

Chesapeake Paddler



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April, 2013

SK 101: An Introduction to Sea Kayaking Classroom Workshop

by Suzanne Farace

The Chesapeake Paddlers Association put on another successful "SK 101 - An Introduction to Sea Kayaking" classroom workshop on Saturday, March 16, 2013, at the beautiful West River Center, south of Annapolis, Maryland. This was a sell-out event again this year, with more than 100 people turning out to hear about Kayak Selection and Design, Paddles, Kayaking Gear, Safety Concerns, Places to Paddle, and Transporting Your Kayak (Car Rack Systems).

In past years SK 101 was offered only every few years, and was often alternated with a Cold Water Clinic. Thanks to Jenny Plummer-Welker's research, we have determined that this year's program was the 9th SK 101 the Club has offered. Demand has been such that the course has been offered annually since 2007, which makes perfect sense since kayaking continues to be one of the country's fastest growing sports.

The CPA's mission is to help people enjoy safe paddling and promote safe paddling practices. We have all heard stories of paddlers in trouble. Often those events can be traced back to poor planning, inadequate clothing, missing or wrong equipment, or inadequate skills. SK 101 and SK 102 (CPA's on-the-water skills clinic) are intended to help kayakers choose and correctly use the right equipment, have the right skills, paddle with knowledgeable people, plan trips carefully, know their limitations, and plan for the unexpected—to have fun but also to be safe.

The presentations at SK 101 began with Greg Welker, who explained in some detail how kayaks are designed and how those designs impact their speed, maneuverability, and stability. Next we heard from Paula Hubbard, who, with the use of models and many props, talked about the myriad of gear you need (or for good reason would want to have) for kayaking, including life vests (PFDs), radios, clothing, etc. Brian Blankinship then demonstrated and discussed the pros and cons of a wide variety of paddles from Euro paddles to wing paddles to Greenland paddles. Concluding the morning session was Don Goff, a fellow kayaker and member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, who talked about safety considerations. The Coast Guard has a vested interest in making sure that we do what we are supposed to do and stay safe. Don's wiki site is available online at <http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php?title=Paddlesports>.



Suzanne Farace welcomes participants to SK101
photo by Catriona Miller

Testimonials from SK101 Participants

"I enjoyed the presentations—well done. Appreciate the combined knowledge and experience of CPA members"

"I learned something from all!"

"Great event!"

"I thought it was all very good—with information and a sense of humor."

Following a nice lunch of fajitas at West River's spacious new dining hall and a tour of the boat display, attendees returned to the meeting hall for the afternoon session to hear a few words from CPA's Coordinator, Ralph Heimlich. Then Paul Casto and Jen Bine delivered, with great effect, good humor, and some amazing photos, a new segment created by Paul entitled "Why I Kayak." Seeing that was worth the price of admission. Following that, Jenny Plummer-Welker gave several examples of places to paddle along with resources for finding launch sites and other trips, building upon a slide presentation prepared by Catriona Miller. Finally, Rich and Sue Stevens talked about the various ways there are to transport kayaks and some of the tricks for safely loading and unloading a kayak.

The slides of many of these presentations can now be found on the CPA website at <http://www.cpakayaker.com/resources/kayaking-101/>.

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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.



Brian Blankinship discusses how to select a paddle at SK101
photograph by Catriona Miller

SCHEDULE FOR THE 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. Have an idea for an article, or is there information you would like to see in the newsletter? Email Jenny at news_editor@cpakayaker.com or call 301-249-4895.

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.

Officers:

Coordinator—Ralph Heimlich
301-498-0918
coordinator@cpakayaker.com

Membership, subscriptions—Sue Stevens
410-531-5641
c/o CPA, P.O. 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

Steering Committee—
steering_committee@cpakayaker.com

Paula Hubbard 407-619-2896

Catriona Miller 571-248-1619

Dave Isbell 410-267-0681

Jesse Aronson 571-969-1539

Tom Heneghan 703-216-9837

Béla Máriássy 410-507-4972

Webmaster/E-Mail List Administrators—
Stephen Bethke and Paula Hubbard,
webmaster@cpakayaker.com

Newsletter Team:

Editor—Jenny Plummer-Welker 301-249-4895,

news_editor@cpakayaker.com

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

Pirate Groups:

Pier 7 Pirates Committee—

Rich Stevens 703-527-4882,
Béla Máriássy 410-507-4972, Jenny Plummer-Welker and Greg Welker 301-249-4895, Sue Stevens 410-531-5641, Brent Cogswell 410-381-0037 pirates_pier7@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of Baltimore —Dave Wilson

443-562-6156
pirates_baltimore@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of the Eastern Shore—Paula Hubbard

407-619-2896
pirates_easternshore@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of Georgetown—Jesse Aronson 571-969-1539, Tom Heneghan 571-969-1866, Jennifer Bine 703-533-2436, Rob Pearlman 240-688-6340

pirates_georgetown@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of the James—Mary Larson 804-

316-3432, Jon Phipard 804-334-3019

pirates_james@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of the Lakes—Tom Hunt 717-940-6572

pirates_lakes@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of the North—Bob Shakeshaft

410-939-0269

pirates_north@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of Occoquan —Jeff Walaszek 703-

670-7712, Jim Zawlocki 703-378-7536

pirates_occoquan@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of Patuxent—Jenny Plummer-Welker

410-535-2348/301-249-4895

pirates_patuxent@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of Potomac—Dick Rock

703-780-6605

pirates_potomac@cpakayaker.com

Pirates of Sugarloaf —Liz Marancik

301-221-0572, Rita Scherping 240-731-9987

pirates_sugarloaf@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 team.

The Chesapeake Paddler is published monthly, except November through February when it is published bimonthly, 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 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.

April is EARTH MONTH

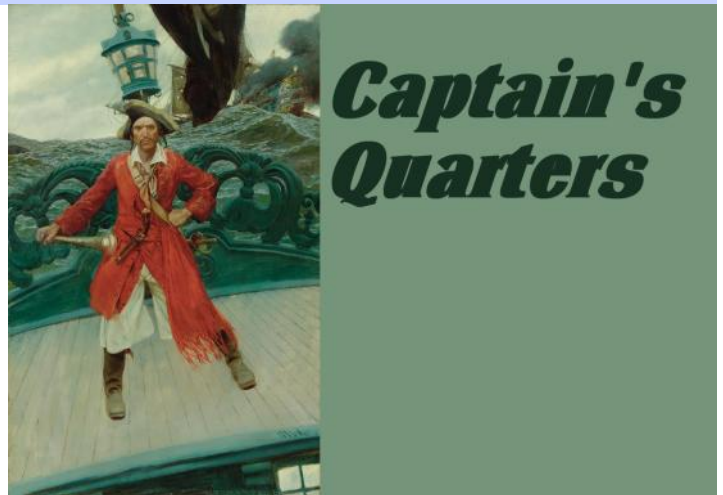
April 22 is Earth Day, the 44th such day and a chance to reflect on the environment that sustains us. You can do your reflecting and keep your hands busy by getting out on the water at FIVE separate cleanup activities on the water, organized by CPA members. April 6 has three of them: [Weinberg Park Beach](#) cleanup in Pasadena, MD, the [Mason Neck Cleanup](#) in Virginia, and the [Patuxent River Cleanup](#). April 20 is the [Garrett Island Cleanup](#) near Havre De Grace, and April 27 is the [Occoquan Cleanup](#), back in Virginia. Do your part in cleaning up our region's waterways and celebrate Earth Day.

Of course, the best kind of reflecting is done in idleness, so take some time to get out on the water with some close friends and soak in the springtime. The older I get, the more of a miracle it seems that the cycle of renewal manifest in spring recurs so reliably, year after year. Find a place on the water where birds are crossing (there are these channels in the air that birds use more than other spots) and sit for a while, maybe with a pair of binoculars, and just watch for the remnants of winter flocks (chickadees, cardinals, titmice, juncos) or spring migrants arriving (warblers, flycatchers, red wing blackbirds). Out on the Bay, the Bay ducks are still rafting and will be coming into spring plumage, a much more colorful display. Get out along the banks of some of our streams to see the wildflowers bursting forth (especially with Jim Zawlocki on the [Bull Run Bluebell special](#)). On almost all the waterways of our region, April brings that special new green of leaves unfolding from buds that have swelled slowly over the winter. Spring doesn't last long in the Mid-Atlantic, so make haste to be idle in April, the month when the world awakens.

Finally, we've had a busy pre-season of training opportunities to help get us prepared to lead trips this season. Thanks to Moulton Avery and Dave Isbell for a very successful Cold Water Clinic in February in Annapolis (and another in Richmond earlier). Suzanne Farace pulled off another SK 101 Intro to Sea Kayaking with help from Registrar Steve Bethke and a host of instructors. Belá Mariassy organized a well-attended Kayak Navigation Course in March, with help from Paula Hubbard and Dave Isbell. Gina Cicotello and Steve Bethke did another edition of the Greenland Paddle Workshop, over two days in March. Red Cross Instructors and CPA members Tom Heneghan and Paul Bieri organized another two-day Wilderness First Aid course at Camp Wright in Matapeake on Kent Island at the end of March. CPA members and I are very grateful for the many hours of hard work it takes to organize and carry out these training opportunities. They are the best tradition of members helping members and epitomize our educational mission. There are more coming up: SK 102, the Boat and Paddle Workday, Gear Day and Fall-Out-of-Your-Boat Day, SK 203 Trip Leader Training, two weekends of Kayak Camping practice on the Potomac and Patuxent, and Kayak Camping Trip Leader Training. So check the calendar and take advantage of these free training opportunities.

The paddling season is finally here. Spring to your boats, and let's get going.

Ralph Heimlich
Coordinator



Ninth Patuxent Cleanup, 2012
photo by Cera Bellum

Kayak Racks—Highlights from SK 101 Presentation

By Rich Stevens, Treasurer, CPA, Inc.

The main manufacturers of commercial kayak rack systems are Thule <http://www.thule.com> and Yakima <http://www.yakima.com/>. These are not by any means the only manufacturers, but they have a long track record of manufacturing rack systems to fit most vehicles. If you go to any kayaking magazine or search on-line you can find many others. If you go to Thule's or Yakima's web sites they will guide you through selecting a custom system for fitting your vehicle, if a system can fit it. A typical system will consist of a component to attach directly to the vehicle or existing factory rails or crossbars, an optional locking system, possibly a set of crossbars other than the factory ones, and a pair of saddles or other means to actually carry the kayak. There may be many options depending on the vehicle and your personal preferences. Naturally, you chose a vehicle that is designed to carry a kayak! If all else fails, there is the option of a trailer designed to carry kayaks, or other custom rack options.

([Continued](#) on page 8)

CPA Paddler Profile ~ Marla Aron

Interview by Rick Wiebush



Marla Aron

Name: Marla Aron

Lives in: Ellicott City, Maryland

Real job: Researcher, policy analyst, project planner, and technical writer for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Do You Paddle with a CPA a Piracy? Pirates of Baltimore and Pirates of Pier 7

Paddling Buddies: The Pirates of Baltimore and Pier 7, and participants on CPA camping and kayaking trips

Number years paddling: 8

Boat usually paddled: Current Designs Suka, about 17 feet, yellow deck on white hull

Type paddle used: Euro and Greenland. I switch back and forth.

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I bought books describing kayak trips in the area and started paddling my way through the chapters. Then I took an L.L. Bean class with Dave Biss who taught me kayak safety and introduced me to the Chesapeake Paddlers Association. On my first CPA outing, I was unable to keep up with the gang, so I worked with Cyndi Janetzko to im-

prove my stroke. I got truly hooked after participating in one of Ralph Heimlich's camping-kayaking trips.

How did you learn to sea kayak? I am still learning. Dave Isbell taught me how to use a Greenland paddle; Rick Wiebush, Jay Gitomer, and Dave Wilson offered training on strokes and advance rescues.

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? Nope. Sea kayaking is my passion.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? Yes. Bike riding on rails-to-trails paths, hiking, and snowshoeing.

How often do you paddle in summer? Every Tuesday and Wednesday evening, and one or two days every weekend

Do any winter paddling? Yes

Go to pool sessions? Yes, Fairlands pool

Favorite local paddling: My favorites for paddling solo include Mattawoman Creek, Sassafras River, and Susquehanna River below Holtwood Dam.

Favorite non-local location: My favorites include Smith Island in the Chesapeake, the rivers and springs in Florida, east coast of Maine, and the Adirondacks.

Best paddling trip/experience ever and why: There have been breathtaking and hilarious moments on many trips. Breathtaking moments include: On Mattawoman Creek, hundreds of swans, geese, and ducks surrounded us as they took to the air. On the Myakka River, large alligators were everywhere. Hilarious moments include the misadventures of our group paddling the Juniper River (getting stuck in trees, losing paddles, falling out of boats).

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why: My first time kayaking was the scariest. A friend and I were in one tandem kayak and our teen daughters were in another tandem. Halfway across Tarpon Bay, Florida a storm blew in. The girls were screaming, the wind was howling, and waves were crashing. At an oyster bed we switched paddling partners so the girls were with an adult, then we paddled hard to get to shore.

Bucket list trips: Canals of Venice, Sydney Harbour, Belize, Galapagos Islands, Milford Sound, and Yellowstone Lake

Three things you like most about paddling? Remember the William Wordsworth poem that starts with, "My heart leaps up. . . ." Well, my heart leaps up when I am kayaking. I attribute this feeling to the endorphins from exercise, spirit of adventure exploring new places, and visual stimulation.

What do you like about CPA? I like the camaraderie of people who love kayaking as much as I do and who generously share their time and knowledge.

One thing other people find interesting about you: I don't know. Maybe it's that I'm a mosquito and chigger magnet.

CPA Paddler Profile ~ Mike Thomas

Interview by Rick Wiebush

Name: Mike Thomas

Lives in: Parkton, Maryland

Real job: Edwards Project Solutions; Project management consulting, training and enterprise-level management tools implementation

Member of a Piracy? Baltimore

Paddling Buddies: Jay Gitomer, Tom Malone, Hank McComas, Glen Schlippert, Mike Ward, and Rick Wiebush

Number years paddling: 5

Boat usually paddled: Necky Chatham 17

Type paddle used: Euro

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I was camping and hiking in Acadia National Park and after observing a few sea kayakers, it just struck me as great fun and a wonderful way to take in the natural beauty of the place. As anyone that has kayaked there will testify, I was right.

How did you learn to sea kayak? I came back from that trip to Acadia, immediately took a basic lesson from Ultimate Water Sports, then joined CPA Pirates of Baltimore, and took more advanced training with Rick Wiebush (Cross Currents Sea Kayaking).

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? Occasional canoeing

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? Skiing, biking

How often (per week or month) do you paddle in summer? Once or twice a week on average

In winter? None

Go to pool sessions? Where? University of Maryland, Fairlands, Catonsville

Favorite local paddling location within 1-2 hours of your house: Waters around Assateague Island

Favorite non-local location: Maine

Best paddling trip/experience ever and why: A 90 nm self-supported trip to Baja Mexico last spring lead by Cross Currents Sea Kayaking. The scenery was starkly beautiful with jagged mountain ranges dropping straight into azure waters. The weather was perfect with conditions (wind) just challenging enough to make the trip more interesting. I especially enjoyed this trip because of the total remoteness of the place, the complete change of pace from modern daily life, the expeditionary feel of stopping at a different beach to camp every night, and paddling with a great group of folks.

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why: This past summer I was paddling alone in the northern part of Chincoteague Bay on a 100+ degree day, crossing the bay for a little navigation practice. The water was so warm at the surface that it provided little relief from the heat. I enjoy paddling in hot weather; it rarely bothers me. I made the mistake of only bringing as much water as I thought I would need. The trip turned out to be longer than I planned, and before I could return to the put-in I began to suffer from hyperthermia: reduced sweating, severe back/shoulder cramps, nausea, and light-headedness. I was seriously concerned I might not be able to make it back under my own power but I made it to SouthPoint where I felt comfortable getting out of the boat and into the water which helped me recover enough to make it the last half-mile to the put-in.

Bucket list trips: Bahamas/Caribbean, Nova Scotia, San Juan Islands, and Alaska

Three things you like most about paddling? 1) Just being on the water and more generally being surrounded by the natural environment; 2) Challenging myself in various conditions; 3) Everything else.

What do you like best about CPA? Especially as a beginning paddler, it was a great way to meet paddlers of all skill levels, providing opportunities to learn new skills and share the struggles of skills development with those at a similar point in their progression. I think I paddle more frequently than I otherwise might without an organization like CPA, and it helps us all stay informed about kayaking events, shared interests, locations, etc.

One thing other people find interesting about me: Most people I know find it interesting that I went kayaking in Baja for a week last year. It may not seem that "out-there" for many kayakers, but most of my non-kayaking friends and family thought I was nuts.



Mike Thomas paddling Baltimore's Inner Harbor

Chesapeake Paddlers Association Tentative 2013 Calendar

Date	Title	Summary
4/6	Patuxent River Cleanup; Mason Neck River Cleanup; Weinberg Park Cleanup	Come and give back to your favorite paddling area. Patuxent: Chip Walsh, 410-562-3466, and Ralph Heimlich, 301-498-0918, heimlichfamily@comcast.net. Mason Neck: Jim Zawlocki, 703-378-7536, jimz2z@verizon.net. Weinberg: Gina Cicotello, 240-305-0922, ginacico@earthlink.net
4/7	Kayak and Paddle Workday	Truxton Park, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Catriona Miller. thelittlepiggies-pink@yahoo.com
4/7	Bull Run Virginia Bluebell Paddle	A leisurely scenic 8.6 mile round trip through banks of blooming Virginia bluebells and wonderful marsh, river, and run eco-systems. Jim Zawlocki, 703-378-7536, jimz2z@verizon.net
4/13	Kent Island Practice Paddle Series (KIPP)	This paddle will have six practice paddles once a month, from April through September. Marshall Woodruff, 202-345-0606, marshall.woodruff@gmail.com
4/20	Garrett Island (Susquehanna River) Cleanup	Help cleanup Garrett Island. Bob Shakeshaft 410-939-0269, bpmcshake@comcast.net
4/20	James River Fest and 3rd Annual James River Paddle Challenge Race	River Fest plus race - 4 mile sprint race or 9.5 mile endurance race around Jamestown Island. Andrew Sikes, Race Director, 757-570-0105, jamesriverpaddlechallenge@gmail.com
4/22	Tridelphia Reservoir Paddle	Paddle Tridelphia Reservoir. Chip Walsh, 410-562-3466, chipwalsh@verizon.net
4/24	Pirates of Pier 7—Season Opener	Begin weekly after work paddles on Wednesdays at Pier 7 Marina, South River, Annapolis. 410-531-5641, pirates_pier7@cpakayaker.com
4/26-28	15th Annual SK 102 On-Water Skills Workshop	Come and learn from the best volunteers in the world. Brian Blankinship, brian@baykayaking.com, and Catriona Miller, registrar, sk102.cpa@gmail.com
4/27	Occoquan River Cleanup	Come and give back to your favorite paddling area. Jim Zawlocki, 703-378-7536, jimz2z@verizon.net
4/30	Pirate of Baltimore—Season Opener	Begin weekly after work paddles, Island View Restaurant boat ramp. Dave Wilson 443-562-6156, pirates_baltimore@cpakayaker.com
5/3-5/5	Assateague Kayak Kamper Paddle	Assateague kayak camper paddle is an 11 mile bayside paddle to an overnight backcountry campsite with a potluck dinner. Jim Zawlocki, 703-378-7536, jimz2z@verizon.net
5/4	Beginner Kayak Paddle	Come on out for a beginner's paddle at Kent Island, MD. This is a great place to paddle and explore with your new kayaks. Marshall Woodruff, 202-345-0606, marshall.woodruff@gmail.com
5/5	Columbia Island Marina Beginner Paddle	Come out and join us for a beautiful paddle on the Potomac River. Carol Collins, JFCBelt@aol.com, and Robert Golden
5/11	Kent Island Practice Paddle Series (KIPP)	This paddle will have six practice paddles once a month, from April through September. Marshall Woodruff, 202-345-0606, marshall.woodruff@gmail.com
5/11	Upper Sassafras River Day Paddle	Paddle the Upper Sassafras River. Steven Jahncke, 443-463-3231, sejank@aol.com, and Suzanne Farace, sfarace@verizon.net
5/12	Bohemia River Day Paddle	Paddle the Bohemia River. Steven Jahncke, 443-463-3231, sejank@aol.com, and Suzanne Farace, sfarace@verizon.net
5/12	Piscataway Creek Circumnavigation	The area is sheltered making it excellent for beginner paddlers. Mike Cohn, 301-283-2391, mdcohn@verizon.net
5/17-5/19	Tuckahoe River Car Camper	Camp at Tuckahoe State Park and paddle surrounding waters. Dorothy Guy, 410-744-6057, dmgy13@aol.com, and Ralph Heimlich, heimlichfamily@comcast.net
6/15	Gear Day/Fall Out of Your Boat Day	Check out all the coolest gear people have/use/make, swap stuff, do a wet exit and paddle float reentry. Truxton Park, Annapolis, MD. Catriona Miller and Kristina McCoy, thelittlepiggies-pink@yahoo.com
6/21-23	SK 203 On-Water Trip Leader Training	Learn rescues, trip leader skills while car camping. Westmoreland State Park, VA. Especially for potential trip leaders. Brian Blankinship, brian@baykayaking.com, 443-994-7990, and Rick Wiebush

Visit the CPA Web page, <http://www.cpakayaker.com/>, for more events, details and trip leader/organizer contact information. For a full listing of upcoming Club events, visit the CPA Calendar, <http://www.cpakayaker.com/index.php?page=calendar>.

CPA logo gear is going international! Freddy Waider of Fjälkinge, Sweden, recently contacted Béla Mariassy to order CPA performance shirts, hats, and logo stickers. Visit the club's Web site for descriptions of CPA merchandise available for purchase, <http://www.cpakayaker.com/join-cpa/cpa-logo-gear/>



SK 203 On-water Trip Leader Training by Brian Blankinship

Do you enjoy CPA club trips? Would you like to see more of them? Are you interested in learning to lead them? Then CPA wants YOU!

If you are interested in leading trips for the club, CPA is providing free trip leader training, June 21-23, 2013, at Westmoreland State Park, Virginia.



Trip Leaders In Training *photo by Brian Blankinship*

To attend, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate basic paddling skills needed for maneuvering in moderate conditions of wind not exceeding 15 knots and waves not exceeding 1.5 feet.
- Demonstrate effective self and assisted rescues appropriate for moderate conditions.

We will teach you how to:

- Plan a trip on protected waters, including a float plan with contingency plans, and screen participants
- Identify hazards and precautions, determine safety equipment requirements
- Organize and lead a trip including the pre-launch briefing
- Trip planning and navigation, rescue/signaling devices
- How to properly manage towing boats of tired or incapacitated paddlers

For more information or to register, please email Brian@Baykayaking.com

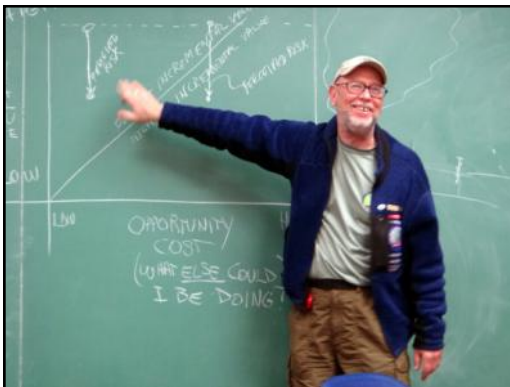


Rick Wiebush shows what is in his bailout bag
photo by Brian Blankinship

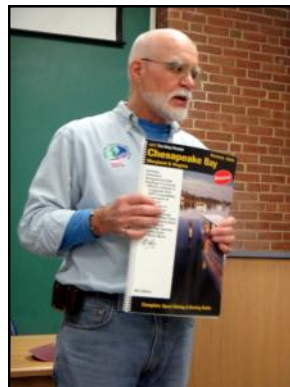


Suzanne Farace demonstrates a wet exit
photo by Jenny Plummer-Welker

Navigation Class Held March 23, 2013



Ralph Heimlich, CPA Coordinator



Béla Mariassy, class organizer
photographs by Suzanne Farace



Classroom at the Annapolis Branch Library

(Continued from page 1)

It truly takes a village to put on SK 101. So, in addition to the various formal presentations, several people played other very key roles in this event. Steve Bethke handled all of the registration, a very time-consuming job that spans three months. Mary Lynn Skutley helped out with on-site registration and also put together all the handouts for the attendees this. Jenny Plummer-Welker prepared and distributed the press release, handled the publicity for this event, and prepared the evaluation forms for the event (and she will also later summarize for us the results of those evaluations—key to our being able to continue to improve the program from year to year). She also brought in a “History of Kayaking” display that included the award-winning skin-on-frame kayak she built. Catriona Miller photographed the event and brought in a photo display for the event. Bela Mariassy brought the CPA photo board, handled the CPA gear logo sales and, along with Greg Welker and Ralph Heimlich, supervised the outdoor boat display. Ralph also prepared and printed the flyers for the event. Greg organized the large, diverse kayak fleet on display at the event, contributed entirely by the volunteers (plus one loaned for the day by Steve Jahncke, who paddled by in another kayak during the event). Rich and Sue Stevens handled the finances and membership, respectively. Rob Pearlman and Maryrose Whelley provided all-around help.

Our efforts seem to have been well-received. Here are a few comments the attendees posted on the CPA Facebook page after the event:

- Great day! Thanks for the amazing information!
- It was an very informative class. Thank you all for sharing your knowledge.
- Thank you to all the presenters for sharing your time and expertise with us!

Just as I took over organizing this event from the very capable hands of Yvonne Thayer and Gina Cicotello a few years ago, next year Paul Casto will take over as the organizer of this event. Paul has some great new ideas, and I know that this event is in very good hands for the future!



Don Goff, in the middle, demonstrates varying shirt color visibility
photo by Suzanne Farace

Suzanne Farace joined the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc., in 2005 and has coordinated the SK 101 workshop since 2010.



Paula Hubbard shows the range of paddling clothing available for a variety of seasons
photo by Catriona Miller



Greg Welker discusses primary and secondary kayak stability
photo by Catriona Miller

(Continued from page 3)

If you have found that a long sea kayak is not for you, for instance you just want a shorter boat for fishing, photography, or exploring smaller creeks, you might just be able to just throw it in the back of a pickup or larger SUV. Inflatable kayaks are another option.

There are many saddle or cradle types to choose from. The primary one is the basic saddle. You need two points of support, generally as close to the internal bulkheads as possible, or about one third the distances from the bow and stern. You can go with two pairs of saddles, which is the basic setup. With these you can often load from the side, usually with two people, or possibly from the back by yourself or with another person.

The other option is a pair of saddles in the front and a pair of rollers in the back. This setup can aid in loading your boat, depending on your vehicle. You, or a friend, lift the front of your boat onto the rollers and then you push it up from the back. Both setups depend on how tall you are, how tall your vehicle is, and how far back your rear saddles or rollers are located. In both these cases the

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Paddling Trip to Shoshone Lake, Yellowstone National Park, July, 2012

by Chip Walsh

Maybe you've seen Ken Burn's documentary on National Parks, and you've been thinking it's about time to visit or revisit some of the parks. Or, if you will be heading west for other reasons, like I did in 2012, a stop in the parks is a great way to break up a long trip. How about Yellowstone or Grand Teton? Perhaps you'd like to go, but have heard bad things about the summer crowds. I was there last July, and I can tell you, there were a lot of people in the National Parks last summer. But, what I didn't expect was how easy it was to get away from the crowds. All you need is something you already have, a boat! This article provides information that will help you launch a trip into these parks. Additionally, it provides a report of the particular trip I took in 2012.

Yellowstone has "backcountry" sites available on Shoshone and Yellowstone Lakes. Grand Teton has sites on Jackson, Leigh, and Phelps Lakes. With a boat, it is easy to get separation from the masses, which tend to cluster around paved roads. Each lake has its pros and cons, and you can read about them online or ask a ranger for advice when you get there. For my trip, I choose Shoshone Lake because it has a manageable scale, and I knew there wouldn't be any powerboats there.

To camp on the lakes, you will need to go to a backcountry permit office to get a permit for your trip. There is usually a back country permits office in park visitor centers. There's no fee for the backcountry permits, so backcountry camping is a cheaper and more desirable way to spend nights in the parks. You can reserve sites on-line for a \$25 reservation fee. The parks always hold back sites for walk-ins, so only reserve if there is a special site you want or you know you will be unable to get to a permit office early in the day.



Chip Walsh at the confluence of the Lewis River with Lewis Lake
photograph by the Canoe Guys

Consider book-ending your boat trip with lodging or camp sites the nights before and after. After arrival, this will give you time to get oriented, draw your permits and arrive at the boat launch the next day ready to go. The road-serviced campgrounds often fill up on summer nights. You can reserve ahead through a park concessionaire or look for day-of camp sites. A portion of camp sites are left unreserved and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you go without reservations, get your camp sites early in the day. That's hard to do when you are returning from a trip on the lakes, so you might want to have a spot reserved for the night you return.

If you are not packing your boat along for the trip (Mistake! Rethink. There're lots of places to paddle on the way), you can rent from outfitters outside the park. There are no kayak rentals available within the parks. If you bring your boat, you need to deal with Wyoming's policies designed to thwart invasive species. The boats need to be cleaned inside and out since the last time they were used in any areas where invasive species have been identified. If you are coming from the east, assume your boat will need to be cleaned. En route to the Park consider stopping at a car wash that has those high pressure wands to clean your boat. You need to register (\$10 at the permit office), self-certify the boat is clean, and put a \$15 sticker (from the marina) on your boat. Also, they give

you a placard to put in your windshield that says the boats are clean. See <http://www.nps.gov/grte/planyourvisit/ans.htm> for details.

Okay, you've arrived, chosen a lake, drawn your permit, applied your registration sticker, and arrived at your launching point. Now you have to pack your gear into your boat. If you are a regular kayak camper, you will know what to do. If not, I suggest you do a practice loading before you arrive that way, you will know what fits, and where it fits, in the boat.

Special Situations

Bears. If you listen to the rangers, you will, probably rightfully, develop a healthy respect for bears. I practiced strategies for avoiding bears (make noise, keep a clean camp), but I was so unnerved by the rangers' warnings that I coughed up \$50 dollars for some bear spray. I thought I was being gouged, but it turns out those bear sprays are expensive. Thankfully, the only bears I saw were from the car on the side of the road. Most of the camp sites have some sort of bear-feeding avoidance devices. At a mountain-top camp site in Grand Teton NP, there were heavy steel lockers for securing food. On Shoshone Lake, sites had a beam mounted 25 feet high between two trees (hint: you need 50-feet of rope to string up your vittles from these high beams).

Most of the camp sites have some sort of bear-feeding avoidance devices. On Shoshone Lake, sites had a beam mounted 25 feet high between two trees (hint: you need 50 feet of rope....)

– Chip Walsh

Yellowstone Lake is cold, even in summer, and rarely unfreezes before the end of May. I was there in late July, and Shoshone Lake's water temperature was cool but tolerable. You'll want to be prepared for the water temperature in the lake you select at the

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time you are there. Find out about the water temperatures and prepare accordingly.

Yellowstone is perhaps most famous for its thermal springs and geysers. On a summer day, literally thousands of people will be visiting the well know attractions. But there are also active geothermal features at some areas on the lakes. At the geyser basin I visited on Shoshone Lake, I was the only person there. Thermal basins can be dangerous. Occasionally people break through the crust of earth and fall into scalding hot water. This can be avoided by following established trails, so if you are going to visit one of these areas make sure to find out where to access the established trail.

On the way to Shoshone Lake, I had to hike up the shallows of the Lewis River while dragging my kayak behind me. The current was quick, and the river bottom was 6-inches to 2-foot boulders. If your trip includes a river hike, consider appropriate foot wear. While walking over an uneven bottom through moving water, walking sticks helped me maintain my balance and keep from falling. There were few decent walking sticks to be found along the Lewis River, so I suggest acquiring sticks before you get there. Most trips don't require a river walk, but if yours does, be prepared.



Shoshone Lake shoreline at camp site
photo by Chip Walsh

Notes on my trip to Shoshone Lake

I paddled solo from the boat launch at Lewis Lake. The route crossed Lewis Lake and ascended the Lewis River. I had a permit for a primitive campsite on the north shore of the "Narrows" section of the lake. It broke down to about an hour crossing Lewis Lake, about an hour paddling up the river, about an hour towing my boat up the last portion of the river, and about an hour to my permitted camp site. I spent another hour or two finding my site, which points out it is always good to have a safety margin of daylight.

Conditions on these mountain lakes can get as rough as out on the Chesapeake Bay, and it can happen in an instant. On my paddle out of Shoshone Lake, a wind came up in an instant, just like somebody flipped the switch on a huge fan. I'd been paddling placid water, then foot-plus height waves jumped up in about three minutes. I recalled reading that afternoon winds came up quickly on Yellowstone's lakes, but this was beyond my expectation for coming up quick, and it was morning.

I hadn't found specific information on the geyser basin at the west end of Shoshone Lake, and I paddled there. I don't know how extensive it is because I became afraid to get out and walk around much, recalling the warning about constantly changing conditions, break-through crust, scalding water, etc. I did find a bubbling fumarole right at the water's edge. A ranger later told me the features are more extensive, and there is a well worn trail through the features. I never saw it. The ranger said if you stayed on the trail, there was little danger of being boiled alive.



Shoshone Lake camp site indicated by an orange reflector
photo by Chip Walsh

It was about a six-mile paddle back to the Lewis River. There were a few other paddlers on the water. In all, I think I saw four boats. At the east end of the lake, I landed at the beach near where the river exits Shoshone Lake, ate a bit, strapped Tevas over my booties, and broke out my wading sticks. As is often the case, the trip downriver was much easier than the upriver trip. I sat on the stern of the kayak, facing the stern, and floated over the shallow swift water at the top end of the Lewis. Sitting on the stern made the bow lighter, so the current wouldn't sweep it around. I dangled my legs in the water to fend of rocks and used the pole in either hand to snub my way downriver. I only scraped one rock on the way down. It was amazing how quick this part of the trip went, at least in comparison to how long it had taken me to travel upriver.

When I came out onto Lewis Lake, the wind was howling. Naturally, it was not a helpful wind, basically southwest and coming at me from about my one o'clock to two o'clock. Waves were a foot and higher, but that just added interest to the paddle. I reached the launch with a mixture of sadness to be rejoining the summer crowds and relief to be out of the wind and finished the trip.

The Lewis Lake campground was full when I came off the lake, so I was glad to have paid up my campsite ahead of time. I'd talked to the campground host before I left, and he told me he had to chase people off my site prior to my return!

Chip Walsh is a member of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc. and paddles frequently with the Pier 7 Pirates. Chip was featured in the "CPA Paddler Profile" in the January-February 2013 edition of the Chesapeake Paddler. A longer trip report with more photographs is available online at <http://chipwalsh.org/GoWest12/Yel-Ss-Lake.html>. Information on Yellowstone, Shoshone and Lewis Lakes is available online from the National Park Service, <http://home.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/upload/3maps.pdf>.

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July 28: Greenland Skills with Alison (Alexandria)
Aug. 3 - 4: Open Water Skills and Delaware Bay Crossing
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Aug. 17 - 18: Intro to Surf (Ocean City NJ)
August 23: Night Navigation
Aug. 25: Intensive Intermediate Skills and ACA Assessment

CPA Classifieds

Kayak Storage. Storing your kayak outdoors? Were you worried about it during the Derecho last summer? Would you like to store it indoors and protected from the weather? The Pier 7 Pirates have indoor kayak storage spaces available at our weekly paddling site on the South River. Attend Pier 7 Wednesdays without having to load and unload your boat each week! With the location conveniently located near US-50, you can pick up your boat on the way to Eastern Shore paddling trips. Reserve now for the summer paddling season. The storage space is indoors, secure, climate controlled, with 24/7 access and free launching from the sand beach on Wednesday nights. Rates are \$25/month for a six month lease (rent for the warm paddling season, rent for winter storage, or both) or \$30/month if you need shorter term storage. Please contact Greg Welker at gdwelker@verizon.net or 301-249-4895 if interested.

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kayak usually sits upright on the saddles or rollers. Some systems allow the back crossbar to be slid back temporarily to clear the back of the roofline.

Another cradle option is what is called a J-rack, where the kayak is mounted on its side. The advantage of this system it takes up less room on the roof. It is good for a smaller vehicle or for fitting more than two kayaks. It requires mounting the kayak from the side of the vehicle, and in many cases requires two people.

The most expensive method, but the easiest for one person, is the load-assist saddle system. These rack systems attach to the vehicle or rack system cross bars. They unlatch and swing down from the side of the vehicle so that the cradles are about waist high and vertically oriented. The kayak is simply placed onto the cradles on its side, strapped down, and then, with a spring assist, swung back onto the roof of the vehicle with the kayak ending up upright like a standard pair of saddles. You may need a short step ladder to load a boat depending on your height or the height your vehicle. There are also devices that hang on the rear tire that act as a step to help you tie down the kayak. Some people carry their boats upside down in the saddles. With this method the boat must be loaded from the side.

Rich Stevens is the Treasurer for the Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc. and is known for paddling long-distances in a single day.



Paula Hubbard presents the Kayak Gear session at SK101
photo by Catriona Miller

Inside our March, 2013 issue:

- [SK 101: Introduction to Sea Kayak Workshop](#)
- [Captain's Quarters: April is EARTH MONTH](#)
- [Kayak Racks - Highlights from SK 101](#)
- [Paddler Profiles—Marla Aron and Mike Thomas](#)
- [CPA Logo Gear Goes International](#)
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- [SK 203 On-Water Trip Leader Training](#)
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The Chesapeake Paddler

Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 341
Greenbelt, MD 20768-0341

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