfall but when push came to paddle, I found my way to the bottom in one peace with an extra large smile.



I returned to my visual vacation for a bit when we came to Ager's Falls otherwise known as Tina's personal take out #1013. This is a neat little bump you can ride over into a

class one pool which flows over a rock and down about 20 feet into a pool. This pool is immediately followed by some major white waves surrounded by really hard rock of the extremely shallow kind. It was here that I learned that all the fun things come with a price. Many later later, Bobby and Matt come be-bopping down the hill like kids that just got off a rollercoaster. Much to their horror, ice cycles had formed on every strand of my hair. Well, perhaps not exactly ice cycles but it could of happened, I was certainly cold enough. Anyway, if I had a tail, it would have wagged when I saw then and knew warm clothes were in my future.

The next day, leaving the boys at the putting was tough for me because I would have like to return to Fowlersville Falls. I knew that I only had one waterfall in me that day and I was saving it for Ager's Falls so I reluctantly drove the car toward Ager's Falls to meet up with the boys. I added an item to my "must see" list for next time while, checking out the scenery directly below double drop. The tourist attraction map for the dam indicated "Burial Island". And sure enough, on a small island was a memorial to someone who had been entombed on that slightly out of reach part of paradise. Seeing the

boys fast approaching after their victorious onslaught of Double Drop Falls, I raced to Ager's Falls, the waterfall, I had yet to conquer and conquer I did!! Then I was done.

The boys continued on to Powerline which simply put it is more crazy water that just happens to run between two powerlines. Then onto Crystal rapid which doubled as the official takeout of the bottom moose. When I got here, the boys had already run the rapid but The Dogg wasn't done howling. Bobby attained back up to the top of Crystal Falls and ran yet another spectacular run of this complex water maze of drops.

All dried off and changed, we hung out talking to some other boaters and planning our next move when the boys noticed a tiny little trickle of water toward the other side of the river. With an intensity that made them actually glow, they poured all their psychic energy into making that little trickle just a tiny bit bigger. Once this task was complete, like superman in a phone booth, The Dogg and Matt were suited up and heading toward the ominous trickle of water they referred to as Magilla. From downriver, this trickle of water can be seen merging with something much larger and tightly packed between a rock crevasses which happens to drop sharply about 30 feet or so just to pour out in a powerful display at the bottom. Bobby taught Matt well here and after three runs by the Dogg, and one by Magilla Matt, the glow faded and we all went home to paddle another day.

Since then, I have published the videos of the really good runs as well as my carnage footage at www.kayakdream.com. I have begun paddling again and repelled a 170 foot cliff! Bobby Miller continues to kayak craziness. He has also begun to triumph in his mountain biking career as he continues to defy death with grace. Matt "Magilla" Dalton, has run that trip many more times in much higher water as well as a trip to Canada for even more insane kayaking. "X-files" Jim has been taken by the men in black.....

Close One on the Lower Yough

-Dan Eigenbrode

It was SAT, August 4th, mid-weekend of a full 3 days on the Lower Yough with a club trip finish on the 5th. On Friday, Rob and I ran the

loop twice with play instruction from Riversport. I went from 0 to 360 in a hole and Rob nailed the Cucumber boof both times. Diane, Brenda and Brenda's friend Mike joined Rob and I for a full run on Sat afternoon.

My story starts at Rivers End rapid. Brenda and Mike were ahead of us and went on downstream. Brenda caught the right eddy and then ferried above Snaggle Tooth rock. I noticed a couple that had been paddling the river also eddied out on the right. The "normal" run is to eddy out left or run left, as the right eddy requires a ferry in a pushy narrow channel to get over to the river left line and avoid being pushed down over Snaggle Tooth. I grabbed the right eddy with the couple and Rob followed. I didn't realize at the time the couple had never been on the LY before and I missed the hint when the young lady asked me what I was going to do. Lesson learned, ask questions when asked questions.

At this time we noticed a 4 man raft was pinned on Snaggle Tooth with all 4 rafters in the craft. We waited five minutes and it was obvious the raft was not going to move until the occupants got out of it so it could be dislodged from its perch. I moved to the front of the eddy and asked the young man if I could go ahead. He said yes and I ferried over to the left eddy where I watched the rest of our group giving instructions to the rafters from below Snaggle Tooth. Rob did the same. I then remember the guy of the couple ferried across, flipped, rolled back up and into the bottom of the left eddy. I gave him a thumb ups and decided to head on down. Rob remained in the left eddy. We needed to give the rafters some more "guidance" to convince them they had to leave the craft to get the weight off as it was pinned on top of the rock in two places and their weight was keeping it there.

So at this time, all of us except Rob and the young lady were in the depression behind Snaggle Tooth still telling the rafters they needed to exit the boat as their attempts at weight shifting, pushing, and rocking were getting them nowhere. After a couple of minutes, we saw the young lady start her ferry and immediately got pushed downstream and then flipped. To the horror of all, she went upside down under the

raft and against the rocks. Rob yelled from the eddy as he saw her go under the raft and the only thing visible beforehand was her paddle and the bottom of the kayak. Loud voices drove out the rapid's noise as MDCC paddlers screamed at the rafters to grab her. Two did and managed to pull her to the surface. Now the instructions to leave the raft turned to screams and two of the men jumped out. A third did after further instruction and of course the fourth with a good grip on the victim's PFD stayed in place. At this time all involved pulled the raft off the rock with ease and the victim was pulled into the raft with the kayak floating out behind it.

Adrenalin now down and everyone safe, the men, all back in the raft, paddled the young lady to an eddy. She was not too badly shaken up, maybe less than those of us that witnessed it. Everyone continued to have a good day on the river, but with a new respect for those rubber hazards. Lesson learned: a pinned raft below is just as hazardous as a raft coming down. Avoid them.