

The Chesapeake Paddler



Publication of The Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

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Make tracks to wanderlust on the auto train

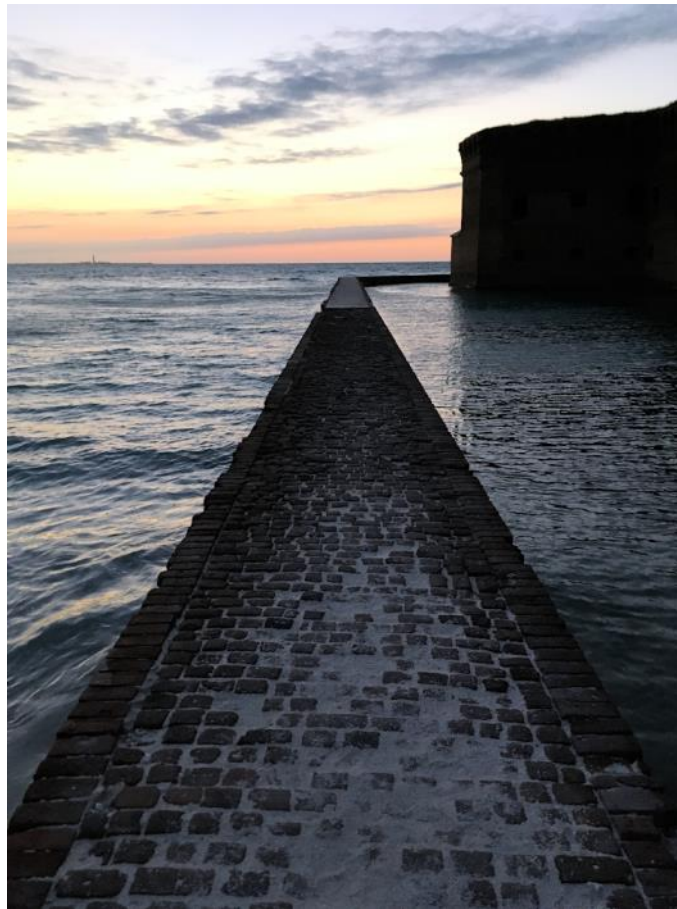
Beyond Key West on Dry Tortugas, a magical fort and the solitude to savor it

By Lee De Cola

My 14' Eddyline sit-on-top kayak, Subaru Impreza, and I boarded the Amtrak Auto Train in Lorton, VA on April 7, 2019. We traveled 18 hours to Sanford FL, north of Orlando. I had been thinking of this plan for many years. In 2018 I phoned and emailed Amtrak about the possibility of doing it, but the answers were ambiguous. So in February I drove the boat on my vehicle to the station where the stationmaster held an 85" stick next to my 76" high rig and told me I was OK. I have a relatively low vehicle which may explain why I didn't see any other boats on the train.

The train trip was uneventful. I had adequate meals enlivened by chats, great views, and a restless night trying to sleep reclining. Even though I had both seats abreast in both directions, I was thankful for downloaded movies! As someone who hates driving even in the best of conditions, I think being foggy-headed the next day is a price worth paying to avoid driving 800 miles on I-95.

My goals were simple. I would visit the Tampa neighborhood where I used to spend summers as a kid, and I would camp on [Dry Tortugas](#), a tiny island 100 km beyond Key West. I would also wander about, camping, paddling, and visiting whatever I might encounter. In the back of my mind was the idea of someday migrating to Florida; I don't think that's going to happen though I might become a snowbird.



*The moat around Fort Jefferson on Dry Tortugas, 100km west of Key West.
Photos/Lee De Cola.*

Orlando and Tampa are sprawling metropolises; I enjoyed two nights in the district of Tampa known as Ybor City, famous for its charmingly seedy ambiance and excellent cigar shops. A Tampan with whom I had lunch cautioned me about the neighborhood, not the first time I encountered folks who were suspicious of what they called 'shady' districts, even though they may never have walked those streets.

After leaving Tampa I camped two nights at Collier-Seminole State Park in the western Everglades. I had an easy paddle down the Blackwater River (How many of this name are there?), where I disturbed a crocigator lazing at the wharf. The day was hot but dry and breezy, and I was reminded that one of the few downsides of a sit-on-top is that my legs were exposed to the sun. However, I was chilly at night in the Everglades in spring!

Before taking the ferry to Dry Tortugas I spent three nights in Key West. The first day I walked around the west end of the island; the second I biked around the east end (Every day I spend not driving gets me another million years in

paradise). I spent a lot of time exploring the three forts on Key West which whet my appetite for Fort Jefferson, 100 kilometers beyond the sunset.

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THE CHESAPEAKE PADDLERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

The mission of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association is to provide a way for people to enjoy sea kayaking within the Chesapeake Bay area and to promote safe sea kayaking practices through educating the local sea kayaking community and the interested public.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Advertising Rates:

We accept display advertising that relates to the interest of our readers. Monthly rates are as follows:

size	cost	dimensions (col)
1/8 page	\$20	2.4" x 3.5" (1)
1/4 page	\$32	4.9" x 4.7" (2)
1/2 page	\$50	7.5" x 4.7" (3)
Full page	\$80	7.5" x 9.75" (3)

A 5% discount will be given for ads supplied as electronic files in acceptable formats (i.e., .tif, .gif, .jpeg, bit-map). Email or call for more information and for 10-month discount. See advertising contact in masthead.

Public service announcements and personal ads to sell kayaks/ accessories are printed at no charge; non-members pay \$10 for 3 months. Ads dated three months before the date of this issue will be pulled unless a new request is received by the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. And if it has sold...tell us!

THE CHESAPEAKE PADDLER

The Chesapeake Paddler is published 10 times a year, with combination issues in Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb. The deadline for submitting copy is the 15th of the preceding month. Have an idea for an article, or is there information you would like to see in the newsletter? Contact news_editor@cpakayaker.com

The newsletter may be reprinted whole or in part if credit is given to this newsletter and any identified author (unless an article is specifically copyrighted), and a courtesy copy is sent to the Editor. The download link or file for the electronic version of this newsletter may not be posted or forwarded to non-members without the express consent of the Coordinator or Editor.

News From the CPA Coordinator - Bill Smith

After nine years as a CPA member I finally got the opportunity to attend SK 102. What a great time I had! This was the 21st SK 102 held on the property of Dave Compton and Teresa Pendleton who have graciously opened their home and property for this event every one of those 21 years. With the spacious lakefront property and 80-degree water in this arm of the lake at the end of April, you could not ask for a better venue. Nearby waterways are barely above 60 degrees. The whole event was beautifully coordinated. Eighty students were in small groups led by twenty instructors and assistants. I must commend Catriona Miller, Maxine Mead, Brian Blankinship, and Suzanne Farace (I hope I did not leave anyone out) for the great job of organizing this event. As a person who has organized events, I can see that a tremendous amount of work must go into putting this event together. There are multiple overlapping levels to organize the attendees, the training, the camping and the cooking into one cohesive whole. I would also like to thank the many instructors who volunteered their time to make this event successful and Dubsid who entertained with the ropes, rolling and giving rolling instruction. Perhaps most important of all is Hector Alers, who got up early to brew the morning coffee and kept it flowing, as well as providing the morning entertainment. As a person who cannot function without my morning coffee, I was most grateful.



The Saturday evening started with Dubsid and Jenny Plummer-Welker demonstrating many Greenland rolls. The grand finale was Dubsid rolling over while passing his veggie burger dinner from one hand to the other and emerging with his burger dry and ready to eat. The Saturday night meal, included in the registration fee, was very tasty and laid out for a good flow to get 100 people fed promptly. The evening's musical entertainment was provided by the infamous Chesapeake Pickers Association, primarily Jesse Aronson and Manual Vera, followed by a few walk-on singers. Though I have been told that SK 102 has a history of rainy weather, it was dry except for a few sprinkles on Friday night, so the weather gods were in our favor this year. The only down side was the shoulder injury suffered by Kara Greenfield, the first injury in the 21 years of SK 102. We hope Kara is well along on her way to recovery now.

PIRATES OF SUGARLOAF

The pirates of Sugarloaf are once again seeking a few pirate captains to keep this piracy going. If you would like to take over this position, please contact a steering committee member. The POSL has a long history with Deb McKensie, Rita Scherping, Liz Marincek, and Lise Soukup leading. I heard that the POSL is the most fun piracy of all, so we want to keep this tradition alive.

Summer is here, so let's get out and paddle. No excuses now! Hope to see you all on the water.

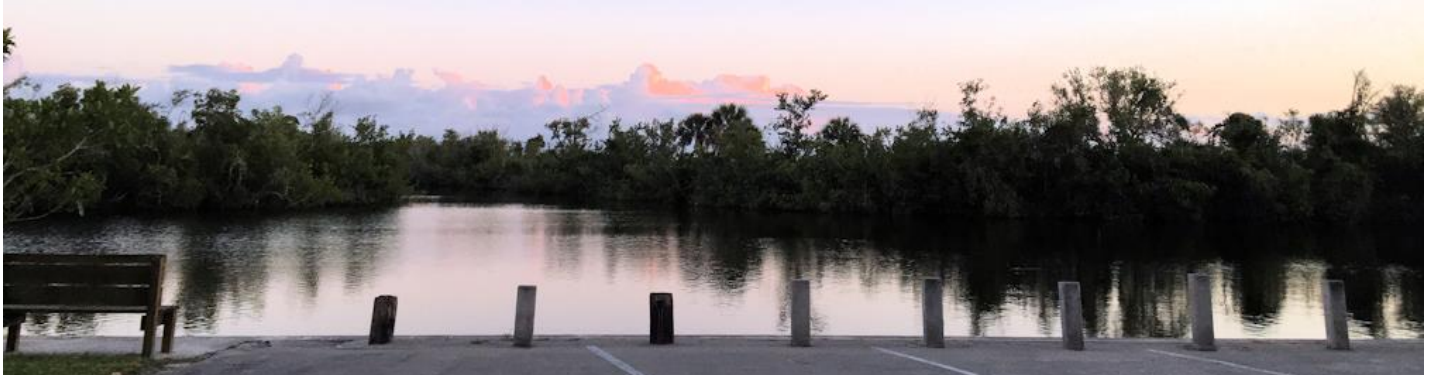
~ *Bill Smith*

Reporting Accidents & Incidents

While CPA seldom experiences accidents or incidents, any that occur should be reported as soon as possible and in detail to the Coordinator and the Steering Committee. The Coordinator or Treasurer will forward these documents to our insurance agents. Fillable .pdf forms for reporting incidents are online [here](#). The first page contains the complete procedure for completing the report. ♦

Help Wanted, Apply Within

Do you have editing and/or desktop design skills? Have you ever wondered how you could contribute to our club? The newsletter team that brings you *The Chesapeake Paddler* seeks one or two additional members to ensure continuity of the publication. Currently, Lois Wyatt copyedits all submitted articles, while Beth Boyd handles the layout tasks (including photos and titles), using *Microsoft Publisher*. New members of the team would share these duties with Lois and Beth, allowing more flexible newsletter staffing in any given month. *The Chesapeake Paddler* is published 10 times per year. All materials are shared electronically via Dropbox. Please [email Lois](#) to ask questions or discuss the jobs further. ♦



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The catamaran ferry to Dry Tortuga is a fast 2 ½ hours. If you return the same day, you'll be on the island for about five hours, into which day-trippers must pack swimming, snorkeling, birdwatching, eating lunch and touring the fort. For me those five hours were barely time to get oriented, so I was glad I had booked two nights. I even asked the ferry captain if I might stay another night, but trips are booked months in advance, especially if you're carrying gear, let alone a boat.

The fort is vast, magnificent, desolate, and remarkably well-preserved. I was particularly struck by how generally useless it was in that it had never fired a shot in the 170 years it has been 'afloat.' Much like a nuclear aircraft carrier, it was a symbol and a great source of jobs, but perhaps not a great weapon for its time. It did, however, serve as an excellent prison! My favorite place was the cylindrical main magazine, a huge brick vault I had to myself several times, except for a little bird that was searching for insects, which are scarce in the dry climate.



The fort is magical, especially once the day trippers have gone and you have the run of the place. My favorite place was the cylindrical main magazine, below right. Above, a casemate. At top, Collier-Seminole State Park.

The fort is magical, especially if you camp there and have the run of the island when the boaters and day trippers are gone. I was reminded of the metaphysical paintings of Giorgio de Chirico - receding arches, stark light, brick walls, empty towers. I spent hours just wandering around, sitting, meditating. You can go anywhere except the Park Service housing; there are no railings, not even 'STAY BACK' signs.

My campsite was beneath the limbs of a buttonwood tree but exposed enough to get the breeze, and because the other campsites weren't easily visible, I could imagine myself a lonesome explorer. Another advantage of camping is that

you have the [NPS](#) park rangers to yourself. They do enjoy talking about the fort, natural features of the island, and even their lives on this isolated posting. One ranger was a pony-tailed fellow I had met decades ago on the California Channel Islands where I had spent a day alone.

I was able to kayak around the fort and out near the booby nesting sites though landing is forbidden. Unfortunately, I had somehow acquired a very sore shoulder that kept me from paddling the 5 km out to Loggerhead Key (next time!). I swam, snorkeled, explored, smoked a few contemplative cigars, and was sorry to leave Dry Tortugas.

Back on the main Keys, I spent two nights at a midcentury modern motel in Marathon, the highlight of which was an afternoon at Crane Point Nature Center. The center preserves about 60 acres of what the Keys may once have looked like. At least it's big enough to get you away from the distracting hiss of the Overseas Highway.

One of the rangers had suggested I get away from the coast on my return to Orlando/Sanford, straight up US 27 to Sebring, so I did. It felt like a mini-vacation from the manic interstates and crowded beach towns.

Ironically, the trip's best paddling, in spite of my sore shoulder, was a few miles along Arbuckle Creek through a cypress swamp. By that time, I was experienced enough not to mind sharing the water with allodiles. The day was crystalline and peaceful, except for the roar of an occasional airboat. I also saw a swallow-tailed kite, which my wife's bird guide lists as 'uncommon' - lucky me!

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I drove 1200 miles in 16 days, may not be much for the typical Florida visitor but more mileage than I like. If I do it again I will spend at least three weeks in Florida, three days on Dry Tortugas, camp more, paddle more, and explore Lake Okeechobee as well as a few more out-of-the way locations. ♦



A campsite tucked beneath the limbs of a buttonwood tree offered a sense of privacy without loss of the breeze. One good thing about remote National Park Service sites: having the rangers practically to yourself. At right, one of the best paddles was through a cypress swamp on Arbutle Creek. Photos/Lee De Cola

Suggested Reading

Ferguson, Jason. (2015) *Moon Florida* road trip. Berkeley, CA, Avalon Travel.

Landrum, L. Wayne. (2008) *Fort Jefferson and the Dry Tortugas National Park*. Big Pine Key, FL, L.W. Landrum.

Ripple, Jeff and Bill Keogh (1995) *The Florida Keys: the natural wonders of an island paradise*. Stillwater, MN, U.S.A., Voyageur Press.



If your boat + vehicle measures 8.5" or fewer in height, you may be in luck for the Auto Train.

What's in your PFD?

By Ralph Heimlich

I polled a sample CPA paddlers at Gear Day on June 2 and asked them what they carry in their PFD. The results are tallied in the [chart on the next page](#), sorted by the number of respondents who carried an item and the number of items carried by each respondent. So, what should you carry in your PFD? The Coast Guard requires you to carry a sound-making device (whistle or horn) and a white light to show to avoid collision (signal light). Our poll indicates that you should carry some food items for energy, a knife, and a VHF radio. Everything else seems optional. If you paddle on the Potomac near DC, you should have proof that you've passed the boater safety course, or you can be ticketed. Another great idea is to put your name on your PFD with indelible ink and have some kind of ID card (helps to ship the body). A lot of other emergency gear can be carried in your boat (versus on your person). Many people recommend having a "bailout bag" in your cockpit in a dry bag that you can grab if

you are separated from your boat. Because most of the bay is civilized, a cell phone in a dry bag, a credit card, and your car key might be a better choice than fire-making stuff, a bear trap or a Viking battle axe. Check through your own PFD before you wish you had. ♦

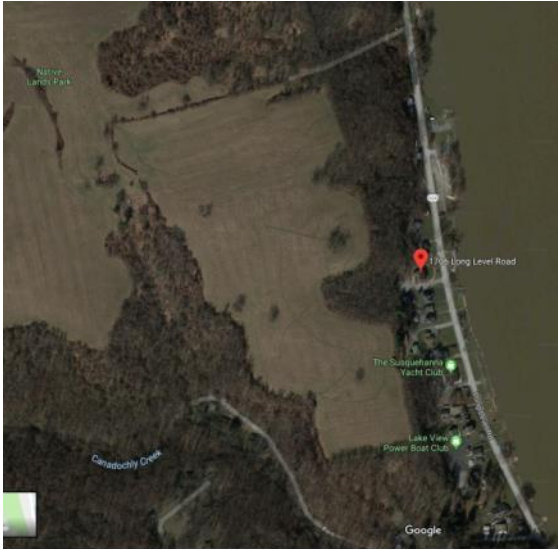
Since the demise of Sea Kayaker Magazine several years ago, there has been a dearth of paddle-written magazine articles for the more typical paddler. *Atlantic Coastal Kayaker*, edited by Dave Eden and his wife Tamsin Venn, is one of the few holdouts in this genre. Now it has gone online-only, making it more accessible to paddlers in a variety of ways. Check them out at <https://www.atlanticcoastalkayaker.com/index.htm> where you can see a free issue. Several CPA paddlers, including Rich Stevens and I, have had articles in ACK, and there is a wealth of information from many authors ranging from the Canadian Maritime to the Caribbean islands, but focused on the Mid-Atlantic. ACK also has free classified ads, so you might find that boat you've been looking for, or find a buyer for yours. ~ Ralph Heimlich

ITEM	Sum	Sue Stevens	Ralph Heimlich	Bill Smith	Mary W in Liu	Greg Welker	Beth Boyd	Lisa Giguere	Julio Perez	Dave Isbell	G???	Marla Aron	Rich Stevens	Jim Allen	Jill Allbritta	Chung Ha	Chip Walsh	Jean W under	Mike Vore	Andrew Bli schak
whistle or horn	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
food bar or snack	14	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
VHF radio	13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
knife	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
signal light	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
sunscreen	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
lip balm	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
tow rope on waist	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
compass	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
cell phone (in drybag)	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
paddling gloves	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
signal mirror	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
waterproof digital camera	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ID card or driver's license	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
nose plugs	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
name on PFD	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
money (\$5, \$20)/credit card/wallet	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
car key	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
water bottle/hydrator/camelback	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
signal flares	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
length of strong cord	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
skull cap when cold	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
emergency phone numbers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
small dry box with 1st aid kit	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
boater safety course card	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
thermometer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
stirrup for rescue	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
sunglasses	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
cow tail with biner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
trip leader checklist	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ultralight raincoat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
GPS	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Emergency Position Indicating Radiobeacon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
extra kayak wheel lock	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
bug spray	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
chimes ginger chews	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
glasses cleaning cloth	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
number of items		22	5	5	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	9	9	8	8	8	7	6	5	3

Upcoming Events. For the most up-to-date listings, visit the [CPA Meetup Calendar](#)

Date	Event	Summary
Tu-Th 6/11-13	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, Jun 15	Magothy River Paddle	9 am-4 pm, Adv Beg, 10+ mi, Sillery Bay; Gibson, Dobbins, & Little Islands, contact trip leader
Tu-Th 6/18-20	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, Jun 22	Magothy River Leisure Paddle	9 am-4 pm, Beg, 5-6 mi in protected waters nr Cypress Creek, contact trip leader
Sat, Jun 22	Marshall Hall to Pamunkey Creek & Mt Aventine mansion	9 am-5 pm, Adv Beg, 13 mi, explore creek, land at Chapman SP for lunch & visit Mount Aventine mansion
Tu-Th 6/25-27	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, Jun 29	Easy Scenic Paddle - Dundee Creek, Middle River	9:30 am-1 pm, Beg & higher
Tu-Th 7/2-4	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Tu-Th 7/9-11	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, July 13	KIP 2019, 14th Annual series, #4	6 am-6 pm, build strength, skills, and confidence for personal paddling goal, w some to circumnavigate Kent Is
Sat, July 13	Chester River Swim for Life, non-CPA event	8 am-2 pm, seeking support kayakers for 5 mi swim; camping option Fri, Jul 12 at 5 pm
Tu-Th 7/16-18	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, July 20	Magothy River to Severn River Paddle	8 am-4 pm, Adv Beg, 16 mi w 5 mi shuttle, around Cape Saint Claire, under Bay Bridge
Sat, July 20	Gerry Blackstone Manhattan Kayak Circumnavigation	6 am-6 pm, benefit from tidal flow to circle Manhattan on Hudson, East, and Harlem Rivers
Tu-Th 7/ 23-25	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, July 27	Wye Island Circumnavigation	9 am-3 pm, Adv Beg, 12 mi
Sun, July 28	Battle Creek on the Patuxent	8:30-2 pm, Adv Beg, fr Broomes Island area upstream to explore Battle Creek, 12-15 km
Tu-Th 7/30-8/1	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat-Su 8/3-4	Practice Kayak Kamper	10 am 8/3-4 pm 8/4, Adv Beg, try out kayak camping w support at paddle-in site
Sun, Aug 4	Islands of the Potomac Tour	8:30-12:30, Adv Beg, explore St Margaret, St Catherine & Bullock on lower Potomac
Tu-Th 8/6-8	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, Aug 10	KIP 2019, 14th Annual series, #5	6 am-6 pm, build strength, skills, and confidence for personal paddling goal, w some to circumnavigate Kent Is
Tu-Th 8/13-15	area piracies	check CPA calendar for details
Sat, Aug 17	Thomas Point Lighthouse	9 am-4 pm, Adv Beg, expect wind, waves, fetch & following seas
Sa, 8/17-Su 8/18	Full Moon Overnight Paddle	8 pm 8/17-12 pm 8/18, Int, strong self & group rescue skills, small group
Sat, Sep 7	KIP 2019, 14th Annual series, #6	6 am-6 pm, build strength, skills, and confidence for personal paddling goal, w some to circumnavigate Kent Is
Sat, Sep 21	KIP 2019, 14th Annual series, final	6 am-8 pm, around Kent Is, culmination of 2019 season of conditioning
Sat, Sep 28	Circumnavigate Wye Island	9 am-3 pm, Adv Beg, 12 mi
Sa-Sa, 10/5-12	Sail Angels at Cedar Island, NC, non-CPA event	10/5 noon-10/12 noon, canoe & kayak sailing

Launch of the Month: Zimmerman Center for Heritage



Lat 39.97797

Long -76.4957

Address 1706 Long Level Rd, Wrightsville, A 17368

Type Small boat ramp

Parking Small

Restroom No

Fee

Ownership NGO

County York

State Pennsylvania

Water Body Susquehanna River

Comments <http://www.susquehannaheritage.org/explore-2/zimmerman-center/>

These are taken from the [Chesapeake Bay Access and Paddle-in Campsite Map](#), which is part of the CPA website. You can enter either the location or street address to find them in Google Maps. Try them out, and look for more in each issue of the newsletter. This site was recently featured in an article on new access points for the Susquehanna in the *Bay Journal* at <https://www.bayjournal.com/article/new-national-heritage-area-to-highlight-susquehanna> ~ Ralph Heimlich

The Chesapeake Paddler

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REMINDER: Please check your mailing label for your membership expiration date. If you receive the newsletter electronically, you will receive an e-mail reminder prior to your membership expiring; please notify the Secretary for changes to your email address. If your CPA membership has expired, or will expire soon, please send in your dues. SEE BOX ON PAGE 2 FOR ADDRESS.