

## CPA Paddler Profiles ~ Bill Upton

### Interview by Rick Wiebush



**Bill Upton kayaking on the Anacostia**  
photo by Catriona Miller

**Name:** Bill Upton

**Lives in:** Huntingtown, Maryland

**Real job:** Communications work for the Machinists union

**Member of a Piracy?** Patuxent River Pirates

**Paddling Buddies:** Kent Island paddle group

**Number years paddling:** 14

**How did you get involved in kayaking?** After moving here from the Pacific Northwest in 1997, a friend took me out on the Patuxent River and I was instantly hooked. Ironically, I didn't kayak in Seattle, I was always in the mountains hiking or cross-country skiing.

**How did you learn to sea kayak?** My first lesson was at Quiet Waters Park when Amphibious Horizons was running classes. After that, mostly other CPA paddlers, CPA-sponsored events like SK 101 and 102, workshops and guest instructor seminars.

**Any formal training or ACA/BCU certifications?** Nothing other than guest instructor workshops and going out in the ocean with Robert Schrak from Adventure Crafters.

**Boat usually paddled:** NDK Romany Surf, white, 16 ft. or Explorer, orange, 17.5 ft.

**Type paddle used:** Greenland paddle from Beale Paddles for touring and Werner Euro for surfing

**Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking:** Not yet.

**Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities:** Downhill skiing here in the winter and hiking and cross-country skiing when I visit Seattle.

**How often do you paddle in summer?** At least once a week.

**Do any winter paddling?** As much or more than summer, it's my favorite time of year.

**Go to pool sessions?** I used to coordinate sessions at the Calvert County Aquatic Center, but not in the last two years.

**Favorite local paddling location:** I'm lucky to live in a water community near Breezy Point in Calvert County so I can launch from our neighborhood beach. Parker's Creek is a favorite.

**Favorite non-local location:** Cape Henlopen, Delaware

**Best paddling trip/experience ever and why:** Making it around Kent Island the first time with Marshall and the others in the KIPP series. After a serious car crash, I never thought I would make fifteen miles, let alone 32, but others helped me through. It's such a good learning experience, I think every KIPPer comes away with a whole new sense of their ability as kayakers.

**Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why:** I was kayak camping at Assateague Island and went for a day trip. A thick fog bank rolled in out of nowhere. You couldn't see more than a few feet. Following the shoreline wasn't an option because it was too shallow and uneven. Even though I had a compass bearing to follow back, it was a big relief when the fog burned off.

**Bucket list trips:** Hot Springs Cove, Vancouver Island, BC

**Three things you like most about paddling?**

- Surfing
- Being on the water and close to wildlife/scenery
- There's always more to learn

**What do you like about CPA?** It's a great community of people who like kayaking and are always willing to help others learn.

**One thing other people find interesting about you:** I used to be a crab fisherman out of Dutch Harbor in the Bering Sea, one of those guys you wonder about their sanity if you watch "The Most Dangerous Catch."