



Where Does the Time Go?

Where does the time go? I looked up and we're preparing the August issue of *Recreation News!* It seems like we were just doing snow-skiing stories and soon folks will be putting away their water skis. I don't pretend to understand Einstein and relativity, but I'm sure there's a corollary in there somewhere that proves time goes by faster as you get older.

Our publisher, Karl Teel, makes a good point in his column this month relating to seizing the moment and not taking so much time to plan the perfect trip that you never get to actually make the trip. If, as it seems to most people I know, time does fly by faster as we age, then it follows that we should take Karl's advice and take advantage of all that is around us sooner rather than later.

Here at *Recreation News* we are constantly discovering new places in the Mid-Atlantic — all within a few hours' drive of the Washington-Baltimore area. And we look outward from the Port of Baltimore at year-round opportunities to cruise to destinations from Canada to the Caribbean. We provide a peek into what awaits you and give you the resources to find out more.

August may be the dog days of summer, but there's still time for a weekend getaway and those of us who are empty nesters can take advantage of fewer crowds as schools go back into session. And parents taking college-bound offspring back to campus have a great

opportunity to stop and smell the roses after all the heavy lifting is finished. Campuses from Penn State to Virginia Tech and from West Virginia University to the University of Delaware are located in great areas that offer lots of recreation, history, and just plain fun.

You don't have to over-plan to enjoy it all!

Travelers Toolbox

- August is the middle of hurricane season, an appropriate time to mention the MicrolinkFR160 emergency preparedness radio. Just five inches wide and less than three inches tall, the unit has solar power and a hand-crank dynamo to keep the radio and a USB cell phone charger going. The cost is \$30 at www.etoncorp.com

- Kiwi now has two different kinds of waterproofing sprays; one for boots and another for patio cushions, hammocks, and other outdoor mesh furniture. Great for home or camping use. Check out www.kiwicampdry.com to learn more.

- If you travel on federal government business, the General Services Administration is expanding its City Pairs air travel program. Beginning Oct. 1, there will be an additional 749 destinations and three carriers added to the program.

- All those Gray Line tours in cities everywhere

COMING NEXT MONTH

- Maryland Wine Trails
- Fall Rafting on the Gauley River
- Civil War Trails
- Star-Spangled Geocache Trail

had their start in Washington, D.C., a century ago. To celebrate, Gray Line is discounting most of its Washington tours and activities by 15 percent through March 31, 2011. Might be fun to take a Gray Line tour here at home.

- If you're cancelling a reservation in the Gulf area, the Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Assn. can help. They'll donate a portion of every reservation made at www.gowilliamsburg.com as an alternative to cancelled plans in the Gulf area. A portion of the revenue will go to the lodging where you cancelled your reservation. The organization will make a further donation to help wildlife recover in the area.

Welcome Ocelots

Zoo America, in Hershey, Pennsylvania, continues to celebrate its 100th birthday and welcomed two ocelots to the collection last month. Ocelots are native to some of the few places in the world where cacao trees grow, providing the source for the famous Hershey's chocolate. The endangered ocelots are a fitting tribute to Milton Hershey's vision.

Animals and Minerals Are a Good Mix in Canaan Valley

Canaan Valley, West Virginia, can be a great place to escape the summer heat and Mountain Trail Rides is a place the whole family can enjoy while seeking the cooler mountain air. The trail ride is only part of the fun, but seeing the mountains, forests, and fields from

the back of a horse is a great way to appreciate the beauty of this extraordinary place.

Being the highest valley east of the Mississippi River guarantees plenty of snow for winter skiing, but it also guarantees a cooler summer and a beautiful foliage display in the fall.

"Families really enjoy trail rides, because we pride ourselves on having great horses, great scenery, and friendly trail guides," says owner Kim Bennett. "We also have hand-led horse rides for children, but that's just the beginning."

Children and families also enjoy the "Barnyard Babies Petting Zoo" where they can visit and feed more than 30 animals. Two additional activities, the Adventure Cave and panning for gemstones, are new this year at Mountain Trail Rides.

Parents and kids can arm themselves with a hard hat, mining lamp, bucket, and shovel to discover treasure in the fabricated cave. There are more than 200 different rocks, minerals, shells, gems, and fossils to be found and cavers should discover at least 16 different specimens. Best of all, you get to keep what you find!

Panning for gemstones is another fun activity parents and children can share. You use a mining sluice



The whole family enjoys panning for gemstones, fossils, arrowheads, or shark's teeth in the old-fashioned sluice.



Kids enjoy mining for treasure in the Adventure Cave at Mountain Trail Rides.

just like miners of the gold rush, but you may find gemstones, fossils, arrowheads, or sharks' teeth.

"Your 'find' depends on the kind of bag of 'rough' you purchase," says Bennett. "You keep whatever you find, but it may be up to 11 ounces of treasure."

Horseback rides range from half-hour to full-day and credit cards are accepted.

By Jane and Marvin Bond

BEFORE YOU GO

Mountain Trail Rides: 304-866-4652, www.moountaintrailrides.com