

## MCM FIRST PERSON

### CAROLYN BAUER

#### Lost

This was a Wednesday hike to Big Schloss in the George Washington National Forest about 25 years ago. It was a sunny, pleasant May day. All went well on the climb up. We ate our lunch at the top and enjoyed the beautiful views. Too soon, it was time to head down. When we got to the bottom, we came upon a fire road and an open bushy meadow. Everyone looked around with confusion. "Is this where we started?" "I don't remember a fire road." "Where are the cars?" "Which way do we go?" No one had answers.

We started walking aimlessly along the fire road and suddenly saw a rattlesnake! My first sighting of a rattlesnake in his natural habitat. Cool and exciting, but he couldn't help our situation.

Shortly after our snake encounter, two men pulled out maps. Dan McQueen (God rest his soul) and Pete Flaton studied the trails and contour lines. They both pointed in opposite directions and said, "We need to go this way." Yikes. We were lost! Cell phones, incidentally, were relatively new and no one had one.

People were getting concerned. It was quite warm. Most had little or no water and everyone was tired. What now?

Then in the distance, we saw a pick-up truck heading in our direction. A savior! Catharina (Cat) Brauer (currently 92) jumped in front of the truck wildly waving her hands. "Help, help," she said. "We're lost." The truck had to stop because Cat was not going to let him pass. Several of the men talked to the driver and explained our predicament. The trucker graciously agreed to take the car drivers in his truck bed back to their vehicles. Hurrah! Before the truck left, most of us threw some money in his passenger seat. He was stunned when he saw the money but we urged him to keep it. "You're a life savior," we said. "You deserve it."

So within a half hour or so, the car drivers returned to pick us up. The truck driver informed the men that if we had tried to walk back to our cars, it probably would have been about *11 miles*. He also told them he had gone to the landfill, and for no particular reason, decided to take the fire road back. Wow! Was this guy heaven sent or what?

So the moral of this story is: If you encounter someone in a jam, don't hesitate to offer assistance. You never know when you will need help, and the help you give to someone else will surely come back to you when you really need it.

See you on the trail.

**Phil Lieske**

## **Volunteers Needed**

Back in the late Spring of 1993, there was a little blurb in the local daily paper asking for volunteers to do some trail clearing in the Prettyboy area of Baltimore County. Not playing as much tennis as I used to and living in the Prettyboy watershed, I called the number listed, got directions to the trailhead, and on one fine Sunday morning met Martin Larrabee. At the time Martin was about 83, and I soon learned that:

- He could still out-hike and outwork most MCM members. For those of you who were fortunate enough to have known Dan McQueen, Martin was the Dan McQueen of his era
- On my first trail clearing day, there were more new volunteers than repeat volunteers
- It was easily discerned that Martin's concept of time was different than most; for example, when he said "We'll just clear another hour or so," really meant "Late, but not too late to drive into Hereford and buy a 'frap'," basically an ice cream soda
- If you survived the first Martin-led trail clearing trip, there was never a need to volunteer again, since Martin personally would call you and enlist your help and even sign up whoever answered the phone
- If you stuck around long enough, eventually, on some very warm day, Martin would take off his shirt and you would notice the large scar on his chest from open heart surgery. I remember thinking, "I know I'll never have surgery like that because I'm never going to survive today's trail clearing."

Somehow I did survive and during the times with Martin, I hiked and cleared most of Prettyboy's "Blue Cap" trail (which starts at Beckleysville Rd and runs about 9 miles to the dam) and many trails below the dam, joined the MCOM (in which he had been active during its formative early years), and was assigned – by Martin – to keep the last 3 miles of the "Blue Cap" trail clear. Tip of the hat to Mary and Ted for continuing to keep many sections of the "Blue Cap" open.

There many other "old timers" I met after joining the club, but I'll leave their stories to be told by others.

**Gary Reinoehl**

I retired from Amtrak on January 6, 2009. Before I realized that I would be busier in retirement than when I was working, I began looking for things to do. As luck would have it, I picked up a Mountain Club of Maryland brochure, joined the club, and took my first hike on March 25, 2009. It was a 7-mile hike with Monica Fortner in Dickinson Park in Columbia. Quickly I realized how out of shape I was. Before too long, my wife, Justine, became a member and is still going strong.

I went on every hike that I could fit in my increasing busy schedule, became fit, and lost 10 pounds in about a month. Before the end of the year, I was leading all lengths of hikes. I soon came to realize that leading history hikes was my thing. I would research the history of an area, find their historic sites, develop a sound-bite script, and lead the hike with brief informative stops. Some of the most popular hikes were Ellicott City, Savage, Patapsco Valley, Oakland Manor, and Belmont Manor. In all I had about 45 historical hikes. Thanks to MCM I became a history enthusiast. I am still leading and hiking, mostly on Leisure hikes.

For me, the most enjoyable aspect of the club is the interaction with other hikers. Almost every hike produced a new friend and a story about a new place to travel. Justine and I have been to every state and 63 countries since joining the club, many of them locations that we found out about from fellow hikers. Some of the side benefits of the club were learning to maintain trails and to build shelters, privies, and trails. The Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center is currently benefiting from the skills that Justine and I learned.

MCM is also where we met paddlers and were welcomed into the Gunk Hole Gang, a kayak club that paddles in streams and rivers all over the region. In addition to hiking across the Bay Bridge numerous times, I got to paddle across the Chesapeake Bay and back.