

Flicks in February

Well, the weather outside was frightful - or not, for most of the second month of 2004. Lingering snow on the trails caused several events to be postponed or cancelled. But we still got out of our houses, if not always outdoors, as it was a big month for movie events. Three of the months' 12 events involved movies - pretty good for Oscar month.

Pet Rescue/Cinema Draft House Day
 Organizers: Shelley Sanner, Steve Pheiffer

The 20 members of the MOC that spent the afternoon at PetSmart in Sterling, VA, helped the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Program to find foster or permanent homes for dogs and cats. Along with walking the dogs and playing with the cats, the group talked to potential adopters about the animals' backgrounds. After the four-hour shift in the afternoon, 12 dogs and 1 cat had homes, more than double the usual amount for that shift, said Theresa Caton of the Rescue Program.

Combined with their good deeds, the MOC group went out to celebrate at the Arlington Cinema 'N' Drafthouse, where moviegoers can enjoy a full menu, including beer, during their movie. That night's feature was "The

Station Agent," which received mixed reviews from the MOC crowd.

Dinner & Movie at Amer. City Diner
 Organizer: Joanne Milne

Joanne got two groups together to check out another eat-n-greet venue. This time, the scene was the American City Diner in Northwest D.C., and the flicks were a pair of Hitchcock's finest: "Rear Window" and "The Birds." The films and the food got high praise from the group, despite the hecklers at "Rear Window" and the signs of age of "The Birds" causing giggles amongst the group. The heat varied, though, so winter moviegoers should bundle up.

Day Trip to Luray Caverns
 Organizer: Mike Eppert

One of the groups that managed to get outdoors headed back in - into the Earth, that is. Managing to snag a day of good weather at the end of the month, the caverns in Virginia weren't even too cold. The group snagged some dramatic photos of stalactites and stalagmites as well as a very still reflecting pool, which Mike called "the most perfect mirror I've ever seen." Of course, the group rounded out the day with dinner at a local restaurant, followed by ice cream for some attendees.

News You Can Use

New Officer Joins the Ranks

Please welcome Jesse Allen as the Preservation Coordinator for the club. Jesse will be working with other community organizations to give back to our area by donating our time and hands to restore and renew our natural resources. Jesse already has several events in the works for March and April. Drop him a note at: jallen@marylandoutdoorclub.org

New Contributors This Month!

Jesse Allen will have a monthly feature on Preservation, starting this month. See page 3. On page 2, MOC Member Marc Durant shares his thoughts on the arrival of spring.

Cancellations and No-Shows

While the weather complicated things this past month in particular, there have been an increasing number of members "no-showing" for events. This is frustrating to other members for several reasons. One, if you haven't let the organizer know you're not coming, everyone often has to wait for you, ultimately making the call to leave without you. Two, often there are long waiting lists for events, and interested members are turned away. When you no-show, that spot could have instead been used for someone else. Three, it's just plain discourteous. Your organizer is volunteering his or her time to provide you with activities, and he or she gives you ample reminders as to how to cancel or even to call at the last minute and say you're stuck in the mud or even just changed your mind.

The easiest way to cancel when you know in advance you won't be able to attend is through the Member Area of the web site. When you first log in, you're shown a list of "Events You're Attending." Click "cancel registration" to be removed from the list and allow someone else to register for that spot. If you can't make it last-minute, please use the contact information the organizer has provided you to let the group know not to wait on you.

The registration process for events allows the club to limit the number of event attendees to a group size that the organizer feels comfortable safely leading and provides emergency contact information just in case. We always welcome suggestions as to how to improve the registration/wait list/cancellation process, however. Please feel free to share your thoughts with any officer via email, at any event, or at Social Hour. Thanks for helping us run the club smoothly and keep costs low for you!



MOC members pose with a doggie friend at the Pet Rescue/Cinema Drafthouse Day (left); part of the group marking their trip to Luray Caverns (center); part of the explorers inside the Caverns (right).

March Events

Fri. - Sun., Mar. 5 - 7
Ski/Snowshoe Weekend III
Canaan Valley, WV

Fri. - Sun., Mar. 5 - 7
Hiking and Hottubs
Deep Creek Lake, MD

Sat., Mar. 13 @ 9 AM
Difficult AT Hike - Roller Coaster
Bluemont, VA

Sun., Mar. 14 @ 9:30 AM
Difficult Hike - Bull Run/Occoquan
Clifton, VA

Fri., Mar. 19 @ 3 PM
CNN Crossfire Live Viewing
Washington, DC

Sat., Mar. 20 @ 6 PM
Salsa Dancing and Dinner
Washington, DC

Sun., Mar. 21 @ 9 AM
Difficult Loop Hike - Sugarloaf
Dickerson, MD

Sun., Mar. 21 @ 11 AM
Moderate Hike - Sugarloaf
Dickerson, MD

Sat., Mar. 27 @ 9 AM
Gwynns Falls Park Spring Clean-Up
Baltimore, MD

Sat., Mar. 27 @ 9:45 AM
Explore Baltimore Zoo
Baltimore, MD

Sun., Mar. 28 @ 10 AM
Difficult AT Hike - Black Rock Cliffs
Smithsburg, MD

Sun., Mar. 28 @ 1:30 PM
Easy Hike - Little Bennett Park
Clarksburg, MD

Wed., Mar. 31 @ 6:15 PM
Intro to Rock Climbing Class
Columbia, MD

For more info on upcoming events,
visit the "Events" tab on our web site.

Spring Forward

For all of you aching for the return of spring, MOC Member Marc Durant shares your pain. Read his 'mildly philosophical' account of his own return to the trail, written in May 2002.

When I stepped out of the office today I was struck by how green the world has become. Trees, bushes, grasses - all barren for months, shadows of their true selves, now lush and alive. In the winter months all seem to be shadows of reality, some dimension missing. Some critical face, long absent, has returned with the spring rain.

The forest has such pull on these days. The stormy sky, strange light filtering through the layers of cloud to reflect from the fluttering green leaves and cast the path into a living form. It winds through the trees like a snake, soft under my running shoes and beckoning me forward over every next rise. The leaves obscure the past and future of the trail, leaving only glimpses of what is ahead.

In this season, it is only ahead that is important, for the unwritten agreement with the forest is clear - there must be no turning back. Stopping is permitted only in the most dire of circumstances, or to investigate the most intriguing of mysteries. There shall be no hesitation, no sly turn of the foot to retrace path. If the path intended to be finished in this manner it would end - suddenly and without warning - preferably at a cliff.



Photo: S. Bournique/USFWS

The new leaves block the sounds of cars, leaving only the running water and running feet, rustling leaves and rustling clothes. I run for a purpose today, and it makes my legs strong. I run for the pain, for the much-needed cleansing of the spirit. There is much in the course of the week that seems to build, to appear and never dissolve. Worries and responsibilities can be overwhelming, burying our spirits in the shackles of the daily routine.

And so you must run too, as the path unwinds through the growing storm. When the rain comes it will wash us clean, leaving the worries of a human world to be filtered by the running water, the growing plants, and the new green leaves.

Marc says: I wrote this in the Sudsville Laundromat in Catonsville, after a particularly glorious run through the heart of a violent rainstorm that left me completely covered with mud except for an ear-to-ear grin that I got to share with the two other crazies I met on the trail that day.

For more information on trail running, or to comment on this story, please email Marc. His address can be found in the Member Network area of the MOC web site.

How do you like this style of story for the newsletter? Do you have a personal outdoors experience you'd like to share? Please email thoughts on the newsletter, article ideas and submissions to explorer@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Organize an Event

It's simple, fun to do, and gives you great leadership experience that you can use on your resume. If it sounds like something for you, please let us know.
events@marylandoutdoorclub.org

This Month in History

March is Women's History Month.
March 3 is If Pets Had Thumbs Day.
March 5, 1770 - Boston Massacre.
March 12, 1912 - Girl Scouts Founded.
March 18, 2002 - MOC Founded.
March 19, 1918 - Congress approves Daylight Savings Time.
March 30 is Take a Walk in the Park Day.



Luck o' the (not-so) Irish

What better way to celebrate a holiday than hanging out with friends, watching parades, and imbibing lots of beverages? They say everyone's a little bit Irish on this day that celebrates everything associated with the Emerald Isles. Traditionally, one must wear green on March 17th or risk a pinching from anyone who notices you lacking festive colors.

Some local places to celebrate before and after the holiday:

Sun., Mar. 14 - Baltimore's 5K Shamrock Run and Parade

Sun., Mar. 14: "The Nation's Parade," Washington, DC

Galway Bay, Annapolis, MD
Sean Donlon Irish Pub, Annapolis, MD
Fado, Washington, DC
The Four Provinces, Washington, DC
Mick O'Shea's, Baltimore, MD
Claddagh Pub, Baltimore, MD
Sine Irish Pub, Arlington, VA
Murphy's Grand Irish Pub, Alexandria, VA

Erin Go Bragh! (Ireland Forever!)

Tick Tock

The first Sunday in April (April 4, 2004) is the start of Daylight Savings Time - set your clocks ahead one hour at 2 a.m.

Preservation Press

The Maryland Outdoor Club brings members opportunities to explore and enjoy the great outdoors. But do we give back as good as we get? In an effort to answer with a resounding "Yes!", the MOC's new Preservation Coordinator is offering new conservation-oriented activities. Most often we will partner with existing organizations to work with them to restore and improve our environment and the health of the local ecology and maintain services for hikers, such as shelters, cabins, and trails. Look for some of the following forthcoming activities:

Cleanup days in Baltimore City Parks with Volunteers Central - Saturday, March 27th (posted on MOC web site)

Tree planting with The Nature Conservancy -Cranesville Swamp Preserve, Saturday, April 3rd (posted),

Seagrass planting and oyster bed restoration with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation,

Trail maintenance crew days with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club,

and many more. Our volunteer opportunities will not be limited to conservancy work. New activities coming up in the future include chances to work with pet adoption services, soup kitchens, volunteering at elder care centers, and so on.

Do you have an idea for ways that the club can give back to the community? Please contact me with your ideas at: volunteer@marylandoutdoorclub.org. We look forward to seeing you on the trails!

-Jesse Allen

MOC
Preservation
Coordinator



Ads & Classifieds

Advertise in the Monthly Explorer
Does your business want to advertise in the Monthly Explorer? Reach hundreds of potential customers each month with a free ad - in exchange for bartered items/goods. Contact us for details.

explorer@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Place a Monthly Explorer Classified
Classifieds can only be placed by MOC members. With classified space you can sell single item goods (depreciated merchandise) or place notices. Classifieds are \$5.00 per 25 words or less. The MOC has the right to refuse or edit any classified. Send your classified, and amount due to Maryland Outdoor Club, ATTN: Monthly Explorer Publication, P.O. Box 854, College Park, MD 20741.

Deadline: the 15th of each month for the following month's issue.



Member Benefits

We now have several coupons and discounts available online in the Member Area. Community Relations Coordinator Joanne Milne is looking for ideas for businesses and restaurants to provide coupons and discounts to members.

If you've got a suggestion of a place MOC members frequent on events, an outfitter, or other venue where members might be interested in getting discounts for events or personal purchases, please email Joanne: coupons@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Monthly Statistics

As of March 1st

1392 - Total Members To Date
88 - February New Members
60% - Female Members
40% - Male Members
32.2 - Average Member Age

Member Spotlight

Who would you like to see highlighted as an outstanding MOC Member? Perhaps an organizer who ran a fantastic event, or someone who always makes new members feel welcome? Submit suggestions to:

explorer@marylandoutdoorclub.org



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Member Bulletin Board

The MOC does not maintain a bulletin board on its website because it's frankly too hard to monitor, so we've made it a free feature of the newsletter. Use this area to hook up a team for a marathon or other race, get a group together for another special event that wouldn't necessarily be an MOC outing, or for other networking.

Got a post for the board? Email explorer@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Novice Mountain Bikers Wanted

Katie Stofer (Montgomery County) is looking for people to join her in using our second Member Coupon on March 27th for a mountain biking clinic. Please email her if you'd like to go also.

Group Forming for 2004 Marathon Training

Interested in running the New York City or Baltimore Marathons this year? Get started training early! We know several of you mentioned you were interested in running the full Baltimore Marathon after watching some of our members complete the Team Relay this past October. Contact member Lizette Ayala, in Montgomery County, for more information on this training group.

Backpackers Wanted

Got backpack? Emilio Ungerfeld, Prince George's County resident, is looking for backpackers for small group trips on (relatively) short notice during any season. Contact him for details.

Log on to the Member Network on the Member Area of the web site to contact these members.



Join the MOC

The Maryland Outdoor Club conducts all administrative tasks through our web site to cut down on processing time & costs. If you are interested in signing up for membership, you need to go to marylandoutdoorclub.org and click on any of the "Join Now" buttons you'll find throughout the site. Signing up is a relatively short process and will save you time later on when you sign up for events and don't need to re-enter all of your information.

The MOC does not sell or share your personal information with any third-party.

MEMBERSHIP IS FREE!!!

Save a Tree

If you are done with this issue, please consider throwing it in your paper recycle bin instead of into a trash can.

Editor's Corner

Whew, four newsletters down. Now's my chance to reflect on whatever I want in this space. I want to say thanks to everyone I've met in the club for their incredible friendships and enthusiasm for the out-of-doors. One of the huge bonuses of this club is the members. So many of you are willing to get involved and share your skills and knowledge, not only of the outdoors, but of many other aspects of your lives as well. Where else can you get a free network of over 1000 people? I've gotten investment advice, information about the Maryland area, rides to the airport, plus met people who went to school with the brother of a schoolmate of mine and know Blue Bell Ice Cream.

What's my point? This club is all about you. It is what you make of it, so don't hesitate to speak up. What do you want to see here? Have an idea or an article for the Monthly Explorer? Send it my way. Got a gripe? a gaffe? Those are fair game, too.

-Katie Stofer