

# Chesapeake Paddler



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March-April 2008

## The Potomac Dash – Fast and light by kayak

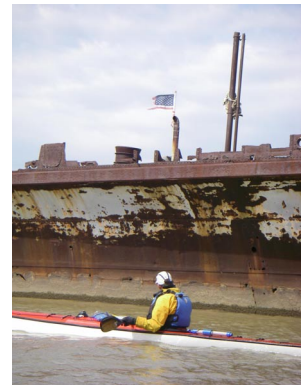
by Cyndi Janetzko



Cyndi in her Nemo photo by Brian Blankinship

Lately, I've been fixated on speed. It started off as an interest in efficiency and progressed into racing. But there is more to life than racing—really. I have always loved tripping – packing up my boat and taking off for two days, two weeks or two months (someday). It was only a matter of time until my love for speed merged with my love for tripping and resulted in a fast and light camping trip.

Last year I purchased a KayakPro Nemo – a racing specific sea kayak with the features of a touring boat. Since I didn't know how it would handle loaded, I decided to stick close to home for this experiment. The Potomac seemed the obvious choice. A good option seemed to be to paddle from Mason Neck to Camp Merrick one day and then continue down to Colonial Beach the next – a total distance of about 45 miles.



Brian Blankinship at Mal-lows Bay photo by Cyndi Janetzko

Trip in mind, I needed a paddling partner as this trip was not Dave's idea of fun. Fortunately Brian Blankinship also has a need for speed and was game. We decided to do the Potomac Dash, as I had dubbed it, on Easter weekend. The tides were ideal for pushing us down river, the moon was full, and Dave was available to pick us up on Sunday. Everything lined up nicely.

Fast and light got its start in backpacking in the 1990s as people discovered they could hike farther, faster, and with less fatigue when carrying less weight. For me, the appeal of going light is about having less to schlep, getting the most use out of each item, and keeping the loads light enough to get top performance out of your boat.

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## Another Successful Greenland Paddle Workshop

by Gina Cicotello with contributions from Len Thunberg



Nelson displays a sanding block as he explains the paddle carving process  
Photo by Gina Cicotello

The Greenland Paddle Workshop held in Carderock, Maryland on Saturday, March 22nd was successful and a lot of fun for the third year in a row. Nelson Labbé and I cooperate to throw this annual wood carving party; he contributes the hard labor of acquiring and cutting lumber to people's specifications, I just make sure everyone shows up. This year we had 29 participants, most of whom were starting with fresh new cedar blanks, and some who brought unfinished paddles from last year or blanks they had gotten on their own.

One of my favorite parts of this event is meeting the characters that it draws out of the woodwork (pun most definitely intended). This year we had one participant from West Virginia, and two showed up from as far away as Durham, North Carolina. Most were people I've never paddled with nor met at other CPA events. And this year just like all years so far, I've regretfully had to turn people away once we reached the limit of how many blanks Nelson can distribute. It's obvious that more and more people want Greenland pad-

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**CLASSIFIEDS**

Ads dated 3 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!

**Advertising Rates:**

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

Size cost wide x deep (col)  
 1/8 page \$20 2.4" x 3.5" (1)  
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Public service announcement and personal ads to sell kayaks/ accessories are printed at no charge; non-members pay \$10 for 3 months.



**Jack Van Horn, Dick Rock, Jenny Plummer-Welker, Greg Welker and the Tennis (ball) Team at Eagles Landing, Chickahominy Lake**  
 Photo by Ralph Heimlich

**SCHEDULE FOR 2008 CHESAPEAKE PADDLER**

*Chesapeake Paddler* is published 10 times a year, with combination issues in November/December and January/February. The deadline for submitting copy is usually the 15th of the preceding month as follows:

Issue	Deadline for Copy
May 2008	April 15, 2008 (Tax Day!)
June 2008	May 15, 2008
July 2008	June 15, 2008

Have an idea for an article, or is there information you would like to see in the newsletter? Email Ralph at [news\\_editor@cpakayaker.com](mailto:news_editor@cpakayaker.com) or call at 301-498-0722.

**THE CHESAPEAKE PADDLERS ASSOCIATION**

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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**MEMBERSHIP:** Subscription to the Chesapeake Paddler is included with membership. Membership is \$10/year or \$20/2 years. Send checks or changes of membership information to CPA, PO Box 341, Greenbelt, MD 20768. DO NOT send them to the newsletter editors.

**DEADLINES:** Closing date for articles, trip reports, information and advertisements is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. The editors retain the right to edit or not to print any submitted material. See advertising information in the Classifieds section.

*The Chesapeake Paddler is published monthly, except Nov-Feb and 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 Managing Editor.*

## Admiral's Walk



## Greenland Style is Hot!

I went to the [CPA Greenland Paddle Making Workshop](#), and I was amazed at the number of people there. By now, you know that I have a lot of interest in the Style of *Greenland Paddling* (sometimes called Traditional Style), and it was wonderful to see so many other people showing interest too. You can read more about that event from our 'CPA Cruise Director' Gina Cicotello, but let me just say that there were 29 people making or finishing paddles, and at least 6 more there purely to help out. Amazing! So what is this *Greenland Style Paddling* anyway? From the looks of it, it is an infection that quickly finds its way into your paddling style and grows and grows and grows.

Seriously, *Greenland Style Paddling* is many things. What seems to make it so infectious is that you can adopt it just a little or a whole lot. It can be just a way to make paddling easier, or it can become a lifestyle; depending upon how prone to infections you are. Let me start at the beginning.

**The Paddle:** Most people get introduced to *Greenland Style Paddling* when a friend hands them a home-made wooden-stick-looking paddle. Since the paddle is light and thin it does not take lots of muscle to pull it through the water, nor does it grab large amounts of water when pulled. Some people immediately enjoy this feeling, since it is less jarring on the shoulders and back.

**The History:** People used these same styles of paddles and even similar boats as our kayaks thousands of years ago to sustain their life and their culture. A people who had mastered the art of controlling a craft so light that you can carry it with one hand, yet so versatile that it could instill confidence to be used in nearly any condition nature could throw at it.

**The Self-satisfaction:** Some people come to *Greenland Style Paddling* simply because you can make all the gear yourself; just like it was done a thousand years ago. A real sense of self achievement and satisfaction comes from paddling in the gear you painstakingly crafted yourself.

**The Work-Out:** Those traditional paddlers must have really been in shape to be able to do all that they are reputed to have done. There is a *Greenland Style* conditioning technique called *Qajaasaarneq* or more commonly Greenland Ropes that really helps one get in shape for paddling when not on the water.

**The Challenge:** To me the ultimate draw and the ultimate challenge to *Greenland Style Paddling* is the art of the kayak roll. No culture took the fact that a kayak could be rolled to such a pinnacle of success as did the peoples of West Greenland.

Whether it is a gentler paddle, the chance to learn about the history of the sport, the chance to build your own gear, or the sheer fact of the challenge – there is so much to this Greenland Style of Paddling. If you have not tasted this style yet, I hope that I might have tempted you. The CPA is not a *Greenland Style Paddling Club*, but every year more and more of its members show signs of this style in their paddling. You can find examples of this at the yearly *Greenland Paddle Making Workshop*, *SK101*, *SK102*, the new hopeful *Greenland Style Event* being planned for this summer, and even at your local Piracy. If you want even more information, I encourage you to look into one of our sister clubs, [Qajaq USA](#). Just beware that I told you it was infectious.....very, very infectious!



Dave Biss  
Coordinator

## Make A Date With the CPA by Dave Biss

I have heard that the CPA Calendar is looking pretty good this season. With that I clicked over there to check it out. Wow! There are lots of things already scheduled this summer! And if it is anything like every other year; many, many more things will show up as the season comes on. What a great club to have all these wonderful volunteers to find ways for everyone to get out and enjoy the water.

Whatever your pleasure, it is out there! Do you want a leisurely day paddle at a quiet location? Do you want to go camping from your kayak? Do you want to improve your skills? Let's look at the events listed already for the months of April and May...



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On this trip, the biggest weight savings would be the boat itself. I usually trip in my 65-pound poly Wilderness Systems Tempest. The Nemo weighs just shy of 40. Next on the chopping block was the kitchen. When Dave and I kayak camp we take lots of food, at least two stoves, a three pot set, the coffee percolator, a spice kit, a table, and complete set of dishes. For this trip I scaled back to my Gigapower stove, two small fuel bottles, a coffee mug, and one small pot into which nest the stove and fuel bottles. My entire kitchen fit in two small dry bags. The tent also got downsized from my lightweight but large 3-man tent to a MSR Hubba – a one person tent that weighs under 3 pounds. The two luxury items I brought along despite their size and weight – my crazy creek chair and a three serving box of wine!

Rain was forecast for Saturday but the bigger issue was that Saturday night was going to be cold – down to the low 30s. I ditched the lightweight summer bag I had packed in favor of my down winter bag and tossed in the second sleeping pad. Extra weight but I'd rather have the weight and be warm than freeze!

Kingsley Chan offered to drop us off at Mason Neck. High tide would be at 8:19 am and we wanted to make the most of the outgoing tide. We arrived at 8:00 as the park opened and began the quick task of packing the boats. Both the Nemo and Brian's Epic 18X have a lot of volume. With 18 feet of waterline and no skeg box to contend with, the challenge became how to keep the gear from sliding around inside the boats' vacant spaces.

By 8:45 am we were loaded and ready to go. A nice breeze was blowing from the north as we took off into Belmont Bay. Almost immediately we spotted our first eagle. Brian declared it a good omen. Turning south around Sandy Point, the waves grew into nice, consistent, two foot rollers – good surfing waves. The boats accelerated quickly, even with their loads. We would sprint, catch a wave and then with just one or two more stokes catch the next few waves as the boats glided along. The GPS routinely read 7, 8 or even 9 MPH. It almost seemed like cheating.

But sprinting to catch those waves still takes effort and with over 11 miles behind us we decided it was time for a break. We landed on the beach north of Mallows Bay for lunch. This was one of the biggest differences between how we paddled on this trip and others I have been on. Brian and I would move steadily for 10 + miles without ever stopping for a break. With camelback hydration systems we wouldn't even stop to get a drink.

Back in the boats I played tour guide as Brian had never been to Mallows Bay. It was mid-tide and many of the old hulls were just uncovering. We paddled carefully among the iron-spiked ruins ever aware that we were paddling boats with very, very light lay-ups.

Once through the wrecks, we eased into our cruising pace of about 5.8 MPH as the waves settled down. We were graced with an enormous number of bald eagles, both mature and immature, on this section. Their comeback gives me hope that maybe we can address some of our other environmental problems. The Potomac makes a slight bend to the southeast near Angel Towers and our tail/beam wind turned into a headwind. We also lost our tide assist and our pace dropped off, but we knew we were near camp and didn't mind the effort. We found the canoe launch at Lions Camp Merrick on Maryland Point as expected and pulled up the boats. It was 2:15 pm. We paddled 22 miles with a moving time of 4 hours and 5 minutes and two breaks.

Camp Merrick is awesome. I had written to the camp administrator about tent camping on the property prior to the trip. She was wonderful and for \$14 we had beach front property. We pitched the tents, hung the wet gear on the clothes line and went exploring. Mudas Marsh runs right behind the camp and there are several trails to overlooks on the marsh. One took us to a large brackish area with one of the biggest beaver lodges I have ever seen. We decided that it would be a great place to return to at dusk to see what kind of critters emerged.

Like frost on a pumpkin *Photo by Cyndi*



The ultralight theme continued into dinner which involved little more than boiling water. Brian boiled up a pre-made Indian meal which is always a camp favorite and I brought a "meal in bag" from Backpacker's Pantry. It was the Katmandu Curry and, believe it or not, when rehydrated was very, very yummy. Eating it straight from the bag meant no plate or bowl needed. Carrots and snap peas for appetizers, wine to drink and chocolate for dessert rounded out the meal.

Following an after dinner walk back to the marsh, we crawled, full and tired, into our tents. I burrowed down into my sleeping bag. The rain had passed, the sky was totally clear and the full moon shone overhead. It was going to be a cold night.

I awoke at 6 am and poked my head out of the sleeping bag. It was COLD! I threw on some layers and headed out. The boats were caked in an icy frost, my paddling shoes frozen solid, and the tent fly sparkled with ice crystals. Coffee was definitely the first order of business. I grabbed my stove and boiled up the water. Instead of my trusty percolator I brought instant coffee – the ultimate sacrifice. But despite my fears the coffee tasted fine once I added the little French vanilla creamer I picked up on a last minute stop at 7-11.

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## Who's Paddling?

This is the start of an occasional series that I hope to feature every so often called "Who's Paddling?" In this series you can read details from informal interviews with members of the CPA. Let me know if there's anyone you'd like to hear from. Dave Biss



Marshall Woodruff

Marshall lives in Kensington, MD and has been a member of the CPA since early 2006.

**What got you started on paddling?** Six years ago, after cancer, I wanted to take up something serious. When I took up kayaking, I knew that I did not just want to paddle a few times a year. I also knew that it would be too difficult to devote time to lots of different sports like skiing, tennis, etc and be efficient at them all. I wanted to find something I could devote to and get good at. I used to also fence, but that was not an all day sport. Then I found kayaking. Kayaking feels easier on the body than many activities yet offers exploration, allowing you to go anywhere and discover many things. Kayaking allows you to challenge yourself as well. I was pulled in, and my paddling quickly took me from the river to the Bay and then to the Ocean. I like going against the wind, doing distance and being out in nature.

**If you could describe your favorite boat what would it be like?** I like my Nordkapp. It is fast. It has a small ocean cockpit. The way I fit into this boat make it feel like a part of me. A keyhole cockpit makes me feel lost in the extra space. As much as I like this boat, I would rather a lighter boat now. Maybe something in a graphite design.

**What's your next big kayak adventure?** Alaska. I am planning a two week solo kayaking trip to Glacier Bay Alaska. In fact I have been sharpening up my paddling and navigational skills so that I will feel safer. I've already got my ticket and will be away the end of June through the beginning of July. I go from here to Juno then onto Glacier Bay. I have been working on how to pack my gear in my folding kayak, and dealing with the added weight of a fully packed kayak. No easy task there. I will camp the first night out, then go north in the Bay. I will have no definite itinerary. I just want to taste what is there. My main goal is to see whales and icebergs. I want to feel the adventure in a frontier with no one around... except bears. For safety, I am taking a global phone, an EPERB, a radio, and lots of other gear. I'll also let the Coast Guard know where I'll be. I made a camera holder for my paddle last year, so it will be right at my fingertips at all times. Hopefully I will not lose any good shots.

**If you had a paddle philosophy, how would you describe it?** What I learn, I try to pass on. What I don't know I try to learn. I do consider paddling a dangerous sport; it's possible to get hurt out there. I try to be prepared. But I also want to know that I am enjoying myself out there in nature.

**Can you tell me about the series of paddles you have lead with the CPA?** Good thing you asked me that! The Kent Island Paddle (KIP) came to me a couple of years ago. I thought; "Here there's an island and I want to paddle around it. Who has done it? Why not have an event with this? But you cannot have an event where you suddenly paddle 35 miles without preparation, so why not have a practice." So I went and took pictures of all the access points, and broke the circumference of the island down to monthly events where we practice and then culminate in a final circle all the way around. Then I presented it to the club. The first session had 20 participants. A great turn out. The last full circle we did late last year had 14 people working to go around the island. That is great! It has certainly been a learning experience for me, if not everyone else involved; organizing events, taking leadership, and experiencing the events as they occur. We learn about the Bay and also about real life conditions. Everyone tries to be as safe possible, but usually nature casts more at us than we expect. To be able to use the skills we learned before in practice to help out when it is needed in a real life event; that is what I think we all want to achieve. We don't know what will happen every time we go paddling. We try to prepare for anything. Practice sharpens your skills more when you get to try out your skills in a real situation when it is unexpected; far greater than if you were practicing in a class or a pool. When an unexpected event happens unexpectedly, where everyone has to react, we see how good everyone really does react. It is a great feeling to see this in action. On a KIP adventure, all the lessons learned come into action. Heat exhaustion, towing, rescues. You are prepared for real life experiences after going through real experiences like the Kent Island Practice Paddles (KIPP).

Eastern Neck is just a fun trip. It is five paddles, 5 times a year throughout the seasons; a delightful paddle, ten miles around. In the summer it can be open to just about any paddler from experienced paddlers to new paddlers. There are always enough people around on one of these trips to share good advice on techniques as well as just to share friendships. My main goals are to, by the end of the paddle, have everyone get to know each other. On some paddles you don't know anybody. I think a good paddling trip is where you meet a lot of people and where friendships develop. I like that. The joke on one Eastern Neck paddling trip was when we had 35 paddlers, we all got name tags to where to that we could have an avenue to get to know each other by the end of the trip. The tags were not waterproof. That idea didn't work out the greatest, but everyone was willing to wear a name tag outside and laughed when they fell off the PFDs. I was trying to show how getting to know each other makes for a stronger paddle where we can count on each other in the end, in an emergency.

No paddle can be done by one person; it is always a makeup of everyone in the group.

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Robert "Woody" Woodruff

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Woody lives in Manassas, VA and has been a member of the CPA since mid 1999.

**What got you started paddling?** I was at work one day and, as usual, I always go in early and get my coffee. There was a guy who had a catalogue of beautiful wood strip canoes. I said, "They are nice, but I already have a canoe." He then told me that they make kayaks too. So after looking into it, I went and got a kit for a wood strip kayak and built it in my basement. That was the winter of 1999. Now, having had no other kayak than this one in my life, and not knowing better, my first day out was January 1, 2000. I was wearing wind pants and a wind jacket and the water was dripping off my paddle and freezing as it hit the deck. Soon after that day, I was hanging out on kayak websites and that trip was even posted. I am sure that the write up is still out there. The first comment that I received about that trip report was, "You were lucky to have survived." After hearing that, I started trying to learn about cold water and how dangerous it was, as well as what skills I might need to paddle safely.

**If you could describe your favorite boat, what would it be like?** I have a few kayaks that I enjoy, but I cannot say what kayak would be my favorite. I don't think I have ever sold a kayak. Maybe I gave away one which belonged to my daughter. All the kayaks that I have paddled have their strengths and weaknesses. They all have their purposes, and I enjoy them for that. I still even have one that I cannot fit into anymore.

**I know that you have paddled a lot with your daughter, can you describe what that is like?** It has always been an extreme bonding experience to share experiences and to share nature with your kin. Kayaking is a way to share early life experiences with others.

**You have paddled many places in this area, do you have a favorite?** Not a favorite place, but I do rather have a favorite type of conditions. I like it when it is quiet. I like the feeling of being alone. But I also like the camaraderie while paddling with others. I've told people I can paddle alone when paddling with others. When I am paddling in a group, talking and listening, and sometimes just taking strokes, I can zone out, putting it all on automatic. That is my favorite time; my favorite place; my favorite condition of paddling: a Zen-type state.

**If you had a paddle philosophy, how would you describe it?** For me again it is that mental state. Sometimes paddling is about distance, sometimes skills, sometimes to look at birds. Early on when I was beginning to paddle, it was all about the skills which I focused on. I wanted to make sure that I could learn the skills that would help me out and I wanted to make sure that those skills would be automatic in any conditions later when I needed them. I did that to allow me to get into that Zen state and not to have to think about my paddling while I was out. I always wanted to be able to get prepared so that I could just enjoy where I was.

**Do you have a most memorable trip with the CPA which you can describe?** There were many but I do have a coolest one I remember. It was a Bill Dodge trip. Although I think that every single Bill Dodge trip would be in the list of the coolest trips. One that sticks out was a trip at Point Comfort. On that trip we had a fast group and a slow group. I was stuck with the slow group so that I could help out. I really wanted to be with the fast group. I didn't want to paddle-paddle, then glide; paddle-paddle, then glide. Well, it turned out that the slow group was the best place to be that day. A pod of dolphins came up and played with us; swimming around us, passing under the kayaks. Suddenly it was about being there and enjoying myself in the moment. I don't know that I have a favorite trip out of the many, but that one I remember a lot.

**What season would be your favorite paddling season?** All seasons have their strengths and weaknesses. In summer you can jump in and play since the water is so warm, but you have to watch out for boats. In the winter there is the cold water to deal with but there is far less boats to watch for. And I think that all seasons are different, even those in between seasons. They all have their good points and bad points. I used to hate going out early in the morning when it was cold, but then after I was out, I enjoyed. For me it is just about being out there and enjoying it for the moment.

Tell everyone I said "Hi."



Tom Heneghan

Tom lives in Falls Church, VA and has been a member of the CPA since mid 2004.

**What got you started paddling?** I found the club through the web. That is the club's greatest asset. I inherited a boat from my brother in law; everyone knows this story. My brother in law says "Keep this boat". I said I won't keep this boat unless I can play with it. So I kept the boat and started using it. I didn't know what I was doing and went looking for other people to paddle with and ways to learn about the sport. That led me to some of the schools in the area and to the CPA.

**If you could describe your ideal boat, what would it be like?** I haven't found my ideal boat yet, but I'll keep looking. It would be the boat that goes upside down only when I feel like it and comes right-side-up every time I want it to. I'd like to find a boat that is really fast and really stable; two points that are counter

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**Want a leisurely day paddle?** Here is what is planned. A little adventure can be had at Eastern Neck Island on [May 17th](#). Another challenging day paddler for those ready for some Chesapeake Adventure to Thomas Point Lighthouse on [May 10th](#). On [May 24th](#) you can paddle and Celebrate History at Chestertown, MD. And don't forget the [Piracy Opener Paddles](#) which will be announced during the month of April on the CPA Forums. So far, we have



Oysters on Assateague Island Photo by Ralph Heimlich

**How about some camping?** By car or by kayak, you can camp with CPA.

Camp at Tuckahoe State Park and paddle down to the Choptank River on [April 18th-20th](#). [May 2nd-4th](#) has a wonderful backcountry style camping experience available at Assateague Island, VA. Paddle the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers on [May 17th - 18th](#). And [May 30th - June 1st](#) shows car camping and paddling at Point Lookout park at the tip of the Potomac River.

**Do you want to go out for some skill practice?** Here are some great choices. Hone your big water and long distance paddling on the Kent Island Paddle Practices on [April 19th](#) and [May 10th](#). Spend two days with your paddle-posé at SK102 on the shores of Lake Anna, taking classes on [April 25th - 27th](#). Get certified in Wilderness First Aid through the CPA on [May 10th - 11th](#).

Take a day of Quiet Water Paddler's Safety & Rescue Training on [May 18th](#).

**How about something a little farther afield?** See Ultimate Watersports Paddfest in Gunpowder State park, on [May 3rd](#). Or Patuxent Adventure's Regatta in Solomons, MD on [May 10th - 11th](#). Hang out with other wooden boat builders at C.L.C.'s Okumefest on [May 9th-10th](#).

**Maybe just a little excitement is your pleasure?** Try these. Try a kayak race on for size at the West River in MD on [May 17th](#). Support one of the longest swim events in the area crossing the Potomac River on [May 31st](#). Support a shorter Swim Event on the Back River on [May 18th](#).

Wow! And all of that is only for April and May. I hope that you marked your calendar for some of these great events. Maybe I will see you out on the water with the CPA. It's a date!

Editor's Note: Live links above will take you to the calendar entry for the activity indicated. For the entire CPA calendar, please go to <http://www.cpkayaker.com/events.html>. If you are a TRIP LEADER, please enter complete information for your planned trip on the calendar. If you're not sure how to do that, contact Dave Biss or another CPA officer.

## CPA Trip Requirements and Ratings

All trips are organized by and for members of the club. When you participate, please remember that trip leaders are "hosts", not professional guides, but you must be willing to follow their instructions. They are neither necessarily trained in first aid or CPR, nor do they always carry first aid equipment or safety devices for your use.

### **You, and you alone, are responsible for your personal safety.**

Trip leaders will pre-screen all participants for skills, equipment and willingness to abide by club rules and policies. If you wish to join a trip, you must contact the leader in advance.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

**Equipment:** While on the water, all paddlers must wear PFDs, spray skirts

and clothes appropriate to the water temperature. Boats must have water-tight bulkheads or flotation devices to prevent the kayak from swamping when capsized. All paddlers must have—and know how to use—a pump, paddle float and whistle. On the day of the trip, leaders may refuse to admit participants for noncompliance with any of these requirements, so if you are not sure, discuss it with the leader in advance!

**Waivers:** All participants in CPA-sponsored trips must sign legal release forms each time before setting out on the water. Only one release per season is needed for regularly scheduled events (e.g., the weekly activities of the "pirates"). The legal release absolves all participating CPA members from legal liability for the injury or death of a fellow participant.



Okumefest Photo by Ralph Heimlich

### **RATINGS:**

**First Timers:** Participants have never paddled before. No prior skills needed.

**Beginners:** Participants have paddled some, taken classes, or have been on short (up to 4-mile) trips and can do a wet exit and paddle float re-entry.

**Advanced Beginners:** Participants have been on longer trips (up to 10 miles, full-day outings), have some experience with varying conditions such as winds and waves and have good rescue and groups paddling skills.

**Intermediate Paddlers:** Participants are comfortable with open-water crossings of 2+ miles, can handle a variety of water conditions and have strong self- and group-rescue skills.

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intuitive. And not a little people boat. I need a boat that will fit me. I'll keep looking.

**Do you have a most memorable trip with the CPA which you can describe?** I like Marshall's Eastern Neck Trips. They have a nice mix of people. You can get varying conditions. Sometimes it's calm and another time it can be choppy. You can get a crew that is fast one time and then a crew that takes it's time on another trip and diddles around a little. I like these trips because they change so much. You never know what to expect every time and that makes it the most interesting.

**What season(s) do you most enjoy paddling in?** I like the summer because of the camaraderie and the friends and the more opportunity to get out there and play around, but I really like the winter too just because I have more of the river to myself. I like to paddle at night and see how pretty it is down stream; to experience things that you cannot during the day. I think I like all season for different reasons.

**I have not seen you do any type of kayak camping or destination trips, but I know you did other things like that in the past. Does that idea interest you?** Yep. I already have it in mind (and even on my calendar) to go on a trip to the 10,000 Islands. I have done backpacking and camping a lot in my past and am anxious to apply this to kayaking. It would be a way of merging two things that I have enjoyed. It seems like a good time to try this out.

**If you had a paddle philosophy, how would you describe it?** When I think I've learned it all, I am probably in trouble!

**Is there anything else about paddling you would like to add?** Well, I must say that I have gotten the most out of my membership with the CPA. There is something for everyone on in the club, whether you want to dink around with paddling or fully immerse yourself into it, head first. There are lots of opportunities.

*(Continued from page 4)*

**Fast and light (continued)** Our picnic table provided a great view on the coming day. Two ospreys sat on the nest to our right and an eagle circled to our left. I sipped my coffee while watching the sky.

Fortunately Brian was looking at the water. Something was swimming toward us very quickly. I was hoping for an otter. Sure enough, an otter he was. He kept straight toward us then proceeded to climb out of the water and up the trail. About 100 feet to our left he stopped, looked at us, and headed back to the river. It was definitely a sign of another great day ahead!

We finished breakfast and moved the drysuits, shoes, and boats to the sunshine to defrost as we packed up camp. We hit the water at 9:00 am. The river makes a hard turn to the east at Camp Merrick and again we found ourselves paddling into a headwind as we worked out the kinks in our muscles from the day before. The river was totally empty, it being Easter Sunday. We set our sights on Mathias Point. We pushed hard for those miles and I routinely saw the GPS hover at 6 or 6.2 MPH. Clearly timing the tides was helping us. Brian would pull away from time to time as he settled into a 6.5 MPH pace and then ease off while I caught up. At Mathias Point we had our first floating snack break – 12 miles into our day.

We stopped to stretch our legs on Persimmon point north of the Route 301 Bridge. The crescent shaped beach was just as I remembered it from my last visit and it was good to see at least some land hasn't been taken over by houses. I called Dave to let him know we had about 8 miles to Colonial Beach. It was noon and I told him we'd be there in about two hours.

Launching back into the river I felt a bit tired and told Brian that I was going to drop the pace. No more 6.2 MPH for me. But just as we got under the bridge we hit a sweet, sweet current. No we didn't hold 6.2. Instead we were holding 7 and then 7.2. I still don't know what caused it for according to the tide tables, we should have been fighting an incoming tide but we just sailed along. 7 MPH in loaded boats on mile 15 of the day and 37 of the trip – crazy! We stayed out in the center of the river riding the current. A large tug boat came up behind us and we surfed his wake into Colonial Beach hitting speeds of 9 MPH on the waves. Just as we came around a large fishing pier I saw Dave pull into the parking lot. We turned our boats into the beach as he came down to take our picture. It couldn't have worked out more perfectly.

In all, I'd say that the fast and light trip was a success. You can definitely trip in these racing sea kayaks as long as you take a little extra care. Carbon/Kevlar isn't poly and shouldn't be treated as such. Packing them is a cinch given their volume. Their quick acceleration helps you take advantage of waves that you couldn't surf in a slower kayak. A rudder is a necessity. Correcting a loaded 18 foot boat that is all waterline even with a rudder takes significant effort. Finally, the boats maintained their ability to cruise which really allows you to log the miles. I don't think I've ever seen 5 MPH on the GPS when I'm in my Tempest loaded let alone average 5.5 for 45 miles.

Could we have cut more weight? Yes, if we did it as a summer trip. Looks like we'll have to plan another Potomac Dash soon.



Brian and Cyndi with all they took Photo by Dave Biss



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Gina sands by the fire Photo by Dave Biss

had done before.

Bill Upton was driven by other motivations. Bill already had two nicely finished Greenland paddles that he had purchased commercially. He had bought them because the aftereffects of an accident had left him unable to paddle painlessly with a Euro paddle. Bill said he credits CPA, especially Dave Isbell, for introducing him to low-impact Greenland paddles and educating him about how to buy and use one. Asked why he was building a third paddle that would not differ substantially from the two he already had, he said he simply wanted the experience of building one himself. His smile at the end of the day showed that the experience was even better than he expected. Only two days after the event, he emailed me a note saying his new paddle had already been out for a test run.

And then there's John "We don't need no stinkin' power tools" Righi. Last year, John missed the deadline signing up for the workshop, so I told him he could scrounge for his own blank and come anyway. John, a little unclear on the concept of what a "blank" is, showed up with a solid 2in x 4in x 6ft plank of clear Western Red Cedar. He took a look around at other blanks that had seen the benefit of a band saw, outlined to the precise dimensions specified by each participant. Completely undaunted, John whipped out a sharp drawknife and got to work. By the end of the day, John had finished his paddle. John was so pleased with himself that he showed up this year with a blank made of spruce, again whittled down by hand with a drawknife. John explains his commitment to doing things the hard way by pointing to necessity; he doesn't own a band saw. But using hand tools stays true to the organic legacy of Greenland paddles, and I also believe he enjoys the challenge.



Cedar shavings turn Carderock pavilion into a giant gerbil cage Photo by Gina Cicotello

By late afternoon we had turned the Carderock pavilion into what looked like the world's largest gerbil cage lined in cedar shavings. The strong scents of cedar dust, tung oil, and smoke from the fireplace made an intoxicating combination. Most people had either finished their paddles or come close, and all left grinning with a sense of accomplishment.



Dave brought his newly built Greenland style kayak for display Photo by Gina Cicotello

There are a lot of reasons people get drawn to Greenland style paddling, or traditional paddling. See Dave's ["Coordinator's Column"](#) for an excellent description of that spectrum. For me personally, I think of Greenland paddling as the bohemian subculture of the kayak world. It's a throwback, a passionate movement to rediscover the roots of kayaking and thereby preserve that history. Sometimes the Greenland subculture seems like an odd anachronism, almost like watching Civil War reenactors or visiting Colonial Williamsburg. But dig into the history and hang out with the folks who so thoroughly know and willingly share this knowledge, and it's hard to resist getting caught up in the fascinating revival. Traditional paddling skills were developed over millennia, and were vital because kayaks were used as hunting tools critical to the survival of Arctic cultures; yet these skills still have strong relevance in the modern world.



## Inside our March-April 2008 issue:

- The Potomac Dash—Fast and Light by Kayak
- Another Successful Greenland Paddle Workshop
- Make A Date With the CPA
- Who's Paddling?
- Greenland Style is Hot!

**Mark Woodside, Rich Stevens, Sue Bauer and Ralph Heimlich with Mid-Patuxent Trash Haul, Hills Bridge Landing**

*Photo by Peakup Andropov*

### **The Chesapeake Paddler**

Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.  
PO Box 341  
Greenbelt, MD 20768

REMINDER: Please check your mailing label or the email you were sent for your membership expiration date. If your CPA membership has expired, or will expire soon, please send in your dues. SEE BOX ON PAGE 2 FOR ADDRESS.