

# The Chesapeake Paddler



Publication of The Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

Volume 28 Issue IV

May 2018

## Navigation Class Schools Paddlers in Charting the Way

*Don't know a nun from a can? Think harmonics is just for musicians? You might find yourself directionally challenged on the water. There's a class for that.*

By Lois Wyatt

Exceeded my expectations - that was my experience in the Navigation class taught by Paula Hubbard April 7. An effective instructor needs to break down content into small increments and move slowly enough through those steps not to lose listeners, not an easy task for those with years of experience and expertise, but Paula succeeded. As a teacher myself, I appreciated how well she prepared for those of us who committed our Saturday to better understand different elements of kayak trip planning. A 9:00 to 4:00 day in a darkened room could have felt long, but instead it was most satisfying.

Two carefully constructed slide presentations guided our day's instruction, Charts and Compasses in the morning and Tides and Currents in the afternoon. I thought that common sense was sufficient for me to grasp the basics of marine charts, but as we looked at all the notations and letters and symbols, so much more was revealed. Yes, much of the information conveyed is more relevant to larger crafts with deeper drafts, but I did learn about some information more important to kayakers than I realized, the superfluous is no longer "Greek" to me, and I can better distinguish between the two.

Though I figured that my ancient Girl Scout compass was probably not waterproof, and thus not a good choice to carry in my PFD, I did not fully grasp the significance of the rest of the markings on compasses others carried. I have heard "red in the shed" before, but I needed to



Photo/Lois Wyatt

hear it again; this time I think I get it. Course, heading, and bearing - of course the terms are related, but now my sense of each is no longer fuzzy. I have heard of dead reckoning, but now I have added the warning phrase "constant bearing, decreasing range" to remind myself how to assess the situation.

To amend our favorite tagline, "we paddle to eat," for a chilly classroom day in early April, 'we come to navigation class to eat,' our lunch buffet offered lots of

delicious options and left us well fortified to focus on Tides and Charts during the afternoon. Thanks to Sue Stevens for organizing it.

Checking tide tables is one component of planning a trip. With high tides, kayakers can explore further up creeks, but an intended lunch beach can disappear. Low tide is feast time for birds, making birders happy, but a destination creek likely becomes much shorter. Being "up a creek without water" is even worse than being there "without a paddle." One trip where finding a low tide on a good day and time is key to success is a visit to Mallows Bay. From childhood, most of us recall science lessons about the gravitational force of the sun and moon, but tides are far more complex than I understood. Paula introduced new (to me) names for these complexities, such as mean higher high and its counterpart, mean lower low, harmonic and subordinate predictions, and neap tide. Of course, river flow and storm surge offset tides and affect water level well upstream. It makes sense that as high tide moves up the bay, there is a lag time, but the delay over a short distance astonished me. From Matapeake on Kent

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# How to make the most of your CPA membership

Dreaming about kayaking on warm summer days? BE SURE to join our 2018 trips!

You may have recently seen an email – or two- about your own CPA membership status, which may be up for renewal. Those with multi-year CPA membership paid up see reminders A LOT less often. Please contact me to keep your email & address info up-to-date so that you can keep receiving the CPA Paddlers E-newsletters monthly!

Of course, you know that CPA offers multi-year membership dues discounts: \$10- 1yr, \$18 - 2 yrs, \$27- 3 yrs, OR the best deal of all at \$35 for 4 years. It's really easy to renew online: [http://www.cpakayaker.com/membership/#online\\_option](http://www.cpakayaker.com/membership/#online_option).

Did you know that the CPA FACEBOOK Page, our Meetup Event calendar and CPA Forum are easy to spot on our web site: <http://www.cpakayaker.com/> Please check the CPA website calendar (on the top row) for sea kayaking paddling days, camp trips, events, and skill workshops. (NOTE: CPA does not provide rental/ loaner kayaks.)

You can read about all kinds of kayaking topics on the CPA Forum (you do not need to log-in to access, only to post a question or reply), just click on the CPA home webpage link. Here's the link to set up your personal log on – if you wish to post: <http://www.cpakayaker.com/forums/viewtopic.php?f=14&t=4676>.

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Island to Tolchester Beach near Rock Hall north of Eastern Neck Island was a two-hour lag. Because many factors contribute to water levels, it is important to use multiple available resources.

Slack tide is the time when the water level is changing the least, which I understood to be around the time of high and low tides. Except when it isn't, when it is midway between high and low, which brings us to the standing wave model, progressive wave model, hydraulic current, and the Rule of Thirds. Finally, combining compass reading with understanding of currents and tides leads to calculations, or intuitive guesstimates, for ferry angles.

My head could have been spinning with new terminology and the wealth of information. Rather than feeling overwhelmed in the class, however, I was excited to be learning new concepts. In the middle of the Chesapeake Bay, most of us probably do not have compass, ruler, and pencil out to calculate bearings, but it is good to understand the principles. Is your curiosity piqued? Wish you could have been there? Last year I wanted to take the Navigation class, but it was impossible, so I was watching closely for it this year. Paula intends to offer it annually, so I strongly recommend that you be on the lookout for it next spring. ♦

Discover more sea kayaking current news & topics on our CPA FACEBOOK Community Page: <http://www.facebook.com/CPAKayaker>.

With the CPA online calendar - you also must join our CPA meetup to see our full calendar, trip details, and to sign up for our volunteer-led trips & events: <https://www.meetup.com/The-Chesapeake-Paddlers-Association/>.

However, you may wish to contact /email the trip leader directly if you feel more comfortable signing up directly for trips with them. They will have a lot more details about the upcoming trip– which is NOT shown on their Meetup calendar event – especially time and location. Our volunteer trip leaders really want to know who is coming ahead of time. Of course, no one likes a surprise early in the morning after only one cup of coffee -- if you have not told them you are coming! Our volunteer trip leaders also may be asking a few questions about you and your kayak skill set if they have not paddled with you before. All our CPA Kayakers want to enjoy the day and paddle safely together!

Looking forward to our 2018 kayaking! ♦

~ Sue Stevens

Membership/Secretary: [secretary@cpakayaker.com](mailto:secretary@cpakayaker.com).



## Paddlers! The Potomac River Swim Needs You!

The 2018 Potomac River Swim (7.5 miles) needs support kayakers to accompany individual swimmers on **Saturday June 2, 2018**. You can really make a difference!

Kayakers accompany individual swimmers on their crossing and get: - pre-swim supper/briefing on Friday, June 1. - camping at Pt. Lookout State Park on Friday, June 1 and Saturday, June 2. - post-swim picnic at Pt. Lookout State Park on Saturday, June 2. - commemorative t-shirt. More info: <http://www.potomacriverswim.com> Sign up: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TQ9HYG3> Cheryl Wagner (202) 387-2361 [cherylw46@yahoo.com](mailto:cherylw46@yahoo.com)