

## FEATURES

# Brevard College Gets High Ropes Course

BY BRIAN THEROUX

A high ropes course will open this semester on the Brevard College Campus.

A ropes course is a series of obstacles or "elements" that are suspended above the ground. Participants are tied into a cable that will catch and hold them if they were to fall. This ropes course is as high as forty feet in some places. Todd Weatherly, Challenge Course Consultant and Construction Coordina-

tor, built the ropes course with a team of eight students. The construction started in January of 2000 after the students designed the course. It was finished this past May.

The high ropes course, which is nicknamed "Squirrel Roost", will be "primarily for the use of the students in Wilderness Education and for the capacity of training students to be facilitators", says Weatherly. The course may also be opened to the community at some

time in the future.

Weatherly says students in Wilderness Education can hope to gain "technical skills in regard to the use and maintenance of a ropes course and facilitation skills with regard to leading diverse groups through challenge course initiatives."

The course awaits final inspection and certification by Ken Jacquot of Challenge Towers, a division of the Blue Ridge Expedition-

ary Center, before it is opened to student use.

The course consists of a Cargo Net, Burma Bridge, Postman's Walk, Loop-de-Loop, Multi Vine, Spacewalk, and Zip Line. The Spacewalk was an original design by Weatherly and proves to be the most physically challenging as well as Weatherly's favorite element.

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## Tour of controversial waterfalls available

The Jim Bob Tinsley Museum will conduct the annual Autumn Waterfall Tour on Mon., Oct. 9th, 2000. Guests will observe Bridal Veil Falls, High Falls and Triple Falls. These three spectacular waterfalls, located on private property, are not otherwise available for viewing by the general public. Autumn coloration, ex-

pected to be at its peak, will provide outstanding photographic opportunities. High Falls and Triple Falls can be viewed from shelters adjacent to parking areas, with an optional trail descent to the base of each waterfall. Bridal Veil Falls will require a short walk to the base of the waterfalls with an optional trail climb to the top.

The tour of the waterfalls begins in the Tinsley Museum, 20 West Jordan Street, Brevard, at 9:30am. Guests will then car-pool to the vicinity of the waterfalls. After viewing the waterfalls, each a short distance from parking areas, an excellent picnic lunch, including hot and cold foods will be served at the pavilion overlooking Triple Falls.

An entertainment program will follow lunch. Guests will return to the museum at about 2:30pm.

The cost of the tour is \$45 per person. Reservations are required. Rain date for the tour is Wed., Oct. 11th. For further information and reservations, please call 884-2347 from 10AM - 4PM, Tues. - Sat.

## Student Conservation Association:

### Changing Lives through Service to Nature

BY JOSEPH MOERSCHBAECH

Many of us dream of spending a month in the backcountry of the great national parks of this country such as Denali, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Teton, or one of the hundred plus other beautiful national parks, forests, and refuges. A great opportunity is available for interested college students to follow this dream while earning income and gaining valuable leadership experience and conservation skills. The organization that runs this program is America's oldest and largest conservation provider. This organization is known as the Student Conservation Association (SCA).

Donors who fund this program are mainly independent citizens who are concerned about the environment. The largest part of this program is known as Conservation Work Crews (CWC), which consist of six, eight, or ten high school volunteers and two crew leaders, who

are over the age of twenty-one. The crew of high school volunteers is chosen through an application process and is provided with all necessities except for transportation to and from the initial meeting place.

Sara Murray worked as a high school volunteer with SCA at Great Smoky Mountain National Park in 1999 and in Glacier National Park in 2000. She explains her experience with SCA by stating:

"I signed up for my first SCA trip because I thought an expense paid five weeks in the backcountry sounded like fun; but after the experience was over it felt great to realize that our crew had completed a lot of valuable work."

The two-crew leaders are offered highly competitive salaries and benefits, which include professional deals from multiple outdoor apparel companies. To become a crew leader the applicant must be highly skilled in outdoor activity, have demonstrated leadership abil-

ity in the past, be able to work with hand tools and demonstrate proper use, and have a certification as a wilderness first responder. While in the field, the crew leader acts as an instructor and a mentor to the volunteers. Other duties of the instructor include attending a three-day spring orientation meeting, a week-long work skills training course, and a two-day fall debriefing course. All transportation for the group leaders is provided by SCA.

Last summer I was lucky enough to take part in a conservation work crew as a volunteer. Each morning I was awakened by the chirping birds and each night I was put to sleep by the bellowing frogs. The days were spent repairing trails and building bridges, while the nights were spent discussing the world and playing intense games of memory. We camped by a lake, which provided refreshing relief after working in the unforgiving summer sun all day.

As a conservation crew SCA strives to maintain the forest, while using its natural resources in instances where other means cannot be logistically used. In the SCA program, use of gas powered tools is also discouraged. These two standards, which the SCA follows were the cause for our crew sawing down a white oak tree with a double handle, cross cut saw. This task took hours to accomplish and it caused us to gain a new found respect for the original lumberjack who at one time provided the nation with lumber by performing this straining task day after day. The tree was then used to build a bridge, which would safely carry hikers from one side of the creek to the other. This was one of many repairs our crew made on the trails in those five weeks.

The friends we met in the Forestry Department also provided

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