



cruiser

Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, DC, Inc.

The Chairman's Cockpit: Coronavirus

A friend, chuckling, said it must be like Groundhogs Day, paddling the same stretch over, and over and over! However, when that stretch is the GW Canal and the Breaks, it's amazing the variety of choices. I've attained at least six times up four different routes. I've paddled the dam, river right, river left and in the middle. We've done diagonals to see the eagle's nest and had a chance to count eaglets and blooming plants. The canal is now watered so after two months of slogging up a 4 inches deep stick and mud filled prism, we can now paddle like normal people. One fun game was a turtle count. Some reputable (or not) paddler says he saw 124. I personally counted 73. A forgotten route when the water is 4 feet or more, is to drop over the dam at the putin and follow the left channel until it joins the main river. It's smaller than the GW but has loads of riffles and moves perfect for a beginner. Plus it's intimate and beautiful.

So when I thought Covid was ending paddling, it turns out that I have been paddling more than ever.

So many people have told me our list of non-shuttle paddling trips has been invaluable. Find it in last month's Cruiser and on the webpage. If you have your own favorite that its not listed, tell us and it will be added.

CCA's phase 2 policy that allows official but non shuttle trips has brought out many new faces. What a treat to welcome them. Please check the schedule regularly. We're even branching out—to Little Falls (yes, the Lock 5 Canal reach is watered!) and to the tidal Potomac to watch the Fireworks. As always, heartfelt thanks to our leaders!

CCA is taking an active role in the Potomac Festival on August 15. We'll have a booth and a banner. Plan on being there.

Safety is still paramount. Masks and social distancing are standard. Also, do not let your paddling safety standards drop - helmets, lifejackets and floatation are required on CCA trips, as always.

SYOTR

Barb



Fireworks article and more photos on page 7.

Downriver Race Issue will come out the first week of September. By this time it is hoped that final decisions on the procedures will be determined. Please watch in the CCA website for updates on the race.

Watch the website
(<https://www.canoecruisers.org/>)
for Pop up trips.

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HFAC asks club boaters to register at their office and pay \$5 per person to park and use their take out. They will issue wrist bands that are good for the day. Registrations remain good for the year; if you use them again, making later check ins easier.

As you may know, their take out involve a long, very steep, one-lane gravel road. They will haul you and your boat up to your take out car with a tractor towed trailer, as they do for rafts and tubes. They do ask that you call them from the river when you're near Whitehorse rapid so they can have equipment ready to haul your party up the hill. On busy weekends, a wait may be required.

HFAC also has a put in site in Millville that may be available on most days.

Worth noting is that HFAC also has a brew pub with a deck that overlooks the river. Word is that the food and drink are pretty good.

Many, many thanks to Bob Whiting for being a great ambassador to the Harpers Ferry area outfitters over the years, and for again this year for renewing our relationships.

Thanks also to Barb Brown for her help on this and for her liaison work with the NPS on HF and lower Po access points, etc.

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Richard Koller

More Notices: From Alf Cooley

Since the last meeting (8 June) we have seen Montgomery & Fairfax Counties lower their anti-covid restrictions - and the C&O Canal Park also to go from defensive crouch, where they had drained the two major segments of Canal that we most depend on [Pennyfield-to-Violettes, and Georgetown Level].

They also re-opened parking at Carderock, Great Falls, and the top of the three lots at Anglers.

On June 24 Barb wrote the NHP asking for the bottom two lots to be reopened, and by 1 July they had opened the middle lot.

The NHP also plans to rewater the level above Swains Lock, and then that at the Great Falls Tavern. These could be used for some family or newbie paddler trips.

So, just as the Club resumed advertising its trips, we now find ample water in these two "paddle-back" sections, which previously had been marginal.

NHP No. 2 John Noel told Alf on 30 June of other plans to clean out the Canal clear into Georgetown with a special reed-cutting boat. He encouraged the CCA to make a Teams presentation for the new Superintendent, Tina Cappetta - possibly illustrated (pics and maps) illustrating our ideas for improvements to the Lower Canal (Violettes Lock to Georgetown.) An interesting covid project.

Key Parts of Canal Rewatered as the Park Reopens

From March to July as the C&O Canal authorities came to grips with the covid epidemic, they closed off the major access points - Great Falls Park, Anglers, and Carderock - and left the Canal itself at minimal navigability at Violettes Lock and Little Falls. Their rationale was that the Potomac might suddenly rise or a local downpour might cause a flash-flood (as happened at Great Falls Tavern two years ago) and their personnel, who were sheltering from the disease, would not be able to drain any watered section quickly enough to prevent a blow-out.

So when they re-opened in late June, they restored full levels to our favorite sections - Pennyfield to Violettes Locks, and Foxhall Road to Lock 5/Feeder Canal. The Parkies tell us they intend to put more water into the latter (Georgetown) Level and bring a pair of "Weed-O" specialty boats down from Williamsport to cut out the reeds clogging the Canal down into Georgetown. A new Canal Boat is expected to arrive next March in Georgetown, which will start ferrying tourists up to Fletchers and back.



New Dock at Seneca Creek, Riley's Lock Road

New easy access launch for boats is just below River Road on Riley's Lock Road just above the public boat ramp for trailered boats. In Google Maps look up Riley's Lock.



Think About Safety by Barb Brown

Does experience make a paddler cautious, or wise? Can we say we've seen it all and continue to paddle with nonchalance? I keep getting sobered by "freak" accidents that are not "freak" accidents at all - but unusual and predictable results of river conditions and equipment.

Take for example - On a recent Little Falls Thursday group trip we had an experienced paddler with a good role spill in the bottom drop of ZChannel. Since the shallow runoff is less than 8 inches deep, the paddler was not able to shift the paddle to the "good side," washed down and pinned upside down in the boat against a large rock. The boat was upstream of the rock. There was no motion for longer than was comfortable, then the boat washed away, leaving the paddler, face up, four inches **underwater!**

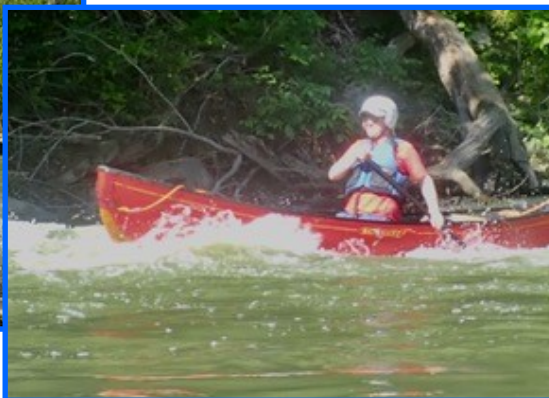
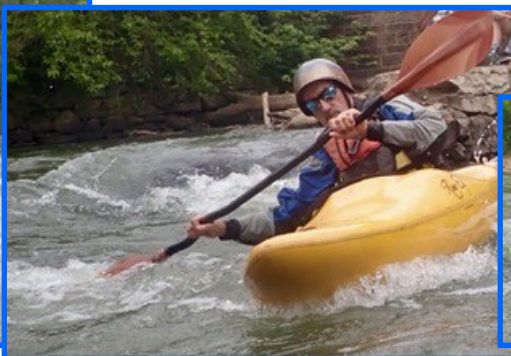
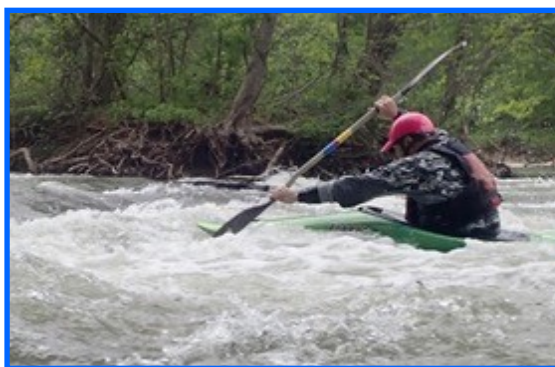
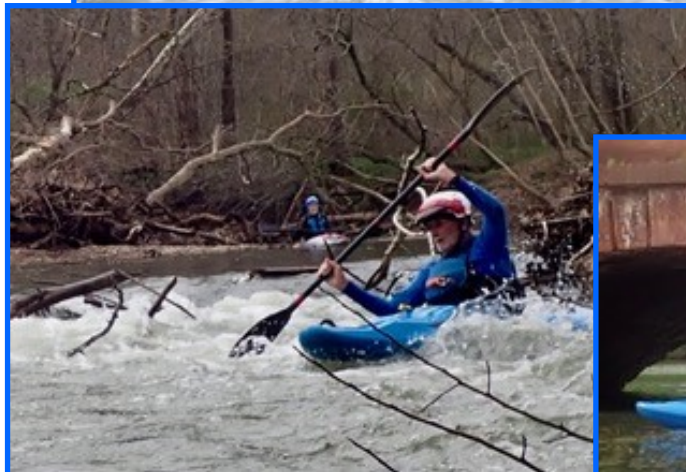
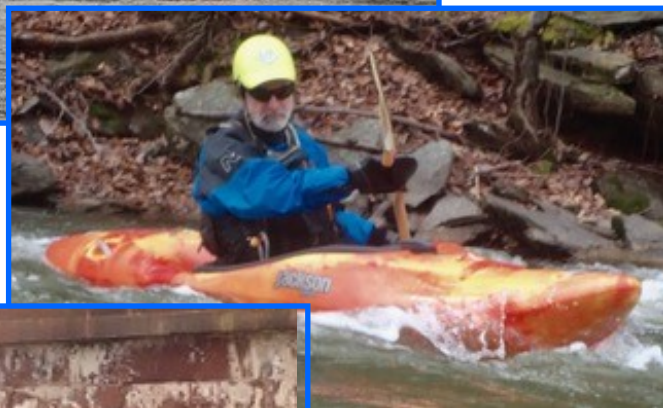
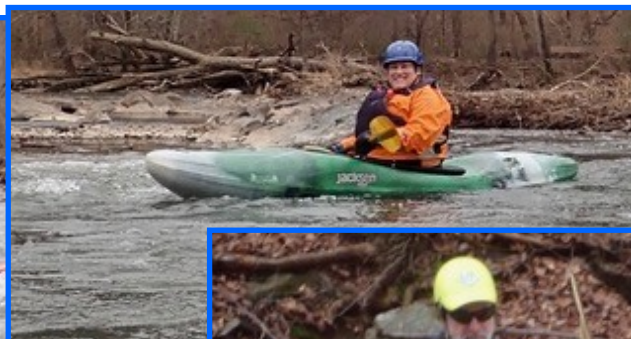
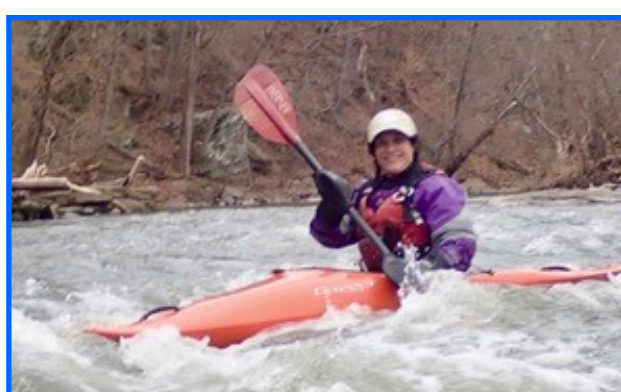
At first it appeared to be a foot entrapment - but the feet were also on the surface!

Instead, the spray skirt had transferred to the rock and had formed a seal, tight enough to make paddler helpless and underwater in the strong current flowing around the rock. Fortunately, experienced paddlers went into full rescue mode. One C-1'er leaped out of the canoe and was able to get the head above water. Another K-1'er, beached the kayak and waded across the stream to remove the sprayskirt from the boulder. The victim floated down face up, was brought to shore, and recovered in about ten minutes, shaken but able to continue. Without these interventions, or if the victim had been alone, I have no doubt we would have witnessed a drowning.

I had seen sprayskirts catch before, but usually by the grabloop on a stick or a log. To have the entire skirt sealed by a rock and holding the paddler underwater was novel. In this case, only recognition and fast action prevented a tragedy.

Paddlers during Covid. Photos by Barb Brown

Miki Komlosh, Lisa Fallen, Ken Jackson, Mark Brenneman, Jackie Hogan, Marilyn Jones, Daniel Mullin, David Cottingham, Gus Anderson, Mike Wellman, Tim Tilson, Alan Gale, Netta Lizak, Lisa Laden, Gordy Lane, John Snitzer, Mike Baumman, Ginny Quam, Gary Quam, Wayne McDaniel, Tom and daughter, Pam White, Alan Dickenson, Allison Holliday



Continued from previous page



Fourth of July Paddle

By Barb Brown (photos too)

It was with some trepidation that CCA planned a traditional fireworks paddle from Fletchers to the Lincoln Memorial and back to witness the national fireworks over the mall. Leaders Gary and Ginny Quam and Barbara Brown worried In the covid era, about parking at Fletchers, social distancing during a picnic and generally finding each other. Arriving an hour before the scheduled meeting time, it was a great relief that Fletchers although it was being used, was not packed. We had room to distance and enjoy our private picnics without risk!!!

Only the 3 Chapelles , Sheila, Pete and Ocoee, were there before me. They left early to watch the flyovers. Slowly paddlers trickled in until we had an amazing 33 people in a wide range of vessels including a gorgeous handmade open C-2 made by Alan Gale, blow up kayaks; open boats full of kids, sea kayaks, etc, etc, etc.

On the water it took a while for reality to set in. Where were the crowds??? We were almost the the only small craft. Arriving at the viewing area after 1 1/4 hours, there was nothing but glistening, reflective Potomac between us and the Lincoln Memorial. The tide had just turned and the water was amazingly still as we watched the full moon rise over Memorial Bridge.







Finally a "patrol" boat with a foghorn asked us to stay near Roosevelt Island. The show began and it was magnificent. In fact it was a double show that continued from Haines Point after the ellipse fireworks ended.

Ears ringing from the echos across the river, we paddled back via the inside (Virginia) passage of Roosevelt Island into the darkness punctuated by the reflections from Key Bridge and the boathouses. Paddling into the now flowing tidal current, it seemed much longer than an hour. Our adventure was further enhanced by small private fireworks lighting our way. Our flotilla was especially colorful from glow sticks worn in rainbow colors around the necks of the young.

Kudos to the late night paddlers who will remember this highlight forever. Leaders Gary and Ginny Quam, Barbara Brown, Fern Abrams and Cheryl Anne Woehr, Miki, Marty and Netta, Steve, Luke and Arianne Odiel, Alan Gale and Peter Olmsted, Elyse Osterwell, Michele Dandrea Lowell, Lindsay Lowell, Briant Lowell, Nathan Hamberg, Nathan and Julia Williamson plus 3 kids plus their friends, Karen Dobson, Hiro Iwaki and their daughter Mila, Gordon Lang, Scott Andrews and Leslie, Sheila, Pete and Ocoee Chapelle, and Toni and David Bickert. Fern's husband joined us for the picnic.



THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

EASY		Easy difficulty with low consequences. Smooth water with a clear passage through slight current or ruffles; can have gentle curves. No gradient loss. No hazards present or maneuvering required.
NOVICE		Moderate difficulty with low consequences. Moving water with identifiable rapids and regular waves; clear passages exist between rocks and hazards. Minimal gradient loss. Some maneuvering is required.
INTERMEDIATE		Moderate difficulty and some consequences. Fast water with standing waves; rocks, eddies and hazards exist with clear passages through narrower channels. Some gradient loss. Maneuvering is required.
ADVANCED		Hard, with major consequences. Long and/or powerful rapids with dynamic features; rocks, recirculating hydraulics, boiling eddies and other hazards. Significant gradient loss. Precise maneuvering required.
EXPERT		Very hard, with major consequences. Long and powerful rapids with dynamic features; rocks, recirculating hydraulics, boiling eddies and other hazards. Substantial and continuous gradient loss. Exact maneuvering required.
EXPERT +		Previously considered un-navigable rapids. Unavoidable hazards and extreme consequence. Substantial gradient loss.

Trip Repots by Alf Cooley

This springtime's trips calendar was a washout. With the covid swelling in March, we had to cancel trip after trip because we couldn't run any without getting into an automobile with another unrelated paddler. Wives and shuttle-bunnies suddenly found themselves back in demand. The Club published its covid tips in mid May - in the Cruiser of May 18, and on the CCA website under Trip Guidelines, but trips went "private" - just between friends.

By mid June the partial reopening of Montgomery and Fairfax Counties allowed the Club once again to allow posting of trips on its website and for members to send out group emails for Thursday, Sunday, and pick-up trips. The first such covid-guideline-observant trip went out on June 21, and there have been ten more trips posted (through 12 July), including the Fourth of July Float down to the fireworks on the Mall. We're happy indeed, as new folks can now sign up - over ten have joined us so far.

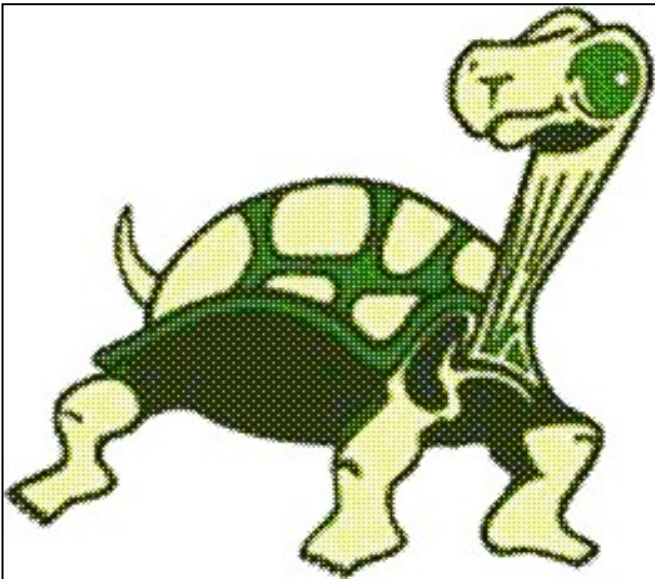
Because of the shuttle problem, trips have been pretty local (lots of Violettes Lock/George Washington Canal loops) but also a number of trips never seen before the covid. Ron Canter, Ed Gertler, and Ed Evangelidi contributed about 50 covid trips (some high on imagination but low on practicality), which are now in the Message Board part of the website. Some of those that have caught fire are: Golfcourse Rapid (Goose Creek), Seneca Creek attain, Goose-to-Edwards Ferry Interstate, and Needles-with-bike shuttle up the Towpath. Other trips have gone to Mallows Bay, Upper Gunpowder Falls, the Needles, Monocacy and Seneca Creek, and as the river has dropped: Little Falls.

We were fortunate in persuading the C&O Canal Park to top up the Pennyfield Lock section - and they've done the same on the Georgetown Level, making the GWC and Little Falls loops far more accessible. And once again Bob Whiting negotiated free put-in rights for CCA and BRV members for the Needles at Bakerton.

And Ron Canter, whose 1980s vintage maps have been up on the website for several years, sent us 2 new Goose Creek maps and an updated one for the Shenandoah from Millville Dam to Harpers Ferry. Take a peek.

CCA Event Schedule and Calendar All Trips cancelled To check on Changes please check at:

<http://www.canoecruisers.org>



COVID-19 & RESPONSIBLE PADDLING

WE ALL WANT TO PADDLE AND WE ALL WANT TO STAY HEALTHY. IN THE CURRENT CRISIS, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DO BOTH. IF YOU CHOOSE TO GO PADDLING, HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS:

BE SMART

If the activities associated with paddling make it impossible for you to respect local orders and national guidelines it's smarter to stay home and stay healthy.

If you feel sick, or have recently been near someone who is sick - stay home! Contact your doctor for care.

Avoid groups of more than ten people.

MAINTAIN 6 FT OF DISTANCE

Social distancing applies to paddling as well as shuttling. Walk or bike your shuttle route, or consider alternative paddling options that do not require a shuttle, such as park & play or attaining upstream.

MAINTAIN STRICT HYGIENE

Wash your hands often, frequently disinfect gear and other surfaces you touch, and do not share equipment, food, water, or other supplies.

BE CAREFUL

Paddle well below your skill level to reduce risk of injury and potential to find yourself in the hospital and in the proximity of others who are sick.

Don't press your limits - if you need outside assistance, you can put undue strain on local first responders, medical personnel, and increase the risk of exposure for all involved in the rescue.



Canoe Cruisers Association



Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, DC
c/o Virginia DeSeau
1105 Highwood Rd.,
Rockville, MD 20851

First Class Time Limit

Attention
Deadline for
Summer 2020
Friday July 10

CCA Potomac Downriver Race



Hosted by Sycamore Island and co-sponsored by
Potomac Whitewater Racing Center.

Saturday, September 26, 2020

Registration is Online Only.

Advance registration is \$25,

day of race the registration fee will increase to \$30.

Tandem teams must register and pay as two individuals.

Register at: <http://www.canoecruisers.org>



Sign-in begins at 9:00 AM and ends at 10:30 AM. Hard cut-off.

A mandatory meeting for all racers starts at 10:30 AM.

The race start time is 12 noon for all racers. Plan accordingly.

Lunch and a T-shirt will be waiting for you at the island.

The Award Ceremony will be held at 3:00 PM.

Earlier if everyone paddles fast.