

The Chesapeake Paddler



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Gear and FOYB Day

By Jim Allen

A big thank you from Marc and Jim to all the CPA volunteers and attendees who helped to make another successful *Gear Day and Fall Out of Your Boat Day*, Sunday June 7th at Truxton Park.

After a week of gloomy and unseasonably cool weather, Sunday turned out to be nearly perfect with temps in the mid 70's, with partly cloudy skies, and a nice breeze blowing. We had over 40 people attend the event! In the pavilion Marla Aron brought out CPA shirts and hats including the latest logo versions; they were selling quickly. We also had volunteer gear displays and personal gear for sale.

At times the pavilion was nearly empty with everyone out on the water training on wet exits, self-rescues, rolling, and short group paddles out of Spa Creek. All of the water activity led to another favorite item of CPA kayakers...FOOD! In seemingly no time all dozens of hungry kayakers descended on the pavilion to enjoy a pot-luck lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, salads, snacks and desserts. Thanks to all who brought along something to share! We hope everyone had a good time on the water and off and can come back again next year. ☺

Balletmobile

By Chip Walsh

I'd heard of Baltimore's Kinetic Sculpture Race. It seemed quirky and cool, and given that pedaling and paddling were two key ingredients of the event and two of my favorite activities, it piqued my interest. But I had never even attended the race, normally held in early May, because that is prime time for paddling trips. But a casual conversation at the PoB (Pirates of Baltimore) Holiday Party turned into a commitment to enter the race—yes, alcohol was involved! Through January my team and I kicked around ideas for the vehicle and its art. By February, we'd decided to base the vehicle on bicycles and reuse as many bike components as possible. We still hadn't decided on the art that would transform the machine into "sculpture" when my original team went AWOL—stopped returning emails and phone calls. Was it something I said? Regardless, it was time to start building, so instead of donning polypro and drysuit and trying to paddle through February's ice and snow, I was putting on layers of cotton and wool (spark resistant) to work outdoors in subfreezing temperatures. Sparks flew as I cut up bicycles, cut steel tubes, and did lots and lots of metal grinding to weld up a four-wheel, four-rider vehicle that could serve as a platform for the sculpture.

The route for the race includes a dip in the Harbor, so it needed to float. On an Assateague camping trip last winter, I found myself

[Continued on p. 4, Balletmobile](#)



Half Way...



Who's Next?



Ta-da!

Gear/FOYB Day

Photos by Ralph Heimlich

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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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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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 announcement 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?

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 - Ralph Heimlich

Behind the Scenes

Many people think that “running” a paddling club can’t be any big deal: A bunch of people who like paddling get together and do paddling trips. Sounds simple enough, and when any such organization is “young”, that may be all there is to it. However, volunteer organizations grow over time and, inevitably, grow a bit more complex. Here are some of the things that go on “behind the scenes” to keep the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc. going.

First, the “gang” of paddlers keeps changing, so we have to keep track of membership. **Sue Stevens** has been our Membership Secretary since 2006. Every month she scans the membership database for lapsing memberships and sends out remainder emails for renewal. She gets all the resulting membership renewals each month and processes them in our database, updating information and tracking anniversary dates, as well as processing any new member applications. I get a list of new and renewing members and print renewal and new membership cards. Each new member gets a greeting letter, their card, and a couple of CPA stickers mailed to them. Almost 700 members have generated an average of 136 new members and 86 renewals a year since we began in 1988. Over the last 5 years, we’ve averaged 123 new members and 45 renewals per year, or about 15 a month, but up to 50 a month in March and April.

In addition to the flow of people, there is a flow of money. **Rich Stevens**, who has been our Treasurer since 2007, processes all checks and PayPal transactions received for membership, and all receipts and checks for expenses for the various activities that CPA conducts throughout the year. Since 2007, Rich has handled over \$128,000 in income, including \$35,700 from events, and \$107,500 in expenses, including \$48,000 from events, \$12,700 for Piracies, \$13,400 for logo gear, \$10,000 for insurance, and \$14,000 for operating expenses, with a running net worth of about \$20,000. He also negotiates all of our liability insurance needs and premiums each year, including requesting certificates of insurance for outside activities such as pool sessions and training at other’s facilities.

The flow of information behind the scenes is also impressive. **Catriona Miller** and **Paula Hubbard**, who have staffed our website, manage most of the postings and changes needed to the site and respond when the system crashes or has issues. New volunteer web staffer Gregg Banse just completed a long-needed update to our online Forum software that totally refreshed the appearance and functioning of the site. All of the web staff process dozens of requests for user ids for the Forum each month, vetting them for cyber security issues and to exclude known spammers. In addition, **Catriona** and **Suzanne Farace** post all of the items that show up on our Facebook page, which many of you may see more often than the website.

Another form of information is The Chesapeake Paddler that you are currently reading. Editor **Carrie Casto** puts all the various offerings together each month and makes them look terrific. Pirate Queen **Jenny Plummer-Welker** manages the print distribution for the



Ralph Heimlich, CPA Coordinator

Photo by Suzanne Farace

remainder of readers still getting hard-copies of the newsletter, while Membership Secretary **Sue Stevens** does the larger email distribution.

Yet another flow of information is the CPA Library, managed by librarians **Caroline** and **Nelson Labbé**. This great, but under-utilized resource consists of some 54 videos and 26 books on kayaking skills and topics lugged around in milk crates from one CPA activity to another so that members can access this information at no cost (see [p. 7](#) if you would be interested in this “behind-the-scenes” job).

Believe it or not, CPA actually has a flow of products to manage, as well. Members expressed a desire for apparel with CPA’s logo on it, so current and previous Logo Gear managers **Marla Aron** and **Bela Mariassy** negotiated contracts for great wicking shirts, hats and bumper stickers that are functional, fun, and colorful at a very attractive price consistent with our non-profit status. Now **Marla** is managing the inventory of over \$4,000 and sales (at events and through the web and mail) that have been as high as \$500 per month.

Finally, there is the flow of decisions necessary to manage a volunteer organization. CPA is a kind of representative democracy, and the Steering Committee (current members are **Paul Casto**, **Paula Hubbard**, **Dave Isbell**, **Bela Mariassy**, **Dave Wilson**, and **Marshall Woodruff**, as well as the **Stevens**) serves as our Board of Directors, keeping my mad schemes in check and helping provide oversight on the operations of the club. Weeks can go by without need to “convene” (we work mostly by email or through the Forum), but when an issue of undertaking a new activity, supporting some group, changing some part of how we do business or making a major expenditure, the SC is on the line to make the right decisions for CPA.

So, a lot goes on behind the scenes of CPA’s mostly-paddling existence, and I haven’t even mentioned the Pirate Kings, Queens, and Commissars. The point is that no organization of this size can simply pay attention to paddling—there is always some of the necessary work to be done. Keep this in mind when nominations for CPA Officers come up later in the season. As members, you should want the best people working behind the scenes to insure that the play goes on. Taking on these responsibilities for a number of years takes a toll, and even the most dedicated officer will want “out” at some time. We need to recruit good people to fill those slots, and that “best person” could well be YOU! ☺

[Balletmobile, continued from p.1](#)

It rolls...

Photo from

<http://www.kineticbaltimore.com/KSR/2015/Preliminary.asp>

around a campfire with Ralph Heimlich, Greg Welker and Dave Isbel, three guys that are not only good paddlers but also know a lot about building things that float. An “around-the-campfire” conversation concluded that the floats should be foam insulation board and plywood, and that’s how I built them. I think I used more plywood than needed. I wanted the floats to be stiff enough to stand on. They are, but the downside is the two floats weighed a combined 230 lbs. So much weight in the floats influenced the selection of art for the sculpture and pilots for the vehicle—they’d both need to be light! Because I wanted to team with a charitable organization, we needed a willing organization and an artistic concept that would align with it. Thus was born the Balletmobile. Ballet Mobile, Inc. contributed mightily with the art and more importantly with an injection of enthusiasm at a time when I was depressed after my three original team mates abandoned the project. It’s always interesting working in teams. Ideas and contributions come from unexpected directions. Our ballerina sculpture (we named her Ketri) ended up being much different than I pictured at the start. She was painted by a multi-talented ballerina named Susan Moore. I would have made Ketri differently, but loved how Susan decorated her. Best of all, Ketri packed a lot of visual punch while weighing in at a mere 22 pounds.

The rules of the race require one pit crew for every rider, or kinetinauts, as they are called. Balletmobile had four seats, so I recruited seven team mates. As to who would be on the Balletmobile and who would pit crew, the overarching criteria was weight. The Balletmobile weighs around 450 pounds. Putting the smallest team members on the bike saved 200 pounds. Even with the small folks, race weight was around a thousand pounds, and bikes just are not made to handle that kind of weight. True we were spreading the weight over four wheels, but the rough streets of Baltimore ensured the weight was not going to be evenly distributed. I was sure the Balletmobile would at least fold a few wheels (we carried extras) under the weight. Many failure scenarios ran through my mind. When people asked where is the best place to view the Balletmobile on race day, my answer was always, “at the start,” because I wasn’t sure we’d make it much further.

Race day came and Balletmobile lumbered off from the start without

breaking. The climb up Battery Ave. to Federal Hill is one of the first challenges. Not only did she roll, but she was passing other kinetic sculptures on the way up the hill. I winced every time the crew drove her across the mini-canyons that pass for potholes in Baltimore, but she just kept rolling. I was thrilled she made it to the waterfront for the dip in the harbor, since it was the weight of the floats I thought would bring down the Balletmobile, and the whole reason for the floats was for the water challenge. Balletmobiles’ paddle-skilled crew excelled in the water segment at Canton Waterfront Park. According to CPA-members, Ben Maycock and Marla Aron, who were providing kayak support for the race, Balletmobile was one of the few sculptures able to make the turn around the buoy without help. But it was probably the weight of Balletmobile’s pontoons that stopped her in the sand and the mud challenges at Patterson Park, despite the best efforts of the pilots. No matter. Her pit crew pulled her through, and she continued to roll right through to the finish.



It Floats...

Photo by Marla Aron

At the awards ceremony, we were surprised to receive the Fill-in-the-gap trophy. This is an award the judges can provide to notable entries that aren’t picked for other categories, such as best art, best engineering, peoples’ choice and so on. I have to agree with the judges, Balletmobile was not best in most categories, but she was good in many of them, and thus well deserved a fill-in-the-gap award. The only problem was by completing the race absent a spectacular failure, it left many team members talking about “next year.”

Videos: <http://chipwalsh.org/Balletmobile/IntoHarbor.MOV>
<http://chipwalsh.org/Balletmobile/Rounding-in.MOV>
<http://chipwalsh.org/Balletmobile/UpRamp.MOV> 📺



And it Turns!

Photo by Marla Aron

Potomac Passagemaker

Touring the Potomac River from the Nation's Capital to the Bay

By Ralph Heimlich

The paddling world is full of water “tribes”: There are sea kayakers and whitewater paddlers, racers, those out for an hour or two (lily dippers), those interested in rolling and rescues (kayatheletes), those with no hip joints (SUPers), those who just want to get close to the fish (kayanglers), those out to change the world (causeyakers), and a small group of us out to see the world from the water (kayak tourers). I’m one of those. As an ideal, I’d like to pack up my kayak with some gear and week’s worth of food and paddle along from one water-side campsite to another until I got hungry, taking in all the wonderful natural and cultural sites along the shore as I passed. I’d like to think that John Smith would, in a different time, be a kayak tourer as well. What would he think of the National Historic Water Trail named after him along the Potomac River?

To find out, I proposed a series of ten paddles for this season that will cover the entire 136 miles from Columbia Island Marina to Point Lookout, MD (see [schedule and map here](#)). Let me tell you about the first two of these.

Columbia Island Marina to Belle Haven Marina and return—Our first leg took place in the heart of the Nation’s Capital, launching at the bustling [Columbia Island Marina](#) and underneath the traffic stalled on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, down past the Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial and the National Capitol, the vast noise of the arrivals and departures from Reagan National Airport. We detoured into the launch ramp at [Daingerfield island](#) for brief stretch break; tangled with the sailing school launching from the Washington Sailing Marina; cut across the touristy Alexandria waterfront; paddled underneath the Wilson Bridge; stroked by the Chesapeake’s shortest lighthouse at Jones Point; and propelled ourselves down to the crowded tip of [Belle Haven Marina’s](#) green-carpeted landing. All that urban scenery was packed into a mere 8.5 miles. To minimize the amount of shuttling, most of us did this paddle with a return up river - timed to make use of the tidal current as much as possible.

John Smith would have been agog at the sights along this modern, urban riverfront. Worse, he would have had to check into a hotel in Alexandria or National Harbor for a night’s stay if he could have found a limousine (or at least a taxi with a kayak rack) to get there. There are NO accommodations for kayak tourers on this section of the river: given high real-estate prices and lack of public parks, there may never be any. One would think that the most powerful city on the planet could somehow enable us to pursue our primitive journey even in this urban landscape, but the answer would seem to be, “NO.”



Aht and an arrival to Reagan National photo by Bob Shakeshaft

Belle Haven Marina to Leesylvania State Park, VA—Our second leg resembled kayak touring a bit more than the first. Because of the many links in this chain, the corresponding car shuttle was necessarily complex. We endured the Friday morning traffic from Belle Haven down busy Route 1 to leave a couple of cars at the car-top boat launch at Pohick Bay Regional Park, then battled back with the commuters to Belle Haven. Launching, we glided down the Virginia shore alongside the George Washington Parkway to the choke-point on the river where the steep-walled Fort Washington (on the MD shore) stopped the British fleet from sailing up to Washington during the War of 1812. Passing Piscataway Creek and the National Colonial Farm on the MD shore, and Fort Hunt on the VA side, we rounded Mount Vernon’s tour boat dock as one of the large cruisers maneuvered to tie up and coasted to a lunch spot on the beach just downriver from Washington’s home. After lunch, we crossed the mouth of Dogue Creek, rounded Whitestone Point and Fort Belvoir, and paddled up Gunston Cove to the beach at Pohick Bay RP, completing 12.1 more miles of our passage.



On the beach at Mount Vernon (Ed Cooper) photo by Ralph Heimlich



Washington DC from Columbia Island Marina photo by Suzanne Farace

I was joined for the out and back by Suzanne Farace, Bob Shakeshaft, Jay Perry, Aht Viraviyda, Lois Wyatt, Bob Maynes, Ed Cooper, Al Larsen, and Marla Aron, and Tom Blount, Madeline Towle, and Kathy and Frank Collins for the down river leg. After a light lunch and a cold watermelon shared with Chip and the other denizens of Belle Haven, we were back on the water. We swung to the Maryland shore for the return, passed close to the Ferris wheel and Oz-like National Harbor, and dodged the wakes of the various power boats and deep-draught tour boats who livened up the paddle by giving us some wakes to surf.

[Touring, continued from p. 5](#)

[Pohick Bay Regional Park](#) is a wonderful facility for recreation in Northern Virginia and provides nice campsites for many on a summer weekend, including our three. We couldn't help thinking, however, how nice it would have been if a small part of the shoreline of the park just up Gunston Cove from the car-top boat launch were set aside for a paddle-in campsite where we could just haul up the boats and set up camp. Kayak tourers don't need much: a little cleared level ground under some trees, a porta-potty and maybe a fire-ring not too far from the beach. Instead, we loaded up the boats and drove the mile and half to our campsites, set up camp and chilled out. One of our "must sees" on this stop was the Pirate Mural painted for the park by Al Larsen's talented son Ben. We thought the pirate captain looked suspiciously like Al, admittedly with one less leg.



Al Larsen and the Pirate from Ben Larsen's Mural at Pohick Bay RP
Photo by Ralph Heimlich

Our party started out with Ed Cooper, Dick Rock, Greg Welker, Marla Aron, Bob Maynes and Al Larsen. Bob had planned to bail out at Pohick and, due to an unfortunate boat loading accident which left a hole in his hull, Ed had to curtail his trip at Pohick as well. After a restful night, we awoke early, broke camp before nearly anyone else at the camp was awake (what do all those RV "campers" actually DO in camp all day?), left the boats at the landing and shuttled a car down to Leesylvania State Park for the Saturday portion of the trip. We launched and set off into the sun around Mason Neck, catching slack tidal current at Hallowing Point (it can run at over a knot on ebb and flow at this constriction). We pulled into Mason Neck NWR and lunched on the beach at the ruined dock and boathouse before launching for a 2.5 mile crossing of the mouth of Occoquan Creek. South winds of long fetch were aggravated by the wakes of many large power boats making fast time out of the marinas on Occoquan Creek. We left High Point behind us and spent a somewhat anxious time peering over our right shoulders for approaching boat traffic (one nearly nailed Greg before the operator woke up and realized he was bearing down on us) and dealing with some of the steep chop churned up by wind and boats. The biggest wave (something over 2.5 feet) carried us onto the shallows in front of the Leesylvania SP marina, augmented, no doubt, by a passing cruiser. Rounding the marina, we passed into Powell's Creek and beached at the canoe launch at Brushy Point, completing another 13.1 miles of our passage.

[Leesylvania State Park \(VA\)](#), has no "regular" camping, but has a very nice group camp site at Brushy Point right by the canoe launch that they will reserve for adult groups (unusual for group campsites). This would be a perfect setup for kayak touring, but at 25.2 downriver miles from Belle Haven Marina, wasn't very useful for us on this leg. If a paddle-in campsite could be developed at Pohick Bay RP (or across the river at MD's Chapman State Park, or on the National Park Ser-

vice's Piscataway Creek Park near the Marshall Hall boat ramp), a feasible touring run from there to Leesylvania SP could be done. These would then link to [VA's Widewater SP](#) (where a new paddle-in site is scheduled for construction this season), to [VA's Caledon SP](#) paddle-in sites dedicated last year, to the existing paddle-in campsite at MD's Chapel Point, a roughly 70-mile stretch of the Potomac River.

While not strictly speaking part of the Potomac Passagemaker Tour, on Sunday, Marla Aron, Greg Welker and I joined Linda Witkin and Mike Cohn for his paddle from [Marshall Hall](#) to Pomonkey Creek on the Maryland shore of the Potomac. Also paddling were Bill McAllister, Gail Davidson, Jim LaMadrid, Jill Zimmerman, and Larry Schoen. The shoreline was beautiful and Pomonkey Creek is a nearly unspoiled tidal creek leading up into woods and swamps that John Smith would feel right at home exploring. We ventured farther downstream and landed at [MD's Chapman State Park](#), featuring the colonial mansion at [Mount Aventine](#). The commanding views from the ridgetop on which the house was built in 1840 sweep down across a treed meadow that was dotted with native prickly pear cactus in bloom, an exotic sight somewhat unexpected in mid-Atlantic Maryland.

There are seven more legs to this season's [Potomac Passagemaker Tour](#), and I invite you to come along, sample kayak touring, and see some of our great national river as John Smith would have seen it (if he'd only had a kayak).

More photos online [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). ☺



Perfect place for a paddle-in campsite at Pohick Bay RP
photo by Ralph Heimlich



Canoe landing at Bushy Point, Leesylvania SP (VA) with paddle-in campsite in the background

photo by Ralph Heimlich

Chesapeake Paddlers Association 2015 Calendar

Date	Title	Summary
July 11	Kent Island Paddle #4	The fourth in a series of paddles around Kent Island.
July 17-19	Potomac Passage Maker Tour #4	The 4th leg will be a camper from Mallows Bay to Southern Park.
July 18	Royal Oak & Miles River	Day paddle near St. Michaels.
July 24-26	Chesapeake Voyager Finishing Paddle	Paddle from Harborton VA to Kiptopeke State Park VA
July 25-26	Practice Kayak Kamper	A chance to try out camping from you kayak for one night, not too far from civilization with an easy paddle.
August 1	Sassafras River LOTUS Expedition	Explore native lotus ablooming in the coves on the upper Sassafras.
August 1-2	Upper Potomac Kayak Camper	An overnight trip for those looking to learn more about Kayak Kamping
August 2	Cove Point Lighthouse Paddle	14-15 nm paddle from Solomon's Island up the Chesapeake Bay to Cove point and back
	All Calendar Dates	

Librarian Wanted

CPA Librarian Needed—Long-time CPA librarians Carolyn and Nelson Labbé are ready to pass the milk crates on to a new librarian. Requirements are a safe, secure place to store several crates of material, willingness to attend most major CPA activities and bring the material along, and to keep track of who has what material checked out. You also get the fun of reviewing new material for acquisition and proposing acquisitions to the CPA Steering Committee. If want more information, please contact **Caroline Labbé** clabbe56@hotmail.com.



Potomac Tour: Mount Aventine at Chapman State Park, MD
(inset is prickly pear cactus in bloom) Photos by Ralph Heimlich



Potomac Tour: First Leg

photo by Suzanne Farace



L'Hermione

photos by Rich Stevens

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Paddler related articles:

Maryland Swim For Life Volunteer site: <http://swimforlife.swimdcac.org/swimforlife/Volunteers.html>

The Language of Maps: A Primer - <http://www.paddling.net/sameboat/archives/sameboat814.html>

"Wear Your PFD," Sea Kayak 'Elitists' Urge - this is a good article to send to your friends who don't want to wear PFDs! - <http://www.kayakfishmag.com/tips/pfds/>

Are you going to be first to have your kayak wrapped? - <http://www.canoekayak.com/news/industry-news-fh-decals-introduces-the-custom-kayak-wrap/> (Send your wrapped kayak pictures to the editor - news_editor@cpakayaker.com)

The Chesapeake Paddler

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