

Chesapeake Paddler



Publication of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc. Volume 22, Issue 5

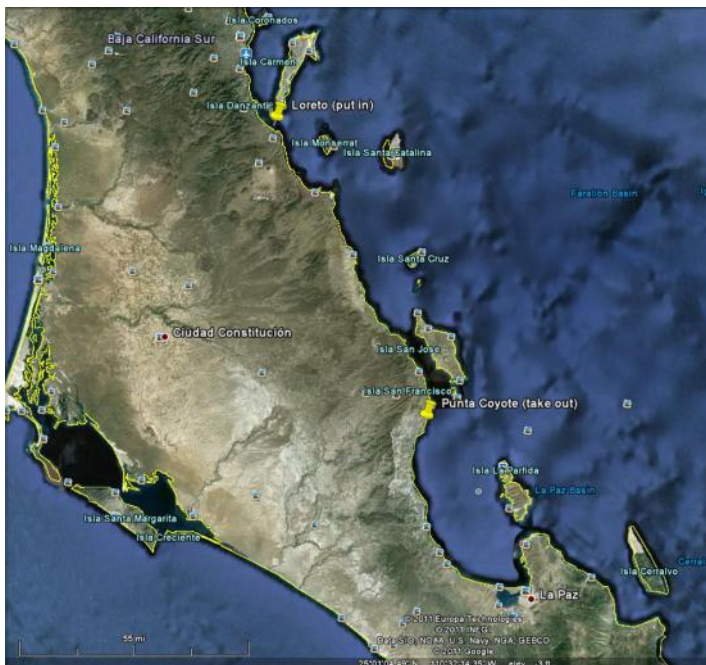
May 2012

California (Baja) Dreamin'

By Rick Wiebush

I recently led a group of CPA paddlers on a two-stage, two-week trip to Baja that included:

- A self-supported week-long 90 nautical mile (NM) expedition from just south of Loreto (Ensenada Blanca) to just north of La Paz (Punta Coyote); and
- A separate 55 NM circumnavigation of Isla Espiritu Santo and Isla Partida.



Overview of the trip

Loreto to La Paz—We rented boats and got a shuttle to the put-in from Baja Outdoor Activities (BOA) in La Paz. Most of the boats were Prijon rotomolded Kodiaks and Seayaks. They were in excellent shape and had a lot of storage space, but had rudders (gasp!).

The routine the first week was similar each day: up at dawn, paddle 15-18 NM while pretty much hugging the coast and seeing no other people, stop around 4 PM at a great campsite, eat and talk, have a little tequila, go to bed right after dark around 8; get up the next day and repeat. We carried all our water with us (about 20 liters each to start) and got one small resupply at the village of San Evaristo.

The trip was run by Cross Currents Sea Kayaking and included CPA members Jan Sheehan (MD), Kevin Black (VA), Mike Thomas (MD) and Glenn Schlipfert (PA). James Kesterson, a long-time paddling buddy from North Carolina, was also part of the group.

Although I had been to Baja five or six times previously, I was again stunned by the scale of the place, the jaw-dropping beauty, and the isolation. Jagged mountains drop directly into the sea; camping is on spectacular beaches; the conditions on the Sea of Cortez change from mild to wild day-to-day; and interesting wildlife abounds, especially on the second part of the trip. In my mind, Baja is paddling at its best. Here's a scene typical of the massive scale of the landscape (note the kayaker, bottom right):



Here's a scene typical of the massive scale of the landscape (note the kayaker, bottom right), photo by Rick Wiebush

(Continued on page 9)

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.



Back on course, on the Pocomoke, photo by Ralph Heimlich

SCHEDULE FOR 2011 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
June 2012	May 15, 2012
July 2012	June 15, 2012
August 2012	July 15, 2012

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 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.

Officers:

Coordinator—Jay Gitomer, 410-687-6878, coordinator@cpakayaker.com

Membership, subscriptions—Sue Stevens, 410-531-5641, c/o CPA, PO Box 341

Greenbelt, MD 20768, membership@cpakayaker.com

Secretary—Sue Stevens, 410-531-5641 secretary@cpakayaker.com

Treasurer—Rich Stevens, 703-527-4882, treasurer@cpakayaker.com

Webmaster/E-Mail List Administrator—Dave Biss, webmaster@cpakayaker.com

Newsletter Team:

Managing Editor/Layout—Ralph Heimlich, 301-498-0722, news_editor@cpakayaker.com

Mailing and Distribution—Mark Woodside, 301-373-4561, news_distribution@cpakayaker.com

Pirate Groups:

Pier 7 Pirate Committee—Rich Stevens, 703-527-4882, Béla Mariassy, Jenny Welker-Plummer and Greg Welker, 301-249-4895, Sue Stevens, 410-531-5641, Brent Cogswell, 410-381-0037, pirates_pier7@cpakayaker.com

Potomac Pirate King—Dick Rock, 703-780-6605 pirates_potomac@cpakayaker.com

Patuxent Pirate Queen—Jenny Plummer-Welker Pirate Captain, 410-535-2348/301-249-4895, pirates_patuxent@cpakayaker.com;

Georgetown Pirate King—

Peter Harris; 703-408-7812, pirates_georgetown@cpakayaker.com.

Baltimore Pirate King—Dave Wilson, 443-562-6156, pirates_baltimore@cpakayaker.com

Occoquan Pirate King—Jeff Walaszek, 703-670-7712, Jim Zawlocki 703-378-7536 pirates_occoquan@cpakayaker.com

Sugarloaf Pirate King—Liz Marancik 301-221-0572, Rita Scherping 240-731-9987, pirates_sugarloaf@cpakayaker.com

Pirate Kings of the North—Bob Shakeshaft, 410-939-0269 pirates_north@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of the James—Mary Larson, 804-316-3432, Jon Phipard 804-334-3019 pirates_james@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of the Eastern Shore—Paula Hubbard, 407-619-2896 pirates_easternshore@cpakayaker.com

MEMBERSHIP: Subscription to the Chesapeake Paddler is included with membership.

NEW: Membership is now \$10, \$18, \$27, \$35, for 1, 2, 3, and 4 years. Send checks or changes of membership information to CPA, PO Box 341, Greenbelt, MD 20768. DO NOT send them to the newsletter editors.

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. 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 Managing Editor

From *The Chesapeake Paddler* Archive: Conklin's Guide to the Support of Swimmers

By Greg Welker and Chris Conklin

Going through some old CPA literature recently I've come across a few articles that, though written around 1993, still sound pretty good today. These were written by Chris Conklin for **The Chesapeake Paddler**. Chris was one of the founders of CPA, and served as coordinator, editor, etc for many years. Most of you know Greg Welker.

The Sea Kayak as Rescue Craft: Native Americans developed the kayak as a hunting craft which effectively pursued marine mammals and swimming caribou. The modern sea kayak exhibits the same speed and maneuverability on the water and makes an easy transition from hunting to fulfilling a water safety role. More and more sea kayakers are being called upon to provide water safety rescue support for swim events.

This is the Chesapeake Paddlers Association's third year [Editor: more like 22rd year by now] of providing such service to swim events. Because we encourage every kayaker in our club to be of service, please accept this as our guide to the ideas and practices of supporting swimmers with a kayak.

The Needs of the Swimmer: The primary goal of water safety is to preserve human life. Other assistance can be rendered such as resting support, directions, redirecting wayward swimmers, ensuring swimmers round the proper mark, and sometimes food and water, but the primary goal is to prevent drowning. Under no circumstances would secondary activities interfere with the primary goal.

The race swimmer is a highly motivated individual who has decided to test their ability in a challenging event. There are often large numbers of swimmers aggressively maneuvering for position in a confusion of arms, legs, and whitewater. Sometimes a swimmer gets into trouble. Swimmers are not well instructed on how to summon help nor are they instructed (as of yet) on how to work with rescue kayakers. Hopefully a swimmer will have the ability to signal for help. However, it remains the responsibility of rescue craft to identify swimmers with problems and render assistance.

The Water Safety Team: Very seldom will kayakers be deployed as rescue craft without the support of powerboats. The goal is the effective use of all water safety craft as a team. The primary role of the sea kayak is to spot swimmers in need of help, get to them, offer help, and deliver the swimmer to a larger rescue craft. Each form of watercraft has its advantages and disadvantages. The kayak can maneuver in among swimmers and not be as great a danger. The kayaker is closer to the swimmers at water level and communication is better. Powerboats can carry swimmers quickly to shore, have radio contact and sometimes have a better view of the swimmers. Of primary importance is that all rescue water craft work together as a team.

The Kayak Team: Experienced kayakers are used to working as a team. Kayaker teamwork is important because other rescue craft may not be knowledgeable of the kayakers abilities. It is not unusual for the beginning of a swim event to be confused. Getting on the water, identifying the course and coordinating positions many times has to be done by the kayak team itself with little instruction from the watersafety coordinator. Usually the more experienced paddlers will take charge.

How an Event Happens: It is important to know how a swim event (usually races) happens. Swim events are sometimes singular events or tied with other activities such as running and cycling (triathlon). There is a start, a course, and a finish. The course can be a one way straight line, a triangle, out and back, or a circle. There may be one big start or a number of spaced starts. Some events have spaced waves of swimmers each wave with a different colored swimcap. We have observed that most races are divided into three segments that take place from start to finish they are:

1. the Herd
2. the Sit-and Watch, and
3. One-on-One.

(Continued on page 4)



Bethel Bed & Breakfast

7728 Main St.
Bethel, DE 19931
302-569-0960

www.bethelawarebedandbreakfast.com

**10% off for CPA
Members !**



The Kayak Team photo by Manuel Vera

Conklin's Guide to Swim Support (Continued from page 3)

1. The Herd. When the race starts swimmers hit the water as a close compact mass. Swim support can only be rendered from the edge of this mass. For a period of time this mass of swimmers forms a "Herd" with rescue craft patrolling the outside edge. It is a good idea to position a kayak behind this mass at the start. Often problems happen right at the start - swimmers hyperventilate or sometimes cramp up from the cool water. It is a good idea to position a kayak as drag until the start has stretched out and reached the positioned rescue boats. Kayakers can observe swimmers best to their front and sides. It is standard routine to keep another kayak a distance in front of you so that you can watch behind them and hopefully someone is watching behind you.

2. The Sit and Watch: As the race continues, the swim mass stretches out with faster swimmers in front, a budge in the middle and slower swimmer bringing up the rear, depending on the course and the number of starts. As the swim mass stretches out it is usually most effective for rescue craft to strategically place themselves along the course and observe the swimmers. The kayak team will coordinate itself to make sure to best fill the gaps.

3. The One-On-One: As the lead swimmers finish the course leaving the slower swimmers bringing up the rear, it is usually most effective for kayakers to cover the stragglers on a one-on-one or one-on-a few basis. Eventually the last swimmer finishes and the rescue craft disperse.

Your Qualifications: Swim events are held on a variety of water types. The majority are protected water such as lakes, and tidal rivers. Others cross the Chesapeake or are ocean races. Your skill level can be matched to the type of water. We would recommend participating in protected water events to gain skill before attempting open water events. If you are unsure get another paddler to be your partner. The basic skills include being able to maneuver your kayak, handle moderate wind and waves (10 knots and 1 ft waves), and to be able to do kayak rescues. Also, you need to be able to do an effective low brace with a swimmer on front of your kayak.

The Observing Role: It usually boils down to the situation that you are alone on the water overlooking a large number of swimmers. There are many other support boaters and kayakers near and you are all aware of what each other is doing but in many ways you are on your own. Your first job is to be observant. We believe in aggressive observation and patrol. It has been our experience that the passive sit and watch attitude is not for us. We are as sharks on the water.

Observing is an art. Do not expect a swimmer in need to send you a clear signal. Some of the things to look for are: swimmers that seem to be slower than the pack; swimmers that keep swimming off to one side. Watch for someone swimming towards a boat. Watch for conversations between swimmers. Keep your ears open for audio signals and of course watch for someone waving to you. Observation must be constant. This is not a social occasion, even when paddling with a partner keep to the business at hand. Position your kayak near people who seem to be having a problem. If necessary ask to see how they are doing.

The Rescue: There comes a time when you see someone in need. Sometimes it comes almost as a shock that all of a sudden there is a person who needs you in a very big way. There is an instant adrenalin flush and you stroke strongly towards this swimmer. Most rescues are bow on. A lot are with the swimmer facing you. Watch your approach. It is best to quickly slow with a low brace and swing the very front portion of your bow to them from their side so that they can grab on. Hopefully once they grab your bow this will stop their panic. If you tell them to grab the bow remember that some swimmers do not know what a bow is, so just say "Grab On". The greatest danger is that they will try to climb on up the kayak towards you. Talk to them, calm them, instruct them. Tell them to stay at the bow. If necessary use your paddle to hold them forward. All the time keep a good brace going to steady the boat.

Intelligence must be used in ascertaining the need of the swimmer. Some swimmers just need a short rest. Others have had it and want very much to get out of the water. If you decide to get this swimmer to a larger rescue craft maneuver your kayak to clear water and signal a power boat. Most likely they will immediately respond. You can paddle (forward or backwards) either with the swimmer on your bow especially if you want to keep an eye on them or you can have them move to the stern.

In our experience, it has never happened that a kayaker has had to wet exit their kayak to effect a rescue. It is certainly not required that you dive in to grab a drowning swimmer who is unable to grab your bow. Only you can determine if you are willing to take this risk. This gets into a different form of water safety and training that is better left to other organizations.

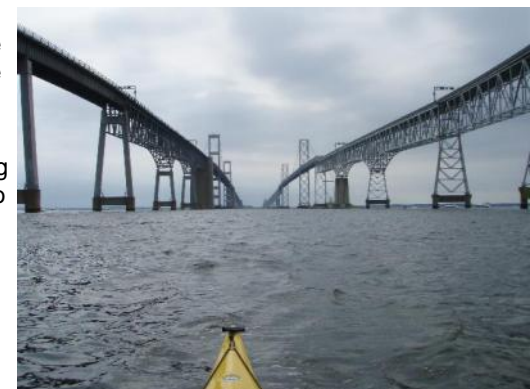
A Final Word: It is our feeling that the sea kayak has the potential of being a superb rescue craft. We also feel that there is a tremendous need for them. Kayakers that support swimmers perform an important service and we think highly of those that do. As a member of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association we invite you to join us!



The Herd photo by Manuel Vera



The One-on-One photo by Page Downer



It's just KOOL!! photo by Page Downer

Memorial Day Trip to the Bodkin 2012

By Lisa Arrasmith

Trip Motto: "Radio Check, Radio Check, Radio Check"

I instigated a Paddle-To-Eat-Lunch-Bunch peer paddle from Fort Smallwood Park, at the mouth of the Patapsco River, into the Bodkin to the Cheshire Crab restaurant and back. Paddling against the tide both ways, predicted high in the 90s, heat advisory, 11+ miles, wind SW – SSW, what's not to like? And I like paddling the Bodkin—the name itself sounds like something out of Shakespeare.

Fort Smallwood Park is an Anne Arundel County park a few miles south of Baltimore's Key Bridge and a few miles north of Bodkin Creek. The park is where the Patapsco meets the Bay so expect Bay weather and Bay conditions. It has a big, sandy kayak launch beach and is my new favorite local put-in. On Memorial Day, I was running my usual efficiently disorganized 11.5 minutes late. I started getting phone calls and texts. "Maywin - running late!", "Debbie - where are you guys?", "Steve - no show, sorry!" Getting to the park, I run the amazing bright yellow traffic slalom at the park entrance. It looks like a driver education course. Don't flunk.

The earnest volunteer in the gatehouse checks my annual pass sticker. If you show up with a boat on your car they will ask for your name, cell number and license plate number. If you don't come back and get your car before the park closes they will fink you out to the Coast Guard. And they might tow your car.

Debbie Schmiel is already at the beach with Tom Blount, who I've not met before. Madeleine Towle vouched for Tom, so I know he's good people. Mark Fisher arrives, as does Maywin Liu. Introductions, boats unloaded onto the big sand beach, gear strewn upon our boats and our persons. Who has a radio? Me, Maywin, Debbie and Tom, but Tom's radio is at home. **Radio Check Moment One:** Is your radio with you?

Last run to the spot-a-pots near the kayak beach. There are proper indoor lavatories all the way on the other side of the park near the pretty pavilion. There's a woman sitting in a chair on the way to the spot-a-pots, a woman with an ENORMOUS tripod telescope set up. I say hi and ask her what she's watching. It's the tail end of the turkey vulture migration and she's keeping watch. Bird Nerd Alert—the park's an Audubon Important Bird Area.

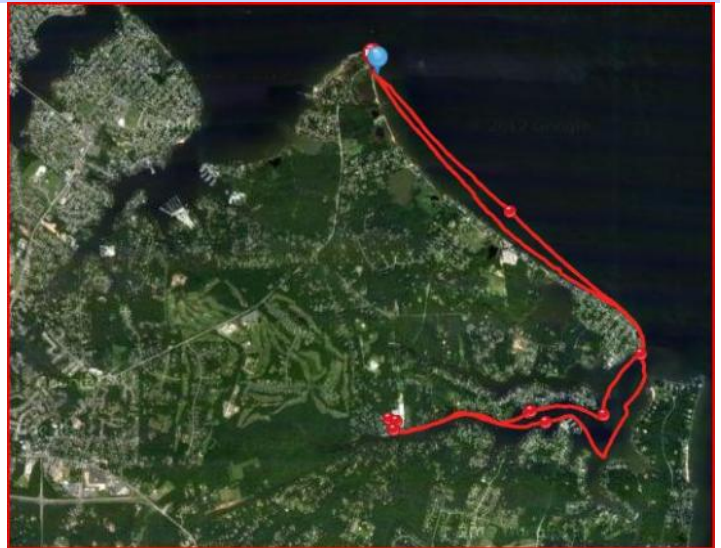
We're ready to roll, but where are Jeff Thompson and Nora Moynihan? Checking my cell, I have a voice mail from Jeff. They left Towson late and need to detour their dog to Bowie, so we go on without them.

It's 3 miles southeast to the mouth of the Bodkin, then 2 miles and a bit west to the Cheshire Crab in the Pleasure Cove Marina. There's a good breeze in our faces, and easy water. Tom's retired Navy and he's flying the U.S. flag on his bow. Sparrows Point steel mill hulks like Mordor across the water to our left. We meet one tired guy in a surf ski heading back to Fort Smallwood. He's the only other kayak traffic on the water. No serious big boat traffic until we reach the narrow mouth of the Bodkin, and that's where the big boat fun starts. The Bodkin has several coves, creeks and channels and it is one of those "leave breadcrumbs" navigation challenges. It's hard to spot the channel markers and boats come from all directions. We line up and cross the channel north to south at the mouth of the Bodkin and cruise along the south shore. We have our second radio check moment when Debbie proves that she had perfect balance all the way from Fort Smallwood. "Where's my radio?!?" Debbie's radio is on her back hatch cover, high, dry and unsecured for the 3 miles from Fort Smallwood. **Radio Check Moment Two:** Is your radio still with you?

The Bodkin splays out like a hand with 5 possibilities. There's a "dividing point" dead ahead as you enter the creek that blocks the view of Main Creek. It will fake you out. There's only one restaurant on all of the Bodkin, tucked away towards the end of Main Creek. Look at your left hand. The "dividing point" is the crotch between your thumb and first finger. There's a plausible looking creek to the right/north side of Bodkin Creek. If you make a hard right into the big first/north channel, the "thumb", that's Back Creek. No restaurant there. So skip the "thumb" and go to the left/south of the dividing point. If Back Creek doesn't fake you out, you're still not done. The first big round cove on the south side of the Bodkin (the "pinkie finger"?) is lined with tasteful waterfront McMansions, but no restaurant. The promising big channel on the left with the small round grass covered island (the "ring finger"?) is Locust Cove. You'll end up in the innards of Downs Park, and no restaurant there. The next cove (the "middle finger"?) has more houses, but no restaurant. There's a marina on a point on the south side of Bodkin Creek where Main Creek heads west. Keep your eyes peeled for it and paddle up the "index finger" of Main Creek. It's about a mile west to Pleasure Cove Marina and the Cheshire Crab restaurant on the right side of the creek.

We arrive at Pleasure Cove Marina, which has a boatel the size of an airplane hanger, with yellow and white stripes. This boatel can be seen from space (Seriously, check it out Google Earth). However, it's a stealth airplane hanger size boatel. You don't see it

(Continued on page 8)



Bodkin Creek from Fort Smallwood, GPS track by Tom Blount

Tuckahoe State Park Paddle

By Paul Fofonoff



Approaching the log barrier, photo by Paul Fofonoff

Fellow and would-be Tuckahoe-ers (Say it carefully, if at all). I'd like to thank the 6 AMC-ers who joined me for a paddle on the Tuckahoe River on the Eastern Shore of Maryland on April 21, 2012. I had planned this trip as a 2-day weekend hiking and paddling event, with an option to camp in the park's pleasant campground. However, the weather had different ideas. The plan was for a long paddle on Saturday, and morning hike and short paddle on Sunday, but a forecast for cold temperatures and heavy rain forced me to cancel Sunday's activities.

I made a couple of scouting trips, exploring the river above Tuckahoe Lake, and paddling the lower river, starting at Hillsboro Landing, just below MD-404, the busy highway which takes people to Delaware's beaches. A few years ago, I had twice paddled from Hillsboro upstream to the dam that forms Tuckahoe Lake, a round trip of about 10 miles, a beautiful trip up a narrow, leafy flatwater river, lined with hardwood swamps and steep bluffs, with twists and

turns that challenge a 17-ft sea kayak. This April, I found the river blocked with fallen trees, not far above MD-404, so instead I did a paddle downstream to Coveys Landing, 5.5 miles downstream,, which I intended to do on my AMC trip. But when I returned to the landing, a canoeist told me that there was a channel around that clump of trees, and that one could paddle up to a horse trail bridge, about 2 miles upstream.

I drove to Hillsboro, around 9:30 and met our paddlers at the Hillsboro Landing, a pleasant spot on the tidal river. It was good to see Carl Lohmann, because this was my first attempt at leading a paddling trip, and it was good to have an experienced paddler as a *defacto* co-leader. We launched at a high tide and paddled past a few warehouses, under an aging railroad trestle, under the noisy MD-404 bridge, and then paddled past azaleas, through a watery forest. We reached the log barrier that had looked impassable to me, a week ago, found a narrow channel to the left and emerged on the upstream side.

We passed an Eastern Box Turtle who probably regretted his decision to take a swim. This terrestrial turtle is an awkward swimmer, but they do cross rivers now and then. For the first mile or so, we were in the tidal part of the river, with weak currents. The river narrowed and soon we were paddling against a moderate current. We had some tricky squeezes through narrow gaps between fallen trees and sawn logs.

We enjoyed paddling through a narrow corridor, flanked by steep bluffs or swamps, and with tall trees on both sides. Violets were often blooming at the base of the trees, and the woods were lively with birdsong. After many tight squeezes, we reached a bridge where a horse trail crosses the river. There was a broad grassy lawn, and some handy logs for sitting, so we had lunch. We enjoyed a rest on the grass, except for Alexandra, who lounged comfortably in her boat. Some of us decided to haul our boats a short distance around some fallen trees upstream of the bridge, but we soon came to another barrier of fallen trees which looked impassable. So we returned, and then we all started paddling downstream.

Mostly the current helped us, but there were a few places where the combination of swirling currents and narrow gaps between the logs was challenging. At one place, my kayak got sucked sideways under a log, and gave me a short, refreshing swim. Fortunately, the water was shallow, and not too cold, and the air was warm, so I dried off quickly. A few other people had less spectacular partial immersions. The rest of the paddle was uneventful but beautiful.

On the way up, with a higher tide, we noticed an interesting little hole in a fallen tree's root mass. On the way back, with a much lower tide, the hole was big enough to paddle through, and the water around it was too shallow, so we all went through the arch. We passed under 3 bridges, including the old trestle.

We reached the Hillsboro Landing around 2:30 PM. The paddle was shorter than I expected, but considering the current, it was a good workout. We all considered it an excellent adventure, and a great start to the paddling season. Initially, I was considering a short downstream paddle or a hike, but most people were satisfied with our trip, and I realized I was, too. Those of us with cabins or campsites returned to the campground for a rest. Some of us went to a pizzeria in Denton for dinner. I considered spending Saturday night in my tent, but rumbling thunder convinced me otherwise.

I think all of us can recommend Tuckahoe State Park and River for future hikes, paddles, and campouts. It's not too far away, and the river is surprisingly beautiful. There are lots of trails, with easy terrain but attractive forests and river views. I expect that we'll have future trips there, [EDITOR's Note: If you get a chance, visit the Adkins Arboretum just down the road from Tuckahoe State Park (see http://www.adkinsarboretum.org/about_us/)



William Weber and Carl Lohman, photo by Paul Fofonoff

CPA Schedules Beginner Paddles For the Year

By Maywin Liu

For those new to kayaking or looking for leisurely trips, CPA is introducing a new Beginner Paddler Series. Participants will be led on trips of 3-8 miles in scenic locations from peaceful lakes and reservoirs to Eastern Neck on the Bay to rivers and estuaries along the Eastern and Western shores of the Bay. The Series will run from May through October. Some of the trips launch from sites that offer rentals if you have not yet purchased a kayak. Many of the trips are combined with special features such as kayak nature photography, a Gear Day lunch stop, historical guides, and lotus blossoms and fall colors viewing. For those who have not done a wet exit or are not comfortable with rescues, most trips will offer the opportunity to practice. Have fun kayaking while improving your skills and confidence with friendly, experienced paddlers who enjoy sharing their love of the sport. For those looking to purchase or upgrade their kayaks, this is a good opportunity to compare the performance of different kayaks and possibly try out a few.

Date	Location	County	Estimated Distance	Trip Leader/Contact	Notes
9-Jun	Jug Bay on the Patuxent	PG CO	8	DJ Manalo/Dave Wilson	*photography too
9-Jun	Tuckahoe State Park - Lake	Caroline CO	3	Ralph Heimlich	
16-Jun	Tridelphia Lake	Mont. Co	6	John Garon/ Sue & Rich Stevens	
30-Jun	Fountainhead Park & the Occoquan	VA	4	Jen Bine /Brian Blankinship	
29-Jul	Turner Creek Lotus viewing & Mt Harmon	Kent Co	8	Ralph Heimlich	* crossing Sassafras
4-Aug	Tridelphia Lake	Mont. Co	6	John Garon /Sue & Rich Stevens	
11-Aug	Mattawoman Creek lotus viewing	Charles Co		Mike Cohn	* not posted per Mike
12-Aug	Jug Bay to Mt Calvert Historic Manor	PG CO	8	Jenny Plummer-Welker & Greg Welker	
20-Oct	Fountainhead Park & the Occoquan	VA	4	Jeff Walascek / Jim Zawlocki	
21-Oct	Upper Chester River Landing	Kent Co	8	Ralph Heimlich	

Please consult [the CPA calendar](#) for details of this Series and for all the other trips and events scheduled.

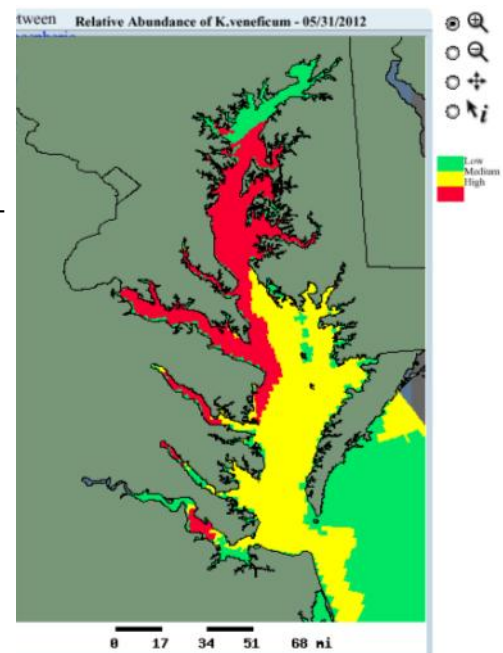
Harmful Algae Blooms (HAB) In the Chesapeake Bay

Within the Chesapeake Bay, there are more than 700 reported species of phytoplankton [Marshall, 1996] and Maryland's Phytoplankton Monitoring Program has identified species in the Chesapeake Bay common to HAB events around the world. The widely publicized occurrence of *Pfiesteria* in Maryland in 1997, where fish kill and neurological responses were detected in several individuals associated with *Pfiesteria* blooms sites, is one such example of the many harmful algal blooms in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. In addition to the presence of potentially toxic species, high biomass blooms of non-toxic species have been observed and recognized for their deleterious effects on reduced oxygen availability and water clarity.

MD DNR, UMD Center for Environmental Science and NOAA are attempting to apply ecological "nowcasting" concepts to predict the occurrence of harmful algal bloom species in Chesapeake Bay. They have developed an experimental procedure to predict HAB abundance at low (0-10 cells/ml), medium (10-2000 cells/ml), and high (greater than 2000 cells/ml) concentrations.



The predicted occurrences are mapped on a real-time basis at http://155.206.18.162/cbay_hab/. These near-real-time maps are experimental and should be considered provisional. The accuracy of these maps is currently under evaluation.



Bodkin (Continued from page 5)

from the water until you're almost right up on it. Go figure. Finding the kayak usable tie-up at this big-boated, rip-rapped marina requires an act of faith. Go past the marina, take a hard right at the end of the boat docks and peek between the dock walkway and the land. There's a sliver of shallow mud and rock-bottomed accessible waterfront squeezed behind the boat docks. I've seen bigger pieces of pie. Bring line, rope, cable, boat straps to tie up your boats. They're not getting out of the water.

We head up the hill to the Cheshire Crab. The lunch of the zombie wait staff begins. Multiple people try and wait on us (really, this is not a good thing), orders are taken, and taken, and taken . . . I suspect confusion in the kitchen as well, buffalo shrimp are not spicy shrimp. "Bring me a menu and I will point at what I ordered." The food is good and given a choice between zombie service and good food or good service and zombie food, I'll go for the good food.

Then what to our wondering eyes do appear? Our not-so-late paddlers Jeff and Nora walking across the parking lot. Jeff and Nora teleported themselves from Towson to Bowie to Fort Smallwood and arrived at the park just as we pulled away. Jeff radioed us with a clever hail based on the paddle instigation email subject line. I didn't hear him, Maywin didn't think whoever-it-was on the radio was talking to us. By the time they offloaded we were gone thataway. **Radio Check Moment Three:** Dogs respond to their names. So do kayakers.

We eventually pay the bill (3 iterations before getting a correct-enough bill) and get back in our boats for the return leg. Heading back to the Bay, we stick to the north shore of the main channel. There's lots more big boat traffic as the post-holiday beauty parade back to dock begins. Sticking close to shore does not get us out of big boat traffic—there is a big sailboat under power cruising right off the end of the docks. We cut across Back Creek to the north side of the mouth of the Bodkin. Not as much big boat traffic going in and out of Back Creek The wind's breezy back on the Bay that the water's kicked up enough with wakes and wind and reflected waves to be interesting but not hard. We're paddling with the wind and against the tide and it's a good combination.



Landing at Pleasure Cove Marina, photo by Lisa Arrasmith



Lunch at the Cheshire Crab, photo by Lisa Arrasmith

Hailing Jeff on the radio on the return leg, we can't reach him. His radio isn't working. The detachable, floating radio battery detached, probably when we were getting back in the boats at the Cheshire Crab. **Radio Check Moment Four:** Is all of your radio still with you?

We land back at the Fort Smallwood beach. Little kids are playing in the water, people are walking dogs, a couple are in a canoe: A good Memorial Day was being had by all of us. Tom's GPS said we paddled 11.3 miles. It was a remarkably comfortable paddle given that the temperature was in the 90s. Steady breezes all day saved us. We all load up slooooooowwwwwly in the heat. Tom and I head back to the Cheshire Crab for a drink and an unsuccessful search for Jeff's radio battery, while Mark goes in search of the black cherry snowball with marshmallow that is calling his name. It was a great Memorial Day on the water.

If You Go—Anne Arundel County took over Fort Smallwood Park from Baltimore City in 2006 and comprehensively renovated it. The park used to be dirty, rundown and unsafe. The park is now meticulously clean and well patrolled and it has a new fishing pier, new playground equipment, nice picnic areas—and a sand beach kayak launch. Fort Smallwood Park has a \$6 per car admission fee, cash or check ONLY. NO cards. The park's sandy beach kayak launch is so sweet that I bought the \$40 calendar year pass for all Anne Arundel County parks. The park is closed on Wednesdays. There's a small stand selling hot dogs, soda and chips near the kayak beach.

The trip is an "advanced" Advanced Beginner moving into Intermediate paddle. Our paddle was 11.3 miles round trip. I'd budget 12 miles because there's meandering inside the Bodkin and Back Creek might fake you out. There are lots of potential bailouts all along the way. CPA guidelines say Advanced Beginner trips are "up to 10 miles". However, 6 miles of this paddle are on the Bay, the rest of the paddle is inside the sheltered Bodkin Creek. You may have a good day like we did, where you come out of the Bodkin for the return leg and all is well and good and fun, or you may have a day where you come out of the Bodkin and all hell has broken loose and you should go back to the Cheshire Crab and call a cab.

Links

Fort Smallwood Park: <http://www.aacounty.org/RecParks/parks/ftsmallwood/index.cfm>

Audubon Fort Smallwood info: <http://iba.audubon.org/iba/viewSiteProfile.do?siteId=369&navSite=state>

Cheshire Crab: <http://www.pleasurecovemarina.com/cheshirecrab/>

Baja (Continued from page 1)

There is no place else to get water along this route. It is extremely remote and isolated. If you were to get into big trouble (i.e., someone seriously sick or injured), the only way to get help would be to hope that some fisherman came by in his panga.

Conditions most days were pretty benign on the Loreto-La Paz leg. We typically had about 10 knot winds and pretty calm seas. However, on the third day we had to deal with 15-20 knot winds (gusting to 25) out of the northeast that had been blowing all the previous night and which resulted in fairly steep (but not breaking) waves that were typically six feet high and frequently got as high as eight feet. Picture sitting in your boat and looking up at a wave that is five feet over your head! This went on for four or five hours and was a little dicey. We took a lot of pictures, but none on that day. We were too busy concentrating, with hands firmly on paddles. Everyone handled these conditions with grace and style and there was unanimous agreement that this day was absolutely the most challenging and best part of the trip.



The beach at Punta San Telmo has been a highlight of every trip I've done in Baja photo by Mike Thomas

I mentioned camping on beautiful beaches. For my money, the prettiest campsite I've ever been to is at Punta San Telmo, where we stayed the third night, about 40 miles into the trip.

Another highlight of this part of the trip was on the next-to-last day, when we did a five mile crossing from San Evaristo out to Isla San Jose, an island that dominates your view to the east for about half the trip. It is huge (20 miles long, 4-5 miles wide) and extremely rugged. On our arrival, we were greeted by a whole pod of dolphins who were feeding in the fast moving currents at the edge of San Jose. Two of them subsequently put on a show, repeatedly leaping completely out of the water in tandem. We then paddled 7 NM back to the mainland. Two great crossings!

With the exception of that San Jose dolphin encounter and a lot of cool birds (e.g., pelicans, cormorants, the occasional booby and frigate), one of the most disappointing aspects of this first leg was the absence of wildlife sightings. There are lots of whales in Baja, but they usually take off by the end of March. We saw none. There are also usually a lot of sea lions and dolphins but we saw only a few of each. This was to change dramatically when we got to Espiritu Santo.

Espiritu Santo, Isla Partida and Los Islotes—After completing the first trip, we all returned to La Paz, stayed in a hotel, got cleaned up and properly fed. Half the group had to return to the U.S. the next day, while Kevin, Glenn and I used that day to recuperate a little and re-supply for the next phase of the trip.

The Espiritu Santo group of islands is just off the coast from La Paz. It is a 4.5 NM crossing to get out to them and they represent a very different scene in Baja paddling. The islands are not as rugged as the Loreto-La Paz coastline. And, because of their proximity to La Paz, all the commercial outfitters run most of their three- and five-day tourist trips out there. In fact, we ran into about three or four such groups, so there was much less of an isolated and wilderness feel to these islands.

That's about the only drawback. The water is crystal clear. There are really pretty pocket beaches, mangroves, and smaller islands scattered all around. There are lots of caves, stacks and arches, and tons, tons of wildlife. In fact the highlight of this bit of the trip—in sharp contrast to the first part—was the wildlife. During a four-day period we saw:

- A whale and her "baby" on day 1 and four whales crossing in front of us on day 3;
- Hundreds of frigate birds soaring, gliding, riding the thermals every evening;
- 5-10 gigantic sea turtles every day;
- A daily late afternoon display of dozens of mobula rays leaping and flapping their way three feet into the air;
- And, best of all, the huge sea lion colony at Los Islotes.

Mobula Rays are related to manta rays, but are generally smaller (maybe 2-3 ft. from wingtip to wingtip). They get going under water, flapping their wings and then launch themselves into the air before belly flopping back down onto the water surface, landing with a crack that sounds like a gunshot. In any given area, there may be 20-30 of them doing this all at the same time. Some of them prefer to do twists and back flips before landing. It is a behavior about which different scientists have varying theories, but no one knows for sure why they do this. It appears to be primarily for fun. A video of the rays is here:

<http://www.facebook.com/crosscurrentskayaking>

(Continued on page 10)

Baja (Continued from page 9)

One of the things I discovered (after Kevin pointed it out) is that for every one of those rays that is leaping, there are about 50 others that aren't leaping. It was a real eye-opener to see these massive numbers of rays traveling all in the same direction about 10 feet under the surface. Think about a tightly-knit group covering an area about the size of a basketball court.

The sea lions at Los Islotes (two small rocky islands about a half mile off the coast of Isla Partida) are absolutely fabulous. There are several hundred of them, alternating between sunning themselves on the rocks and sliding into the water. In the water, they wrestle with each other, swim and dive or just lay on their sides relaxing while holding their flippers out of the water (for balance?). There's another video here:

<http://www.facebook.com/crosscurrentskayaking>

When a kayaker or snorkeler shows up, the fun really starts. Many of the sea lions are extremely curious and they will swim all around your boat, periodically popping their heads above the surface to check you out. Then if they want a different view, they dive down and come flying directly at you about three feet under the water. Just before reaching the boat, they will turn over on their backs and streak beneath you upside down. The really inquisitive ones—we hypothesize that they are juveniles—will pop up right next to the boat and start inspecting things. One sea lion actually had her flippers wrapped around the stern of Kevin's boat, like a hug. He then reached up and started nibbling on the rudder. (She is also rumored to have mumbled: "Kevin, please. WTF? How come you don't have a skegged boat?")



A sea lion came up to Kevin and started nibbling on his paddle! And this one found my deck lines very interesting, photo by Rick Wiebush

Comments by Kevin Black, A Participant

It is very hard to wrap your consciousness around a landscape so big. A number of times I asked Ivan, from BOA, how far away a particular rock or headland was, thinking that it was perhaps two miles, and he would say, "Oh that's eight miles easy." I finally gave up trying to comprehend it and just let myself float in the bigness as a very tiny and grinning speck.

We had great weather throughout the trip—no bugs, no rain (hasn't rained in two years) a little wind one night, warm temps during the day and cool ones that were perfect for sleeping at night. We always camped on a beach, and were always pretty active once the sun came up in the morning because it started to get hot pretty quickly. That and the fact that Jan thought that when Rick said, "we need to get going by 8:30", he really meant it. Jan was the strongest female paddler in the group by far, but she did exhibit a few "female territoriality issues" when we would land for the night. Of course, being mostly gentlemanly paddlers, the guys always (I mean always) gave Jan the pick of the spots so she could do whatever it was she was doing over there. This behavior occurred early on, when we were still being polite and civilized.

I like to poke around beaches while kayaking. I discovered a lot of totally new shells and dead fish and coral bits and a lot of burro poop, and less manmade trash than I have ever seen in all my paddling. Paddlers before us had left what I call campsite shrines of shells and stones and beach glass and such, all placed in some way to indicate that they were there. I got a huge kick out of those for some reason.

I loved the sense of knowing you are in wilderness in a place like this. We only saw a few fishermen in their pangas (24' open boats with outboards) and a couple of remote fishing villages that were just clusters of one room cabins made from plywood or cinderblock with flat roofs, and occasionally a photovoltaic panel and satellite dish sticking up from the roof line. Most cabins have a palapa (palm thatched roof with no sidewalls) where the fishermen spend most of their time lounging in the shade while not fishing.

A highlight for me was spending a night on the beach at Rancho Dolores, a privately owned ranch that only exists because of a hand dug well (I don't know how old) from which water is pumped into a cistern that is used to irrigate small crop plots and trees on the farm. About eight folks lived at the ranch, and had no problem with our camping on their beach and using a bit of the cistern water to rinse the salt off our bodies for the first time in days. There was livestock about—horses, cattle and goats on tethers to trees, chickens, and burros. As we were walking away from the ranch hacienda (all concrete with a flat roof and Mexican arches and open porches) we watched one of the farmer's daughters sharpening a machete to use for the next day's work on a stone that had obviously been used for that purpose for a very, very, long time.

We camped one night on the beach at San Evaristo, a very small village on a natural harbor that is popular with the live-aboard crowd. The boat folks were a good source of weather info. In fact, they were our only source. We visited the very small store to get a few supplies (like canned salsa and chips), and resupplied with some fresh water from the desalination plant (for lack of a better word). Someone said that there was a bar and restaurant across the bay, but that the beer would be warm because they had no ice. Warm beer sounded just fine at that point, and James and I paddled across to the palapa bar/restaurant to discover that there was no food, no customers, and two warm canned beers in a refrigerator that had been placed on its back to be used as a cooler of sorts. Not what we were looking for, exactly. *more next page*

We had a great group of paddlers for this trip. Everyone pitched in and helped one another or not and traded camping tips and a lot of lies. Glenn, however, did have this thing about wearing silk during the evening hours. I never did figure that one out.

We finished our paddle at Punta Coyote and threw our gear in the van and trailer and endured an awful long and hot ride back to La Paz, much of it on a dirt road that redefines pothole.

The Espiritu Santo circumnavigation was the perfect end and chill-out from the 100 mile open coast trip we had just done. The West side of Espiritu is more protected, with deeper bays to pocket beaches and not as much swell and wind chop so we could see into the depths of the clear water. But the days were getting HOT, as in land, find the closest boulder with shade and lie down behind it. We spent most of two days paddling to Los Islotes and watching the sea lions, which was mesmerizing. They are total klutzes on land, but beautiful to watch in the water. Glenn quickly learned to imitate the calls of the male sea lions, and soon had several females swimming about his boat. These islands also contain a nesting rookery of Boobys (look 'em up). From a distance the islands appear to be white from all the Booby poop all over them.

The East side of Santo was all about huge cliffs and arches and caves and boulders under water with a lot of fish swimming about. We were starting to feel beat up by the sun about this time, and were ducking for shade whenever we could find it. We spent the last night on a two-mile long beach sleeping under the stars.

The final day we spent simply lounging at El Moro, our hotel- among palm trees and bougainvillea in full bloom and a pool that took up most of the grounds with two built in hot tubs and a poolside bar—very nice accommodations for the end of a paddling trip.

Some details/If you go—First, there are a lot more photos here: <http://outdoors.webshots.com/album/582739780AxMmSq>

Doing the Loreto to La Paz trip takes a lot of work and time (and some money), but is well worth it. We flew into Cabo San Lucas (SJD) for about \$750 round trip. We went there because flying directly to La Paz is now pretty expensive (\$1,100). We then took a limo (\$250 one way) from Cabo to La Paz, mostly for various reasons of convenience. It is possible to get a bus for just \$35.

Then you have to get from La Paz three hours north to the put-in near Loreto. To get the whole group, the boats and our equipment there cost \$800. The shuttle to get picked up at Punta Coyote and returned to La Paz was an additional \$400. But the real pain about flying to Cabo is that you essentially spend two days traveling before getting on the water. (It's still worth it.)

The boats cost us about \$32/day and were in good shape. We all brought our own paddles, PFDs and paddle floats, but BOA normally supplies them with the rental. We all also brought radios and tow lines.

I've stayed in several hotels in La Paz, but the El Moro was clearly the nicest (see photos) and very affordable. We got rooms that comfortably slept three people (one with two bedrooms) for about \$130/ night. Split three ways, that's what you'd pay for a single room at one of the cheaper hotels. The bonus about El Moro is that it is right next door to both the BOA shop and a great restaurant that is frequented primarily by locals.

There are food stores in La Paz where you can get just about anything you would need for a camping trip. The only exception to that I can think of is freeze-dried food. Several of our group brought almost all their food with them and, after seeing the grocery stores, regretted it.

You can bring stoves and (empty) fuel bottles on planes. Just make sure they are clean and have no fumes. You can get white gas and canister fuel in La Paz.

This trip probably sounds really expensive, but I don't think so. People in our group paid less than \$900 for everything (boats, hotels, shuttles, etc.) except airfare and their camp food and in-town food. That's for the week-long Loreto to La Paz trip. The outfitters charge about \$1,300 (+ airfare) for the same trip.

I think the people who left after a week may have made a bit of a mistake. It seems to me that if you are going to spend \$750 to get to Baja, you should maximize your time there. By that same reasoning, I think I was dumb to think that some people might come to just do the Espiritu Santo portion of the trip: why spend all that money on airfare and just go to Baja for 4 or 5 days? My recommendation is to go for about 10 days.

If you are thinking about doing a trip to Baja, I'd be happy to help with any information, resources, contacts, tips, etc.



Chris Beckman and Jack Martin at CLC Okumefest May 12, 2012, photo by Ralph Heimlich



We paddle to eat, Assateague Island, *photo by Jesse Aronson*

Inside our May 2012 issue:

- California (Baja) Dreamin'
- Guide to the Support of Swimmers
- Memorial Day Trip to the Bodkin 2012
- Tuckahoe State Park Paddle
- Beginner Paddles For the Year
- Harmful Algae Blooms In the Bay

The Chesapeake Paddler

Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

PO Box 341

Greenbelt, MD 20768-0341

REMINDER: Please check your mailing label for your membership expiration date. If you receive the newsletter electronically, you will receive an e-mail reminder prior to your membership expiring. If your CPA membership has expired, or will expire soon, please send in your dues. SEE BOX ON PAGE 2 FOR ADDRESS.