

Emersion Team B returns

by Tom Cowan
COntributor

We never used tents so we became well adjusted living amid a constant flow of cool air. In the mornings we would awake to the sound of the breeze making our tarps flap and the trees sway. You could feel the cold air sucking your precious warmth right through your sleeping bag, and upon unzipping this cocoon you would feel your body heat disintegrate, forcing you to move quickly to stay warm. Despite some discomfort, we carried out our morning tasks with efficiency and even cheerfulness.

Most days were started with the lighting of Whisper-Light stoves and pots of boiling water from which we would make our morning mush, normally oatmeal, which was a perfect fuel for hauling gear over long distances. Warmth was normally only felt with the sweat of our labors and the

putting on of layers after reaching camp in the evenings. On the trails our daily mileage maxed-out around 13 miles with elevation gains of over three thousand feet. Much of the challenge lied in the fact that our packs were often waited with several days worth of water, which was otherwise unavailable in the drought stricken mountains.

The advantage to the drought was the fact that we enjoyed staying dry. Starting in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, we enjoyed beautiful weather on our week-long hike to Lake Fontana. After paddling the length of Fontana we set our longest base camp on the mud-flats of a dried inlet near the trials of Tsali, where we spent three days mountain biking. After our first light rain of the trip a drastic cold front moved in, turning this base camp into a freezing wind tunnel where the sun would dip beneath the tree tops at 3:00 pm. One freezing night, we

were awoken by dogs barking and men screaming. It was bear hunting season and several hunters recklessly passed through our camp yelling obscenely at their hounds. For whatever reason they displaced some of our cooking gear, all of which minus a crucial pair of pot grips, we found a short distance away.

After a successful week and a half of flat water paddling and mountain biking, we resumed hiking – now north bound on the Appalachian Trail into the Great Smoky Mountains. As planned, our instructor and co-instructor returned home and we split into groups of five, traveling lighter and faster over some of the highest ridges in the Appalachians. We slept under the roofs of three walled trial shelters which proved vital to us as the rainy weather became snowy. On our last night, one of our two groups was not able to get sufficient shelter at the place they had planned to camp. All ten of us

were forced to crowd into a small shelter as a blizzard coated the world around us with several inches of snow and temperatures dropped into the low teens. As always, we coped well. Building a fire, we never succumbed to hypothermia, hunger or any other miseries.

The next day on Nov. 16 we reached the frozen summit of Clingman's Dome (the highest peak in the Smokies) and soon after met our van. All of us returned proudly and with all our ten digits intact. Having planned and conducted the trip with little interference from our instructors, each of us gained vital experience in the way of trip planning, leadership, and teamwork.

The members of Emersion B include:

Tony Brendel, Curt Schwartz, Robin Funsten, Caryn Gates, Tom Cowan, Ken Hardwick, Drew Beck, Colin Jones, Ceci Gatungo, Noah Warshauer and our instructor Joe Moerschbaecher.

Senior Project: Voice of the Rivers

by Rhrea Frederick
Copy Editor

As the semester quickly comes to an end, there are several seniors working diligently on wrapping up their college career. One senior in particular made the best of his senior project last week by reintroducing to the Brevard community "Voice of the Rivers," during his presentation in the Porter Center.

James Davisson got the idea for his project from his advisor, Dr. Anne Chapin. He became very interested when she informed him of the trip and

how the history of the trip could be relevant to the Art History and WLEE elements of his integrated studies major.



James collected pictures, journals and news paper articles of the trips in the past. The photographs were of people the students met along

the way and the land they had the opportunity of encountering on their journey. James found journals and logs kept by students on the trip, and he used these findings to his advantage.

He scanned the 2,000 photographs and 100 articles he found onto a digital archive for the library. James felt that it was important for "the college to be able to look back on the past experiences."

The Voice of the Rivers experience is primarily kayaked, using the Wilderness Leadership activity to "adventure through the woods and educate the students about

preservation."

The trip is a "great opportunity to gain knowledge of the ecosystem in which we live, the effects we have on the waterways and the interaction with young and old along the river," said James. "The only to see these places is by kayaking because most of them are so remote."

The photographs James found are framed and hanging in the Porter Center around the map of the VoR river systems. His paper and interviews with past VoR accompaniments are archived in the library. The picture exhibit will be up until December 18.