

MONOCACY CANOE CLUB **MOKE SIGNAL**

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Monocacy Canoe Club
www.monocacycanoe.org

March 2009



What's in the Numbers?

2008, 291, 18, 2625, 13000, 25, 26, 100, 6, 2

1989, 40000, 300, 1500

2009, 141, 2, 15, 3, 59, 62

Give up? See inside....

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What's in the Numbers?

- 2008 Last year's annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup
- 291 Tons of trash removed
- 2625 Tires removed
- 13000 Balls removed
- 25 Bicycles removed
- 26 Shopping carts removed
- 100 Pounds of metal piping removed
- 6 Televisions removed
- 2 Bathtubs removed
- 1989 Year of the first Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, since then the numbers speak for themselves; Over:
- 40,000 Volunteers,
- 300 Partner organizations,
- 1,500 Tons of trash removed
- 2009 This year's cleanup, the 21st annual cleanup with:
- 141 Official cleanup sites to choose from listed on the Alice Ferguson Foundation's site
- 2 Cleanup sites in Pennsylvania
- 15 Cleanup sites in DC
- 3 Cleanup sites in West Virginia
- 59 Cleanup sites in Maryland
- 62 Cleanup sites in Virginia

The Alice Ferguson Foundation is the sponsor of the annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. The Foundation's website lists 141 locations in 5 states with links to the sponsoring organizations and links. Most of the local paddling clubs and leaders are sponsors for specific sites or unofficially adopt a site and commit to providing cleanup duties. Several have listed themselves or will list on Paddle Prattle. There are many miles to be covered and many more yet to be covered so, please, donate your time and energy to caring for our watershed on this day. You can find a sponsor and a site on the Foundation's website at www.fergusonfoundation.org or www.potomaccleanup.org.

**2009 Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup
Saturday April 4, 2009**

Trip Report: Tohickon Creek, November 1-2, 2008

The annual end-of-season lollapalooza that is the dam release on Tohickon Creek once again honored its tradition of traffic, crowds, carnage, and entertainment. If you count the costumes and inflatables in the lineup, it amounts to a prequel to the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade floating down the creek. Will we see a floating marching band next year? There was one notable exception this year to Tohickon's predictability—The weather this year was Wonderful: overcast and in the low 50's on Saturday and sunny and upper 40's on Sunday and in the 30's (not the teens!) at night.

I took off work on Friday to get a head start and avoid the rush hour traffic around DC, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. My plan didn't anticipate congestion around Philadelphia due to the World Series Championship celebrations, but I must have sneaked between traffic jams because it was a clear shot through downtown. I arrived at the Tohickon Valley Campground at 4:30, in time to watch a gorgeous sunset through the yellow light



of the late-fall leaves. There was only one other camper and nobody in the group camps so the forest was very quiet. I was soon joined by that ubiquitous blue Volvo station wagon that has surely travelled more miles of the Appalachian range than Daniel Boone himself. We in turn were soon joined by Courtney Caldwell and Chris Esswein who shared Ed's site and then Terry Irani who maneuvered his Dodge Monster Van self-contained paddle/hike/bike/ski support unit (the Space Station can't be better equipped than this rig) into my site. After everyone was set up we piled in the Monster Van and drove into Lambertsville for the de rigueur dinner at that little Italian place whose name I can never remember but serves the unforgettable lasagna, accompanied by Court's gourmet pepper and faultless wine selections. This foray was also seasoned by the appearance of the many Lambertsville Trick-or-Treaters who were on the streets in force. This was, after all, Halloween. The Halloween theme carried forward the next day to the Ralph Stover State Park put-in with the usual carnival atmosphere and fashion runway of costumes: freeze-dried hippies, two full gorilla suits, one Elvis sighting, various Edgar Allen Poe-inspired macabre boats and outfits, lots of feather boas, and of course those guys in green ranger uniforms complete with Smokey-the-Bear hats and realistic sidearms—nice costumes, guys, you really had me going! As the parade assembled in the staging area, Courtney's head count for our group swelled to twenty plus change, so he decided to break up the group into several smaller units before pairing off partners. And off we went....

The release was at its normal level so there were no surprises and the Tohickon parade was out in all its glory. Negotiate the rapid, stop and play, bail; negotiate the rapid, play and bail; negotiate the rapid, play, stop and bail; negotiate the rapid, stop and bail, watch the carnage; scout the ledge, negotiate the ledge, stop and bail, watch the carnage; and then the good stuff in Race Course; and on down the river....Eventually the groups got hopelessly spread out but we all reconnected at the takeout on the Delaware River. It appears that the parking lot—the one that's the size of a K-Mart parking lot—has been graded because it was much friendlier this year to those of us with low-clearance vehicles.



After paddling for the day, some of the group departed for home but we still had a headcount of 20-plus for dinner, including some who made the trek just for dinner that evening. One couple I recognized came—I know for a fact—all the way from Sharpsburg just for The Occasion. The Occasion? A surprise birthday party thrown by Margie Pruitt in honor of Jim's 50th birthday (which wouldn't be until December but, what the heck, as long as we're all here let's party) at the Lambertsville Inn Restaurant. In addition to our 20, there were another 20 of Margie's relatives who crashed the party. Or did we crash their party? It's hard to say, but the relatives did get there first. It was a big surprise for Jim although he must have experienced a brief moment of confusion when he arrived outside and

saw all the car-topped kayaks on the street before he saw the crowd indoors. An even bigger surprise was the dog biscuit under glass served up by the restaurant staff, compliments of Jay Robbins. The restaurant was not expecting this request but, for some reason, keeps a ceramic covered dog food dish on hand for just such occasions. I'm sure there's a great story behind the dog biscuit, but you'll have to ask Jim for yourself. At any rate, it was a great dinner—thank you Margie—handled very well by the restaurant staff who served the riffraff very professionally, with good humor, and even had the wisdom to seat and serve the paddlers first. Note to Jim: Margie scored big points with this one and I'm sure you'll be paying them back for a long time.

As I'm running up the word count I realize that this trip report is long on incidentals and short on paddling. Did I mention the hot air balloon that nearly landed in our campground, or the 5:00 a.m. wakeup call from the ranger emptying the trash cans, or the great breakfasts in the general store that stocks Road Kill Helper from Eddy Trucker? On Saturday night, there were many more people in the campground but on Sunday there were fewer people on the water, although the carnage count held steady. Beth and Marilyn had a blast tandem-paddling a Shredder for the first time. I

had my first-ever dip in the waters of the Tohickon and, after getting boat, paddle, and paddler to shore, sat down, thanked the river gods that I had the sense to finally buy a wetsuit, and watched a succession of six kayakers drop over the ledge, flip, and swim. This was all at the third ledge, which is named Second Ledge—although it is the third ledge—because someone at some time named the first ledge something other than First Ledge, which made the second ledge First Ledge and the third ledge Second Ledge. And that confusion, my friends, is why everybody flips when they reach the third ledge—which is Second Ledge.



From “New light on Secret World of Men Who Went to War in Canoes by Matt Jackson, UK Defense Correspondent, The News, Portsmouth UK”

Mention the Cockleshell Heroes and images of brave, eccentric marines rowing in mortal danger towards an enemy port spring to mind. But while that mission to Bordeaux has gone into legend, author Quentin Rees has spent eight years uncovering just how large an industry the Cockleshell canoes were.

Far from there being a handful of the innovative craft made for a one-off mission, his book, *The Cockleshell Canoes*, shows that thousands of the top-secret craft were tested in Langstone Harbour, Chichester Harbour, and the Solent.

The 51-year-old says: ‘Back in 2000, a friend pointed out a canoe in the magazine, and I decided to buy it. ‘When I got it there were no manufacturer’s markings, so I started to ask questions.’

‘The Mark 2 Two Star Canoe was tested extensively off Southsea and was the same design – though a different length – as the canoes used by the Cockleshell Heroes. ‘It could be folded down to about six inches so it was tremendously versatile, but that made it extremely difficult to paddle. ‘So to keep themselves ready for the challenge, the marines used to paddle from Southsea boom over to the Isle of Wight every single day. ‘It was a bare minimum to keep them fit for the Frankton Raid, but even then the submarine journey robbed them of a few days’ fitness.’

Operation Frankton, as it was known, was a British military commando raid on German shipping in Bordeaux harbour in France in December 1942. The secret canoe operation was based at Portsmouth. The task of the men was simple – destroy as many ships in the harbour as possible so it would be blocked with wreckage.

After training in secrecy off Southsea beach, and led by Major ‘Blondie’ Hasler, on December 7th the 12 men of the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment left the submarine HMS Tuna to paddle 70 miles in two-man Cockle Mark II canoes upriver against the current towards Bordeaux.

One canoe was damaged on leaving the submarine, leaving only 10 men to paddle deep into enemy territory, and then one capsized before its crew was shot by the Germans.

Two more men drowned after their canoe capsized and they fell prey to the cold water and currents. Two others became separated when their canoe sank. They were in a civilian hospital when they were betrayed to the Gestapo and taken to Paris.

The four remaining men reached their targets after four days, lying low during daylight and paddling only by night.

Though not all limpet mines attached to targets detonated, four cargo ships were flooded and a minesweeper was damaged. The raiders then made their way over land 90 miles northeast to Ruffec, where they stopped at the Hôtel Restaurant la Toque Blanche to contact the French Resistance and utilize the ‘pipeline’ for their escape to Gibraltar and Britain.

Only Blondie Hasler and partner Bill Sparks made it; the other two were betrayed by locals and captured at Montlieu.

The book is called *The Cockleshell Canoes - British Military Canoes of World War Two*, by Quentin Rees.

54TH RUNNING OF CCA POTOMAC DOWNRIVER RACE SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2009

By V. Star Mitchell, CCA Downriver Race Chair & Adam VanGrack, BCE Vice-Chair

What race do you know of that has lasted consecutively for 54 years? The 54th running of the CCA Potomac Downriver Race hosted by Sycamore Island and co-sponsored by BCE will be Saturday, May 23rd. **COME AND BE A PART OF ONE OF THE GREATEST AND LONGEST RUNNING WHITEWATER RACES IN THE NATION! JOIN THE FUN!**

The pre-registration fee is only \$20 if received by May 17th! Obtain a registration form from www.sycamoreisland.org or www.canoecruisers.org. Follow the instructions for mailing. On race day the entrance fee will increase to \$25. Tandem teams pay as two individuals *unless* they are a parent and child (under age 18) who are permitted to pay as one individual. Liability forms **must** be signed on race day.

The race begins at Rocky Island on the Potomac River just above Wet Bottom Rapid and continues for 7.5 miles to Sycamore Island. At the end of the race, a free T-shirt and a free lunch will be given to all workers and racers, and there will be a ceremony with awards and prizes for the winners. (If you do not attend the ceremony, do not expect to receive the above! No awards will be mailed!)

Sign-in begins at 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Great Falls Inn (Maryland) followed by a **mandatory meeting** for all racers. If the river is over 5 feet, the race may start at Old Anglers Inn. And if the river is over 6 feet, the race may be postponed.

This is a race for any whitewater paddler from the pros to parent/child tandem teams, but this is **NOT A NOVICE RACE**. All participants should have experience in and be comfortable with up to **Class III rapids**. Participants may enter with any type of a boat provided it is properly outfitted with **adequate floatation** (air bags) and all occupants of the boat are wearing a **helmet and a PFD** (life jacket).

If you plan to paddle the race, **PLEASE PRE-REGISTER** to help with registration and planning. Please do not bring two cars to the race — parking will be difficult and a **shuttle will be provided**.

VOLUNTEER helpers are needed for **safety boats** and for helping at the registration at Great Falls and at the finish at Sycamore Island. Volunteers will receive the gratitude of the racers, a sense of participating in an important annual river event, a race T-shirt, and lunch.

Anyone interested in helping out with this year's race should **contact Star Mitchell** at 301-530-3252 or e-mail starmitchell@verizon.net. **DO JOIN THE FUN!!**

For use by Race Committee Only
BIB NUMBER: CLASS: BC ___ AC ___

54th CCA POTOMAC DOWNRIVER RACE MAY 23, 2009 - RACER REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out a form for EACH RACER. Make sure to COMPLETE and PRINT all fields.

Racer's Name: _____ Male/Female: _____ Age on Race Day: _____
Address, City, State & Zip: _____ E-Mail: _____
Phone: _____ Emergency Contact (Name/Phone): _____
Parent's Name & Signature (if Entrant is under 18): _____

Please CHECK your Boat Class AND Age Class (there will also be separate male/female classes):

- Boat Class #1: Wildwater Kayak (WWK1) (e.g., Zastera K1s, NoLimits, Savage, Match II)
- Boat Class #2: Wildwater Canoe (WWC1) (e.g., Zastera C1s, Bala)
- Boat Class #3: Long Kayak (K1) over 9 feet (e.g., Slalom, Speeder, Isere, Dancer, Green Boat, RPM Max)
- Boat Class #4: Short Kayak (K1) under 9 feet (e.g., Fun, All-Star, Godzilla, X, RPM, Fly, Solo, Nomad)
- Boat Class #5: Closed/Decked Canoe Solo (C1)
- Boat Class #6: Open Canoe Solo (OC1)
- Boat Class #7: Canoe Tandem* (OC2 / C2 / Raft) Name of Partner: _____
- Boat Class #8: Mixed Canoe Tandem* (OC2 / C2 / Raft) Name of Partner: _____
- Boat Class #9: Any Kayak Tandem* (K2 / Inflatable) Name of Partner: _____
- Boat Class #10: Parent & Child ** (any boat & child under 18) Partner: _____

Make, Model, & Length of boat: _____

- Age Class #1: Junior 17 and under **BCE Overall Winner Awards**
- Age Class #2: Open 18 - 35 *Fastest Overall*
- Age Class #3: Senior 36 - 54 *Fastest Kayak* (not wildwater)
- Age Class #4: Master 55 - 69 *Fastest Canoe* (not wildwater)
- Age Class #5: Legend 70 and over *Fastest Female*
Fastest Tandem

*Tandem Boats must use **oldest** paddler for Age Class.

** Parent & Child Class does **not** need to mark an Age Class and may pay as one individual.

All paddlers **must** wear helmets and life vests. Each boat **must** have proper flotation.

Race Officials at the **mandatory check-in (9-10:30am)** will confirm boat class and safety equipment.

Race Officials reserve the right to combine classes when numbers registered for a class are under 3.

Entry Fee for Pre-Registration: **\$20** (must be **received by May 17**) Enclosed \$ _____

Check No. _____

Entry Fee for Race Day Registration: **\$25** (9am - 10:30am only) Attached \$ _____

Voluntary Contribution for the CCA Potomac Downriver Race Enclosed \$ _____

Check No. _____

Please enclose your check payable to the "CCA" and mail to:
Star Mitchell, Race Chair, 8705 Hempstead Ave., Bethesda, MD 20817

Monocacy Canoe Club
P.O. Box 1083
Frederick, MD 21702-0083

Membership Form

Membership dues are still only \$15 per family living in the same residence. Please make check payable to **Monocacy Canoe Club** and send to:

Monocacy Canoe Club
P.O. Box 1083
Frederick, MD 21702-0083

Name: _____

Do you want delivery of the newsletter and cruise schedule as Adobe PDF files via email instead of regular mail? Yes No

Any changes in membership information? Yes No (If No, please do not fill out the rest of this form).

Family members: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Day Phone: _____

Additional Phone: _____ Email 1: _____

Email 2: _____ Email 3: _____

NOTICE AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

Canoeing or kayaking (paddling) can be physically demanding and/or dangerous. Canoeists and kayakers (paddlers) take personal responsibility for their personal safety. By participating in Monocacy Canoe Club activities, you acknowledge an assumption of the risk involved in paddling, which could involve risk of serious injury or death.