

# The Chesapeake Paddler



Publication of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Volume 14, Issue 8

September 2004

## A Beginner's Trip to Oxford *By Danielle Ring*

I fell in love the first time I paddled a kayak. I had always thought of myself as a would-be sailor: I loved the water, the peace and efficiency of wind-powered motion. The first time I lowered myself into that plastic shoe of a boat and shoved off from shore, I knew I was a paddler. I hadn't meant to try paddling; it was part of my new employee orientation at The Nature Conservancy—a field trip to the Pamunkey River, just east of Richmond.

That was over four years ago. After the trip, I started a kayak savings fund, read whatever I could and signed up for local paddling trips with outfitters. This summer, my husband and I finally splurged on two 11.5' Dagger Blackwaters. Well, it wasn't really the kayaks we had to splurge on. It was everything else that beginner paddlers seem not to know about: PFDs, paddles, car racks, rollers, saddles, spray skirts, portage covers, paddle floats, bilge pumps and so on. At least *Jim and I* didn't take these expenses into account.

Eager to get on the water, we began searching the web for interesting launch sites.

(This is how I found the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, which I joined and for whom I now edit the newsletter.) I am still on a local outfitter's email list, and every few weeks they send a list of upcoming trips. While the trips sound wonderful, I always think about how I do not really need to pay them to take me to these exciting places.



And so I began a list of the outfitter's trips and mapped them.

My husband and I had been yearning for a short vacation. So on a perfect August Saturday, we left Falls Church, Virginia for Oxford, Maryland. Oxford is a small town on the Eastern Shore, about an hour-and-a-half from D.C. (though plan for possibly three hours if, like everyone else, your only way over the water is to cross the Bay Bridge). The Tred Avon River runs out of Oxford and drains into the

Bay. The outfitter called Oxford an old, charming town and the Tred Avon a delightful place to paddle.

It would be an understatement to say that Oxford is boat crazy. There is only one main street that runs through the middle of town, and all the side roads lead to a marina where flagrantly luxurious yachts and sailboats sit. The main street is subdued, with local businesses like a market that moonlights as an ice cream parlor, video store, liquor store, café and sub shop. Most of the remaining structures are small, colorful houses with white trim and pristine lawns. The few homes that are unkempt still retain an off-beat charm.

My husband Jim and I rented a room at the Robert Morris Inn and were told that we could use their beachfront property to put in. The launch is at the edge of a green lawn which abruptly turns to sand and continues down under the river to form its bottom. This beach is just east of the town creek, whose waters lap reassuringly against the boats and docks. When we put in, we first experienced short, choppy waves as speedboats whizzed by. Once around the yacht club's jetty, we

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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)
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 announcement and personal ads to sell kayaks/ accessories are printed at no charge; non-members pay \$10 for 3 months.

**FOR SALE:** One-piece, feathered paddle by Advanced Technology (<http://www.atpaddle.com/TouringXOSSeries.html>). I believe it is the Xception OS E model. Paddle is new! 230 cm. Cost: \$299. Asking \$100. Contact Lisa at [lgardner25@comcast.net](mailto:lgardner25@comcast.net). (9/04)

**FOR SALE:** CLC Chesapeake LT16. 15'8" X 23", approx. 45 lbs. Fiberglass over wood construction. 1 year old. Tracks very well. Varnished mahogany over white. Beautiful boat! Asking \$1800. Lisa Gardner, [lgardner25@comcast.net](mailto:lgardner25@comcast.net). (8/04)

**SPACE FOR RENT:** Rent kayak space at the Pier 7 Boat House on the South River. Convenient to Annapolis. Free launches on Wednesday nights. Secure indoors storage. Greg Welker, 301-249-4895 or [gwelker@chesapeake.net](mailto:gwelker@chesapeake.net) (9/04)

**SCHEDULE FOR 2004 CHESAPEAKE PADDLER**

The 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
October 2004	September 15, 2004
Nov/Dec 2004	October 15, 2004
Jan/Feb 2004	December 15, 2004

We need your stories! Please let us know if you can write a trip report, product review or informational article for the newsletter. Direct inquiries to Danielle, the Editor, at [news\\_editor@cpakayaker.com](mailto:news_editor@cpakayaker.com).

**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.

**Steering Committee:**

**Coordinator**—Brian Blankinship, coordinator  
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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.

**Newsletter Team:**  
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[news\\_editor@cpakayaker.com](mailto:news_editor@cpakayaker.com)

**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.

*Articles Editor*—Thomas Crabill,  
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**Pirate Groups:**

**Pier 7 Pirate King**—Alan Avery, 410-956-3299,  
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*The Chesapeake Paddler is published monthly, approximately March–December 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.*

**Potomac Pirate King**—Dick Rock, 703-780-6605

**Patuxent Pirate King**—Dan Wells, 410-414-  
2660, [pirates\\_patuxent@cpakayaker.com](mailto:pirates_patuxent@cpakayaker.com);

## Coordinator's Column

Welcome to our new Newsletter Editor, Danielle Ring, and our new newsletter distribution team, Rob and Jackie Castle. Once again outstanding volunteers come through to keep the association running well. Please offer your assistance when you can. We can always use interesting trip reports, gear reviews or other articles.

### Critical Judgment II

The ACA released its latest report: "Critical Judgment II: Understanding and Preventing Canoe and Kayak Fatalities 1996-2002." I pulled some statements I thought were particularly relevant to us.

- "Among the 558 paddling fatalities for which type of vessel is known ... Sea Kayaks represented a very small proportion of fatalities (1% overall and 5% among kayaks)."

Considering the small percentage of paddling fatalities in overall boating fatalities, sea kayaks must make up a minuscule percentage.

- "Among kayakers, only 9% of fatalities involved alcohol use." Previous reports have noted alcohol to be a major factor in boating accidents. Unfortunately, this statistic doesn't differentiate between types of kayaks.

There was some movement by the Safe Boating Council to require kayakers to display flags like kid's bicycles. Here are a couple statistics that argue against it:

- "... the ACA found only a few fatal accidents positively identified as involving another vessel. There are, however, a significant number of fatal capsizes un-witnessed and where the cause of the capsize is unknown."

- "...nothing in the [Boating Accident Report Database (BARD), 1996-2002] accident data or in the accident descriptions reviewed by ACA indicates that the low profile of a kayak has played a role in boating accidents or fatalities."

The report also provides information that may help you to judge your own risk. This list appears to have more to do with whitewater than sea kayaking, but several do apply to touring:

- "The following lists present human errors resulting in reported accidents [for all types of kayaks] in the order of frequency from highest to lowest.

CONDITIONS-venturing out in conditions too severe  
CLOTHING-inappropriate for cold

weather, no helmet  
ROUTE-not checking for rapids, waterfalls, obstructions  
SKILL-insufficient for conditions and attempted activity  
WATER-not considering navigability, obstructions (rocks)  
WEATHER-not ceasing operation, seeking shelter  
SELECTION-wrong type of kayak for route and conditions"

CPA has always been safety conscious, but we try not to go overboard. We prefer education over regulation and believe our equipment requirements are the minimum for safe, self sufficient paddling. Of course, skills will always be more critical than equipment.

You are always responsible for yourself while kayaking. CPA does not certify trip leaders or paddlers. Just as trip leaders are expected to screen participants to get an idea of their ability to handle probable conditions, paddlers are expected to screen trip leaders to ensure they are comfortable with the leader's skills.

Brian Blankinship



## The Dog Paddle

## PADDLIN PLACES

*This feature is compiled from discussions on the CPA mail list. It focuses on places to paddle, as documented by list participants.*

*Chris Conklin:* Here is a sampler of 2 launches from the Chesapeake Boat Launch Guide.

### **Perryville Community Park**

([www.perryvillemd.org/park.htm](http://www.perryvillemd.org/park.htm)); Located at the top of the Chesapeake Bay at the mouth of the Susquehanna River, this park is identified as #19 Green in the Public Access Guide put out by the Chesapeake Bay Program. However, that guide does not indicate the park has any launches. This season as part of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (A Gateway Project), a gravel canoe launch is being installed and site improvements are being made. So far the use of this large and pristine park and launch seems to be free. The launch is located at 39 32.88 N Lat and 77 02.92 W Long (ADC Cecil Co, p. 14, grid K6) or on the Mill Creek side of the Perryville neck that also contains a VA Hospital. This gives the ramp protection from a full southern exposure to the Chesapeake Bay. Mill Creek has a surprisingly undeveloped shoreline. Furnace Bay and Carpenter Point are to the east, with Havre De Grace to the west across the mouth of the Susquehanna River. *Directions:* From downtown Perryville on

*Broad Street, which is MD Rt. 7, proceed east (NNE) for about a mile. At the Perryville Fire Station, take a right (south) on Firestone Road (MD Rt. 327). Proceed south into the park. The paved road winds through the woods with Mill Creek (Bay) on the left and then opens to a large sports field with a gravel loop road around the neck to Stump Point. The launch is on the left (east) side of the loop.*

Sandy Beaches come in many types. I pay particular attention to what I call "Sunset Beaches": West-facing beaches that offer a good over-the-water sunset view. One of the better sunset beaches is **Guard Shore Beach** on the Virginia Eastern Shore. Guard Shore Beach is on the eastern edge of Beasley Bay, which is the first big bay south of Pocomoke Sound, just into Virginia and in the northwest corner of Accomack County. Beasley Bay is one of the more remote and pristine sections of the Chesapeake Bay. Unlike the marshlands of Dorchester County to the north, Beasley Bay has many more isolated sandy beaches for landings. This is because the southern

half of the Chesapeake has more sand than the northern half. The shoreline in this area is still marshy, but the number and density of boat launches is greater. Recently I revisited Guard Shore and a lot has happened in the last several years. I took VA State Road 684 west from Bloxum Town out into the marshes to where it makes a right turn on a small peninsula with a mile-long sand beach on the west side of the road. Previously, this area was not well kept. Last year the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia donated the property to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as a wildlife management area. Local volunteers helped with a cleanup. Now, the area is clean and well kept. The sand beach is wide and long. On the horizon across the wide bay, other sandy shorelines beckon. As a plus, there is a small commercial campground just back up the road called Little Acers Campground (757-665-4788 or email: [littleacres@dmv.com](mailto:littleacres@dmv.com)). The owner, Homer, is very interested in supporting kayak operations. At this time I am not sure what the camping possibilities are out on the bay but at least you have a campground to daytrip from. I very much encourage exploration of this area and I ask for trip reports.

**Continued from Page 1**

were safe within the confines of the town creek.

We paddled for some time, weaving in and out of the nooks and crannies where the giant boats bobbed. We read their names—mostly women’s—and noted to ourselves how far they had traveled. Some were from Canada, some Maine, some Florida. At one point, a man started his sailboat engine and began backing out. I paddled quickly to give him a wide berth. He certainly didn’t see me – I was practically at the same level as the water.

Unlike some of the more deserted places we paddle, there was no way for me to discreetly empty my bladder. For some reason, this urge becomes magnified as soon as I settle down into my kayak. Amongst the yachts, I looked at my watch. It had only been about thirty minutes since we put in, but I needed to go. I yelled to my husband, who paddled over and gave me that “I love you but you are such a pain” look.

He said, “Remember that park we passed? It had Port-a-Potties. Let’s paddle back that way.”

“But that’s sooo far,” I whined. “There has to be something else I can do.”

I looked around for a private place, but there were people walking along the docks, hundreds of boats hovering over us and houses guarding the riverbanks. I didn’t want it to come to this, but I was beginning to sweat.

“Empty your drink and give me the bottle.”

“No!”

“Come on!” I pleaded, but he had already begun paddling towards the park.

I hesitated for a moment, cringing at the uncomfortable physical effort ahead of me. But paddling was the only choice. With extreme determination, I began what Joe Glickman (author of *The Kayak Companion*) calls the “power paddle”. My blades stabbed through the water’s surface as I imagined pulling myself along an invisible line just in front of me. Like a Zen master, I thought of nothing but transcending my physical existence. Soon, I was digging the front of my boat into sand just several feet from my salvation. What sweet relief!

Soon after my recovery, we directed our boats toward an island. We had to cross a wide channel and avoid being creamed by monstrous luxury vessels. Just past the island, Jim and I found ourselves in a marsh along the Oxford Cemetery. The centuries-old markers had been carved into either crosses or ovals. Short, thin-branched trees hid hundreds of blackbirds.

As we paddled further along the cemetery and into the trees, we first saw an uncanny movement of limbs and leaves. Suddenly, we heard a giant WHOOSH as the

birds left their resting place. Like the town market with its many services, the cemetery does double duty as a bird sanctuary.

The water was peaceful next to the cemetery, and I wanted to linger in the quietness. I did not yet have the CPA-required spray skirt, so I pulled my legs out of the cockpit and stretched them over the top of the boat. I released the seat and lay back, resting my head on my balled-up T-shirt. I simply enjoyed the feeling of non-movement, of being satisfied with where I was. I remembered my first trip on the Pamunkey River and how it allowed me to fall in love with the water all over again. Like a kid on a raft, I closed my eyes and left my body for a little while. I floated peacefully, gently cradled and rocked by the Tred Avon.

And that’s when I realized that my bladder was again full.





## ELECTION NOTICE

The Annual Meeting is currently scheduled for Sunday, November 7, 2004. Lunch will be provided.

At the meeting we will discuss CPA business and elect the association officers (Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer) and the other six Steering Committee positions.

If you are interested in running for one of these positions, send your name and a brief "campaign speech" to [webmaster@cpakayaker.com](mailto:webmaster@cpakayaker.com).

The deadline is October 10. The names will be listed on the proxy ballot in the October newsletter. I hope everyone attends

the Annual Meeting. If you can't, please fill out the proxy ballot.

More information on where we will meet is forthcoming.

*Brian Blankinship*



## You Know You're Still a Newbie When...

By Mark Woodside

- You put on your farmer john suit inside out on more than one occasion
- You refuse to accept that the best method to fit the skirt onto the cowling or cockpit is to start from the back
- You attempt to paddle with the blades upside down
- You maintain poor hand grip —hands too close together
- You take over forty-five minutes to load the kayak and pack the car
- You still don't have the second-nature feel of wearing a PFD
- You paddle solo the day after Isabel in the Patuxent River
- You used to wear glasses until you realize the eye glass strap needs to be attached before you attempt to roll.
- People with a Greenland paddles can out-manuever you in speed and turns

## 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.

### 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.

## CALENDAR

Participants in CPA events must read and comply with the statement of CPA trips requirements and ratings.

Please contact the trip leaders in advance, even if you are familiar with the area being paddled. They need contact information in case of changes, and there may be space limitations or other trip restrictions.

The latest information about CPA trips is at [www.cpakayaker.com](http://www.cpakayaker.com).

### SEPTEMBER

**5-11 (Sun-Sat) Adirondacks. Week-long paddle.** (All) David Moore. Lodge and camping.

**11-12 (Sat-Sun) St. Clements Island Kayak Camp.** (Advanced Beginner) Bill Dodge

**24-26 (Fri-Sun) Elk Neck State Park Campout.** (Beginner) Ralph Heimlich

### OCTOBER

**10 (Sun) Nominations for officers and steering committee members due; see CPA website for form**

**28 (Thu) Halloween Paddle, Jack's Boathouse.** (Beginner) Dave Biss

**29-31 (Fri-Sun) Chickahominy River Paddle and Camp.** (Beginner) Bill Dodge

**30 (Sat) Indoor Pool Sessions Begin** (All)

**31 (Sun) Daylight Savings Ends**

### NOVEMBER

**7 (Sun) Annual Meeting**

### DECEMBER

**4 (Sat) Holiday Party, Alan Avery's house** (All)



## Weekly Pirates Paddling

CHECK THE STARTING DATES FOR EACH GROUP ON THE CPA WEBSITE:  
<http://www.cpakayaker.com>

### Pirates at Pier 7

Wednesday nights, arrive 4-6 PM. Paddling, rolling, rescue practice, boat fitting, BBQs and hanging out with other paddlers. PFDs required. Directions: Take US-50 west toward Annapolis. Exit onto MD-665. Exit onto MD-2 south, over the South River. Take the first left after crossing the bridge. Follow road to Pier 7 Marina. Contact: Alan Avery, 410-856-3299 or [pirates\\_pier7@cpakayaker.com](mailto:pirates_pier7@cpakayaker.com).

*Note: Pier 7 kayak launching is free on Wednesday only. All other times there is a \$5 launch fee, even if launching from the beach.*



### Pirates of the Potomac

Wednesday nights, 5 PM. Belle Haven Marina. \$3 launch fee. Seasonal passes \$45. Directions: From Alexandria, VA, take the Mount Vernon Parkway 1.3 miles south of the Beltway, then left and straight into the marina. Contact: Dick Rock, 703-780-6605 or [pirates\\_potomac@cpakayaker.com](mailto:pirates_potomac@cpakayaker.com). In case of inclement weather, call Bellhaven Marina at 703-768-0018 after 3:30 to confirm launch cancelled.

### Pirates of the Patuxent

Thursday nights, arrive 5-6 PM. Free parking on the right, just north of the boardwalk across from Our Lady Star of the Sea Church. Contact: Dan Wells, 410-414-2660 or [pirates\\_patuxent@cpakayaker.com](mailto:pirates_patuxent@cpakayaker.com); (alternate) Don Polakovics, 301-866-0437, [pirates\\_patuxent2@cpakayaker.com](mailto:pirates_patuxent2@cpakayaker.com)

### Pirates of Georgetown

Thursday nights, arrive between 6-6:30 PM. Jack's Boats (202-337-9642), 3500 K Street, NW in the Georgetown area of Washington, DC under the Whitehurst Freeway. Plenty of parking. Rental kayaks available. Contact: David Moore, 301-445-3273 or [pirates\\_georgetown@cpakayaker.com](mailto:pirates_georgetown@cpakayaker.com); <http://www.jacksboathouse.com/POG>

### Pirates of Baltimore (the roving Piracy!)

1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesdays at Canton Waterfront Park, 3001 Boston St., Baltimore; 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at Rocky Point Park, Essex, MD. Meet at 5:30 PM for paddling and skills practice and to meet other paddlers. PFDs, sprayskirts and a waterproof light required. Contact Barry Marsh, 410-728-4016 or 703-837-3017.

### Pirates of Algonkian (upper Potomac)

Tuesday nights, 6 PM until sunset. Paddlers from VA and MD paddle along the upper Potomac shores. We raid unsuspecting canoes and fisherman for food, drink and catch-of-the-day. AAARRRRG! We also portage and paddle down along the C&O Canal. We often explore Seneca Creek and elongated islands as well as practice skills, rescues, and rolling workshops. Two launch points: Algonkian Regional Park in Sterling, VA, and Fountainhead Regional Park in Clifton, VA. Contact: James Song, [james.song@verizon.com](mailto:james.song@verizon.com) or [tsongus@yahoo.com](mailto:tsongus@yahoo.com) or 703-375-4754.



Inside our September issue...

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**The Chesapeake Paddler**  
Chesapeake Paddlers Association  
PO Box 341  
Greenbelt, MD 20768

REMINDER: Please check your mailing label 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.