

Bob Safranek sent this review of the 1994 raft trip to Ken Long and Deb Hermann.

Ken and Deb (or Deb and Ken):

Since you were not able to be at the raft trip in person, but were in spirit, I decided to give you a recap of what your spirits experienced. Rich, Renee, and Jeff started it all off on Sunday. (By the way Rich just quit his job at Martin Marietta and is planning on paddling ALOT this Summer) Don and Roberta (yes she exists and they are engaged), and Kim and Daryl arrived on Monday. (Kim and Darrel will be moving to New Orleans.. Daryl got a promotion and started the new job July 5). Mr. Higgins and Parker got there sometime before Wed. Saturday night Ray had close to 300 people at the campground for a radio station promo (live bluegrass band).

Rich and Renee did some paddling, Jeff some hiking, Kim and Darrel vegging, and Don and Roberta exploring... On Wednesday, there was a big thunderstorm. Most people were at MRT, but Darrel ended up holding Allie on top of a picnic table. Lighting struck in the field next to the campground (not the cow field). Ric Bo with Jason and Patrick got there Wed too. Loree had a business trip and made it in on Saturday (the last arrival). Deb arrived about 6pm, I got there 10 minutes later, Ed and Eileen 30 minutes after that, and Paul, Sue, and Rita (at 1 month 1 day the youngest GSP to attend) yet another hour later. That night I got a phone call that the "cool gifts (tm)" were in NJ instead of at MRT like they were supposed to be. Luckily, Greg Bo hadn't left yet and I got hold of him 5 minutes before departure.

Greg Bo arrived about 8am ("cool gifts (tm)" in hand) Thursday after driving most of the night. The Treece clan rolled in 30 minutes later. Rich and Renee went paddling. They found a way to put in just about Grassy Shoals and paddle down to Thurmond. A crew, (Paul, Sue, Rita, Deb, Kim, Ed, Eileen, Don, Roberta, me) drove over to the Monongahela National Forest. We decided to do what we were told was a 6-7 mile circuit hike (the Cow Pasture Trail). Well, it turned out to be closer to 12 miles... A VERY long day! There were several interesting incidents though. Early in the hike a wild turkey (an official GSP bird) crossed in front of us. About 8 miles in, during a "Rita feeding" stop, we had an up close and personal meeting with a deer. Ed went down the trail to use the bushes and said "boy, there are some fresh deer tracks here". A few minutes later a deer came out on the trail (about 200' away). It looked at us, we looked at it, and everyone was happy... The deer proceeded to move into the woods on the opposite side of the trail and approach us. It passed about 15-20' away from us, continued another 50' and crossed the trail. At this point, someone sneezed and it turned and looked at us (photo op!). The other notable incident on the hike occurred a little earlier. I was in the lead and noticed something rustling the grass about 15' off the trail. I stopped and pointed. The rest of the crew came up and tried to see what it was. After a few seconds, it bounded away from us. "Its a fox" said I. Then I thought, no, its too big.. a wolf?, no Deb then says "Its a (gurgle) BEAR!" (as mom bear's head appears above a 6' high bush about 50 yards off the trail (what I saw was a cub...)). Intimidated by the sight of 9 GSPs mom and cub beat a leisurely retreat. Needless to say, the GSPs were quite happy at that. At the campfire that night, a small blue heron decided to land in camp.

Friday was the ducky/hardboat trip. The Treece clan (Jeff, Cherre, Greg, Victoria, and Scot Tracer) and Rick Bo duckyed, Rich, Ed, and Eileen K1'd, and Paul OC1's from Prince to Thurmond. (Renee pulled a chest muscle on Wed.) The river was running at 2.5' so it was a good day. Most of us vegged out at camp most of the day. But Don and I decided to try and drive to surprise to video the carnage. It turns out that if you have 4wd you can get all the way there... Go to Canard, take the road at the end of the parking lot and continue about two miles. There is even a pulloff by Surprise. We walked (all 200-300 yards of it) down to the wave train, and then crab walked up river left until we found some small dry rocks to sit on.

We ended up about 40' left of the hole in GREAT position. Lance said they would be through Surprise between 3:30 and 5:30. At 6:15 we gave up and started on out. We got back to the lower wave train at 6:30 and left. The MRT bus driver at Canard said they were supposed to be there at 5:30... Well, they ended up getting to Surprise after 7, and taking out after 7:30... They hole was very sticky... First boat: Paul, hits the hole solid, gets turned sideways and starts surfing Paul "Hey I'm surfing Surprise... This is (glub)" as he gets trashed. Next: Eileen, she never made it up the wall.. trash city... Rich, not knowing we are not videoing them, is thinking "I'm going to get trashed so I might as well look good". He lines up, tosses his paddle, and makes it! At lastly, Ed... he hits the hole... AND MAKES IT! after he got though the wall he almost lost it because "I've always been swimming by that time! I didn't know what to do!". Everyone else arrived that day (except Loree).

Saturday was pretty much a veg day. People went to the swimming hole on the Meadow. SR fixed the ladder to the rope (the boards were loose earlier in the week) Kim Strang got a good bruise (with a handprint in it) from jumping off the rock. Rich and your entries to the homebrew contest were quite similar. The response to them was overwhelming(ly bad). We ended up with a total of 18 entries by 9 brewers (if you could call two of them brewed!) Jeff S. won with a Doplebock. Jeff Mizener took second (Porter?) and Jeff M and Paul tied for third. If you haven't heard, Ed is now a professional brewer. A Brewpub opened up 6 blocks from Eileen's house and he is moonlighting as the brewmaster. If you get to Naperville, stop by Taylor Brewing Company... GSPs drink free if Ed is present.

The campfire was highlighted by the Tammy singers reditions of a Christine Lavin song (can't remember title) with Dan Osborn as an inflatable doll, and a new GSP classic "The Bron-Son Song". Jeff and Deb did a new "How to be a Poster Child" presentation (the 92 raft shot is on this years flyer again).. The saying came out to be "NO ED". Sue and the gals (with the help of Greg Bo) did rendition of the "Diet Coke Break" commercial. Paul did a masterfull job with the initiation (5 new pigs). The magic elixer disappeared very quickly (I bairly got some) and Rich sacrificed the smelly shoes to the river gods. This night was capped off with the release signing, distribution of "cool gifts (tm)" and a sing along with music by Darrel, Rich, and Don.

The river dropped fast and was running at 0.5 on Sunday, so the trip started at Canard. Kim, Stacy (pregant again!), Sue (and Rita), Daryl, (recovering from bronchitus), Don (bad ear), and I (ditto) went to the old bridge at Fayette and mooned the crew (actually Kim tooks stills, and I videoed). Ed did a headstand moon of the bridge, and got a river enema as the Mizner boat snuck up and Jeff got him with a full bucket. We had 37 people go down. 6 - R6's (3 with 6 people, 3 with 5) and an R4 with Steve, Mark Bruak, Paul, and Rich. Other notable assignments Jeff and his Harem (Jeff Schwab, Kim Strang, Roberta Faiola, Barb Russell, Renee Gelblat) and Eileen and her Gigalos (Eileen, Ed, Tom Tengdin, Pete Hallenbeck, Joe Cychosz, Joel Plisken).

At the evening campfire there was a skit (Rich and a cast of thousands) "Mr Do-Be and Mr Don't-Be Teach Kayacking" (Paul was Mr Do-Be and Ed Mr Don't-Be... Jill and Pete declined to organize next year, so it went to the second senior person Dan (and Holly in abstentia) Brunner (who have just moved back to Indy). Darrel closed out the trip with his song.

Hope to see you next year (or at the Folk Fest????)