
November 1998

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Viking Views

V I K I N G C A N O E C L U B N E W S L E T T E R

TRIP REPORT: BOYS & GIRLS SECTION OF THE RUSSELL FORK

by Frank Weider

When Alan Baldwin sent me a last chance to catch the Russell Fork e-mail I was grateful for the opportunity to get out and paddle some nice water in a very pretty area. On the last full weekend in October the Corps of Engineers released 1,000 cfs on the Russell Fork as promised.

Unbelievable as it may seem, on October 24th we had the pleasure of 64 degree water on a 70 degree day. Alan and I left Louisville at 6a.m Saturday and met up with the rest of our group at the put-in below the dam on the Pound River. There were twelve in our group but on this class two stretch of river there are plenty of play spots. Don't be in a hurry because the most serious of these is right at the base of the dam. Later, a shameless deviate antisocial member of the group found that one could actually maximize play time by dropping down to the next interesting river feature within site of the group and thereby selfishly maximize personal play time (by a full order of magnitude). The next day not one but two people had the nerve to repeat this social transgression.

Immediately after the confluence of the Pound and the Russell Fork you get to run a break in a dam and if you so choose you can sidesurf there until you just don't want to sidesurf any more. One of our group decided to show off and gave an excellent demonstration of this until some rude fellow in an "X" decided to bump her out so he could have fun too. From the confluence to Garden Hole the river changes character and becomes class 2/3 but remains very playable with lots of technical moves available. "Railroad" seemed to be a favorite of many and "Twenty Stitches" got a close look from some. Happily the river gods demanded no sacrifices.

On Sunday we were back on the Pound with six people but we had an alternate plan in mind. After the confluence we took out and ran a second shuttle so we could do the class2/3 (4-) section from the end of the gorge into Elkhorn City. Nobody in our group had done this stretch before, but, we were told that Don Spangler said everybody should do it once. Before we took off the river we got together as a group and decided we should all get our story straight. So, here's our story and we're sticking to it - "don't bother with this stretch of river!" One might think we are trying to hide something! Oh yes, we even saw someone who sort of looked Stephen Segal showing off at "Meat Cleaver".

VIKING CALENDAR

NOV 16 -- Viking meeting at TGI Fridays. Annual meeting including elections.

DEC 4 - 5 -- Cumberland below the Falls. The annual draw-down of Lake. Cumberland exposes the maximum rapids. Full moon so we may see a moonbow. Contact Frank Weider.

JAN 1 -- Annual Polar Bear Cruise. River to be determined.

JAN 9 -- Probable start date of roll sessions.

1999 -- *Viking Canoe Club's Thirtieth year.*

Annual Dinner Meeting for January to be determined.

TVA News

During the week of October 1, at the House's insistence, the Senate ratified a move to "zero out" funding for TVA's (who owns the dams) non-power projects, which include flood control, navigation and management of its recreational activities. But some late session political maneuvering at the end of October provided funding for the TVAs recreational and lake management functions. This should ensure that access to areas such as Land Between the Lakes and the Ocoee remain accessible in 1999.

Visit our Web Site:
www.vikingcanoecub.org

LABOR DAY TRIP TO THE NEW RIVER

by David Ackerman

Paddlers, K-1: David Ackerman, James Monroe, Kenny Slaughter, Richard Millea, Amy Shipman, Chris Hill, Gemma, Drue & Violet Rice; Raft: Mark Atkinson

The New was running at -1.4 feet, making it a fun run. Since at below 0 there is a pinning spot to avoid at Lower Railroad, the ran far left, next to the bank and boofed off a rock for great fun.

We all had a great time, finding lots of play spots along the way. Be sure to watch out for the moving undercuts: Big Rafts. Don't neglect to smile as you go through Lower Keeneys since they take your picture there, which you can buy at Fayetteville.

On the second day, Gemma joined us for her first time on the New. She had a great time and learned a lot, like not to follow her boyfriend through Millers Folly and to stay away from rafts. Kenny and James tested new demo boats on Sunday. James went for the 3D while Kenny had to paddle the Beast from Savage. Both had great fun in these new boats.

Everyone had a great time on the New and are looking forward to coming back. Concluding note: when you start to feel a little cocky, like a certain unnamed paddler did, you may just get to run Middle Keeney upside down and discover that its rocky at low water.

Rodeo Results

Member Beau Downing finished 14th in Men's K-1 Advanced at the recent Ocoee Rodeo. He missed by two places competing in the finals, but an outstanding performance none-the-less given the caliber of the competition. Congratulations Beau.

GO GIRL! Tori Murden

You've probably seen the news that Tori Murden made it two-thirds of the way across the Atlantic Ocean rowing solo before being stopped by huge waves. Tori was formerly a member of the club and certainly took her paddling skills to a level well beyond those needed for local rivers! Congratulations to her.

JAMES RIVER- RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

by Mike Cowan Paddlers - Brian Sanders, Mike Cowan

I recently had a temporary job in Richmond, and took advantage of an opportunity to paddle the James at low water. The James River has a reputation as a challenging trip at higher water levels, as it includes features such as a healthy gradient and several older low-head dams as it drops to Tidewater downstream of Richmond. We rented boats at Old Dominion Outfitters located on Mayo Island in mid-river downtown. You can get there by taking the 14th street bridge. This location was also takeout for the lower section which we paddled. This is the most difficult section, but we found it to be fairly manageable at the level of zero even for Brian who was on his first whitewater trip.

We put in at the Reedy Creek access about 11:00 Sunday morning, behind a group of local boaters. This access is maintained by City of Richmond Parks, and has a good map of the river posted on a sign. There is a row of small islands hugging river right and we immediately took a channel between two of them to mid-river. Then looking down river set a course for the upstream tip of Belle Island. You can see a horizon line from the dam, but once you get close you'll see First Break rapid. We ran it center left straight through no maneuvering required. It was probably class 1+ that day with a glassy surfable wave. Immediately downstream we stayed right of center close to the island approaching Hollywood rapid. This rapid is named for the cemetery on the hill river left and you should give it (the rapid) due respect. After scouting, we carried, it was probably class 3 that day. But all of the locals ran it most starting left and working right to an eddy. Then coming back across with a strong ferry to river left and avoiding washing up on a rock at midstream. The only tongue you would see when running this rapid feeds directly into several holes in succession so unless you can punch these holes while simultaneously working left in the pushy water, then head for the eddy & fast! Downstream of Hollywood you will see what looks like a pedestrian bridge about 25 feet high off the water. This is another low head dam with old gates used to control the release. Slightly right of center two of these gates were washed out in the 1969 flood. Directly overhead, you'll see a yellow sign that says CHANNEL marking Second Break rapid. Run the left opening and stay left. The next rapid is marked by the presence of a 15 foot diameter concrete pipe running parallel to the left bank near the water surface.

You can run Pipeline Rapid right center over a drop then paddle hard left. By this time Mayo Island will be on your right. You will then see a railroad bridge downstream. Run it center then work right to go under the 14th St. bridge. Takeout just past the bridge river right up a steep trail to the Old Dominion parking lot. You should know that most of these rapids are class 3-5 at higher water levels. I went back about two weeks later and hiked the pedestrian bridge over to Belle Is. finding the river maybe 4 inches higher. The difference at Hollywood rapid was much more dramatic however due to the way the river narrows there. Also the sign says access to the river is restricted at a level of about 5 feet. That's a pretty tough place to be then anyway.

Other hazards include numerous re-bar sticking up at low water. I hiked the channel below the dam river right of Belle Island and those rocks are class 6 no doubt say at a level of about 10 feet. And that's assuming you can navigate the riverwide strainer which has collected about 100 yards upstream of the dam if you wash river right of Belle Island. Whenever they get another flood comparable to the one resulting from Hurricane Camille there's a good chance more sections of these low head dams would wash out. So I know the boaters will pray for a big rain on the James!

Needless to say this is a very unique but impressive stretch of urban whitewater. Give it a try if you get the chance and the level's right!

MINUTES OF MEETING--Sept. 21, 1998

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM by President Johnny Sena. There was a round of introductions by the 18 members and 4 guests present.

Secretary's Report: It was moved by Dave Ackerman and seconded to dispense with the reading of the past minutes and to accept them as printed in the Viking Views.

Treasurer's Report: Violet Rice listed the Club's profit from the boat raffle as \$580. The balance is \$1866 with 80 currently paid members.

Old Business:

There was discussion regarding dispersal of profit monies. It was suggested to contribute to the following: American Whitewater Affiliation--\$250, earmarked for the Russell Fork Fund; West Virginia Rivers Coalition--\$250; Scotts Gulf of the Caney Fork River--\$80; nothing at the present time to the Friends of the Elkhorn River Coalition. Frank Weider made the motion to contribute the money as noted above and it was voted upon affirmatively.

Dave Ackerman has contacted three organizations for *safety clinic* info and at this time the NOC program seems the most feasible. A decision will be made when all details are received.

Johnny Sena reported that the *business cards* will cost \$35/500 and he will use the Club logo from the Viking Views.

The Long Run Lake *summer sessions* have been lightly attended. Reporting on the *winter pool sessions*, Dave Ackerman says that the Mary T. Meagher Aquatic Pool seems the most receptive to us, but a final decision has not been made.

New Business:

A vote was taken, and passed, to send American Whitewater Affiliation our Club's *member roster* for a one-time mailing by them; it will not be sold to other

organizations. We will also send the NOC our roster so members may be able to obtain their 10% discount on purchases. Johnny distributed National Park Service opinion surveys of the *Obed/Emory Rivers system*.

The November meeting is very important as it is the *annual election* of officers. Members should be thinking of their choices for nomination to the offices and plan to attend.

Mike Roberts very graciously gave a detailed history of the *Elkhorn Creeks access* and egress problems for the benefit of new members and guests. He reported that he had recruited Don Coaplen as the second Club delegate to the newly forming Coalition. They would welcome input.

Richard Millea inquired as to whether anyone could guide the *Club raft* at the Gauley Festival weekend, as Don Clark has had surgery. No one was available at this time. Mark Atkinson has located the Club banner and it will be taken to the Gauley Festival.

Don Coaplen suggested Johnny look into acquiring the Middletown Women's Club facility again for our *January dinner meeting*.

Many Vikings reported on their recent paddling adventures in several locales.

JoAnne Fischer suggested we list all upcoming events for our new members and guests present: Gauley Festival, Sept. 26; Russell Fork Rendezvous, Oct. 3-4; Ocoee Rodeo, Oct. 9-11; Monthly Club meeting, Oct. 19; NOC Paddler Appreciation Sale, Oct. 31; Cumberland below the Falls trip, Dec. 5-6, Frank Weider.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Weider, Secretary

MINUTES OF MEETING - Oct. 19, 1998

The meeting was called to order by President Johnny Sena at 7:40PM. There was a round of introductions by the 12 members and 2 guests present.

Secretary's report: A vote was taken and passed to dispense with the reading of the past minutes.

Old Business:

Dave Ackerman reported on the *winter pool sessions*: CanoeKY will help this year, as last winter, by adding us to their insurance and by bringing boats. We will acknowledge their help by mentioning their sponsorship on our advertising flyers. The University of Louisville's Crawford gym pool will be available to us late Saturday afternoons for the following fees: \$10/hr. lifeguard; \$10/hr. supervisor; \$25/hr rental. We must prepare risk-management paperwork. Members present discussed starting dates, with the sessions possibly beginning Jan. 9 and lasting 10 weeks. The excepted Saturdays would include our January dinner meeting and the Paddling Film Festival.

The Viking *business cards* will be ordered. The Middletown Women's Club will be reserved for our *January dinner*. A reminder was made by Johnny regarding our upcoming elections at the Nov. 16 meeting.

Drue Rice (through Dave Ackerman) has expressed interest in holding a *beginners' clinic* in May with the Blue River as a possible site.

River Rescue Clinic--Dave Ackerman will receive final results in November.

New Business:

Robert Meisburg was concerned about our club *retaining new members* after the pool sessions. Dave Ackerman stated that better records will be kept of participants and

followup calls made. Flyers will be distributed that state our upcoming clinic and summer Long Run Lake sessions.

Mike Roberts and Don Coaplen will attend an *Elkhorn Coalition* meeting Oct. 20. Frank Weider brought to the Club's attention a mailing from the AWA addressing their intent to address the Elkhorn access situation.

Alan Baldwin is to be commended for his work on our excellent *Web site*.

Tyler Sattich from *Quest* for the Outdoors distributed a *survey* to those present concerning boating gear. Those responding receive complimentary T-shirts. He requested flyers of the upcoming pool sessions. The store would like to carry more boating gear.

Frank Weider reminded members of his *Cumberland below the Falls* weekend Dec. 5-6. Several rivers were suggested for a *Polar Bear Cruise* on Jan. 1, 1999.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Wetder, Secretary

BIG SOUTH FORK NOTES

The O&W road out of Oneida that leads to O&W Bridge is apparently open and passable.

The old canoe-shaped "Leatherwood Ford" sign at stop light #3 in Oneida is now gone. New traffic lights have been installed in Oneida.

Book Review

Whit Deschner's: TRAVELS WITH A KAYAK

by Frank Weider

When it comes to being a "wild and crazy guy" - Deschner, Deschner he's our man, if he can't do it no one can. What a funny book! Sure it helps to be a boater to appreciate the subject matter but that what makes this book so special. I skimmed through the book just after I got it from our beloved River Mom and found myself laughing out loud at the foot notes. This guy does not miss any opportunity to make a statement including a note in the Library of Congress information that this book is to be filed under "...Questionable Tax Write-offs".

This book has 18 hilarious chapters plus a preface, introduction and closing which are not to be skipped for fear of missing some important fact - like the photographer was born several years after both his parents passed away. Some parts of the book are admittedly fiction, other parts originated with non-fiction facts the author made up. Whit is the consummate B.S. artist who proudly subscribes to the American proverb that the first liar never stands a chance.

Each of the chapters are four to twenty some pages long and contain copious foot notes (read them!). You can read whatever strikes your fancy at any given time since the chapters are basically funny short stories. I liked the whole book but I had two favorite chapters. The first was "Private PURTZ's Account: The Real Truth." In this chapter are the secrets of Private Purtz's long lost diary of the Grand Canyon's first descent. The entries are unedited and the spelling was not changed. Purtz claims "I rites this 2 put the record straight. I wuz on major Powell's trip down the Colorado but he seems 2 have 4got the fakt...". Included in the chapter is the lone surviving picture of Private Purtz - a sort of muddy full monty.

My other favorite chapter was "Rescue on the LOW SEAS". This is a short four page chapter in which Deschner relates his first experience with a sea kayaking group. Poor Whit found himself on a beach on Vancouver Island's west coast surrounded by people with seven logo outfits and had their boats "...adorned with more gadgetry than in a Dick Tracy cartoon..." and gear "...plastered with manufacturers' names so large that even passengers in jetliners passing overhead could discern the letters...". They started telling stories and as you might have guessed by now - the first liar never stands a chance. Whit proceeded to relate the story of how "Greystoke" rescued a female who was found swimming without any clothes on about a mile from shore. "All she wore was a startled look on her face." She was rather confused and turning hypothermic. She began to panic and tried climbing into the kayaks. He described how Greystoke took her aboard, got her to shore and treated her for hypothermia. The reader knows the female is actually a deer but the Dick Tracy characters never find this out.

It was also interesting to read about Deschner's adventures with paddling legend Walt Blackadar and their trip to New Zealand where he came to know that kiwi fruit is actually gooseberries on steroids. Insights on Walt's friend R.F. are likewise very humorous.

While I was happy to see our friend Greystoke featured in several of the chapters, it was also nice to find a piece of insider information on a piece of paper enclosed in my book. So, make a note of this and mark your own personal copies of this great book accordingly: The upper two boaters in the color photo of the Marsyandi in Nepal are Dave Weber and Dan Dixon (a.k.a. "Greystoke") respectively. The person shown in the photo of the Landsborough in New Zealand is Pat Mueller. Oh yeah, the book also has some terrific photos. If you liked Monte Smith's stories about Beau Rockerville you'll love this. I highly recommend getting a copy - it would certainly make someone a nice Christmas present.

COMMENTARY FROM A SELF-APPOINTED JERK

Probable cause at Frozen Head; the Issue That Will Not Die

"When you read the e-mail I sent to the AWA, that they want to publish in their next issue of "American Whitewater", you're going to think I'm a jerk.

I told them it was OK with me if they printed it, even though I wrote it before I new all the facts and have been thoroughly rebuked and humbled by an e-mail response to my posting on RBP. My wife is a lawyer and she did say that they had "probable cause" to raid your camp. But I failed to communicate the whole story to her. After telling her the facts again she said they DID NOT have just cause to raid the camp. The key issue seems to be whether or not the car that was pulled by the cops was on their way to the camp, but was not yet with the Vikings or that they were registered at the camp and were just returning to the camp. I don't know didley about law, but I know about small town southern cops, which is not the same thing. So please don't be too outraged when you read the letter. I gave them permission to publish the letter, because the issue needs to be addressed and controversy is a good catalyst. Plus how often does the AWA want to print something that I wrote?Once.....See ya'll on the water.....Robert Martin"

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SAFETY LINES: THE OTHER END OF THE ROPE

Here is a report for your consideration from a person who was rescued from a difficult situation on the Lower Gauley.

Hey folks, I am the " poor sob" who swam into the sieve behind House Sized Rock on Sunday of the Gauley Festival weekend. Again I give praise and thank you's to all of the people who responded. I indeed have a different outlook on life now!

Through e-mails and other posts, I have become aware of the names of a few of the people who were involved in the rescue. I want to personally thank my partner from the Southern Whitewater Assault Team. Bill Hancock for getting back from his swim and getting a hand on me. Also, thank you to Jim Daniels, who directly assisted in the rescue. And to John Foy , whose rope finally found its way into the cave where I was. And to Ellen Walker Harding and Amy Shipman, two women who without hesitation, jumped right into a very serious rescue situation.

And last (and certainly not least) I want to thank Charlie Walbridge, who as ironic as it may seem, picked me up at Swiss as I was hitching back up to our intended put-in at Peter's Creek. Realizing who I was in the vehicle with, I promptly introduced myself with many kudos and praises given to Charlie as to his work with the AWA, River Rescue and all of his work on safety on the river. Anyway I was in awe. After all, Charlie is somewhat of a Guru in these parts. Why I was even wearing an Extrasport Hi-Float, a jacket designed by Charlie himself for big-water conditions. Believe me I was grateful for the extra floatation.. Well he dropped me off at Peter's Creek and went on upstream to Wood's Ferry for his put-in. This by itself is inconsequential, but, as I was finally pulled from the water, I lay prostrate on the rock for a long time. When I finally lifted my head up, who did I see first? None other than Charlie. Crazy huh?? The world works in mysterious ways. I am very,very glad to be alive. And very lucky!! But you know what?? I would paddle PSH again, any day. And no matter what, I would never be anywhere near that boulder sieve EVER. Thanks again to all of the people involved in my rescue. SYOTR... Always Daniel Webb.