

## CPA Paddler Profile ~ Mike Ward

Interview by Rick Wiebush



Mike Ward at Watts Island, Virginia  
Photograph by Rick Wiebush

**Name:** Michael Ward

**Lives in:** Hershey, Pennsylvania

**Real job:** Sunoco/Fuel Transport Driver

**Member of a Piracy?** Pirates of Baltimore and Pirates of the Lakes

**Paddling Buddies:** Jay Gitomer, Rick Wiebush, as well as others from the Baltimore area. Gary Benzon of Carlisle, Pa.

**Number years paddling:** 6

**How did you get involved in kayaking?** Bought my first rec boat with the idea I would just goof around a little.

**How did you learn to sea kayak?** SK102, skills clinics with the Pirates of Baltimore, as well as some commercial courses.

**Any formal training or ACA/BCU certifications?** I have taken courses with Cross Currents, Adventure Crafters, Bay Kayaking, and earned a BCU 3\* three star assessment at the Kiptopeke Symposium last fall.

**Boat usually paddled:** Tiderace Xcite 17'10" red/white

**Type paddle used:** Euro

**Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking?** No

**Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities?** No

**How often do you paddle in summer?** Once or twice per week

**Do any winter paddling?** Yes

**Go to pool sessions?** Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg organizes winter pool sessions at a local high school.

**Favorite local paddling location:** Swatara Creek in Hershey.

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

**Best paddling trip/experience ever and why:** The coolest thing I ever did in my kayak was during an open water training course with Cross Currents at Cape Henlopen. Conditions were kind of flat with regular dumping surf of about two feet or less. So for fun we paddled parallel to the beach riding the shoulders of the waves, using draw strokes to keep from being thrown down on the beach. Most fun you can have with your clothes on.

**Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why:** On a recent surfing trip to Metomkin Inlet, Virginia, I experienced my first pitch-pole. When I noticed I was looking up at the water and down at the sky, the thought *take a deep breath* went through my mind. Once things settled down and I stopped being pushed by the wave, I realized I had managed to stay with my boat (and shocked to find it still attached to my \*\*\*). I was able to roll up and after some re-orienting, I found the beach where our gear was stored.

**Bucket list trips:** I want to (will someday) paddle with icebergs.

**Three things you like most about paddling?** I am a water guy anyway, plus it's a break from the everyday run around. And I get to meet a lot of really cool people.

**What do you like about CPA?** The paddling resources: people, places, and a whole wealth of knowledge.

**One thing other people find interesting about you:** Saying I'm an amateur gourmet cook is probably a little much, but I'm certainly a foodie.