

The Chesapeake Paddler



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Paddling in my back yard



The entrance to Parkers Creek in Calvert County, MD with the Chesapeake Bay in the background. The wildlife refuge has become a refuge for many paddlers, too, during the pandemic. (Photo: Bill Upton)

By Bill Upton

The pandemic put in big dent in everyone's paddling plans, including mine. Before I knew it, my epic road trip to my favorite place in the San Juan Islands in Washington state turned into sharing too much quality time with our indoor cats.

As the weeks turned into months and more months, all activities became hyper-local. Luckily for me, retirement meant no worries for income or going to an office. As for paddling, I was also lucky to live in a community in Calvert County with access to the Bay. It's just a short walk from my house to the beach and miles of water.

And so began paddling in my backyard. I've now made

too many to count trips from my home near Breezy Point to Parkers Creek. It's a pleasant five-mile trip along some of the most rural areas left on the Bay's western shore.

There are beaches, small creeks, farms, cliffs, Tom Clancy's old house, the remains of a summer camp (ask Marla Aaron about it next time you buy CPA gear) and lots of birds along the way.

The [Parkers Creek Natural Area](#) is owned by the American Chestnut Land Trust and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The area is named

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From the CPA Coordinator

Nominations, Annual Meeting and a legend

With September comes the chance to run for CPA office or nominate your favorite candidate. Nominations are open through the month of September.

CPA is always looking for new blood to take the reins and guide the club into the new year. The club officers serve a term of one year.



Bill Smith

There are a few vacancies this year since a few long-serving members have decided not to run again. The voting results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on November 7, 2021. This will also be a chance to vote in person if you missed the mail-in or online voting which will occur during the month of October.

As always, in-person events are subject to change because of COVID so we'll keep you posted if we have to move to ZOOM as the Annual Meeting date gets closer.

Honoring a legend

In the August Coordinator's column, I mentioned the famed paddler Verlen Kruger. Verlen is in the Guinness book of world records as one who has paddled more miles than anyone. Verlen has paddled more than 100,000 miles, impressive considering he did not start paddling until the age of 41.

Verlen died at the age of 82 so he spent half his life in a canoe. Verlen was also the designer of the Kruger canoe, CPA member Greg Welker paddles a Kruger canoe. Over a four-year period in the early 80's, Verlen and his son-in-law, Steve Landick (a former Navy seal) paddled what they dubbed the ultimate canoe challenge—a 28,000-mile canoe trip.

The ultimate canoe challenge began in spring of 1980 when they launched near Red Rock, Montana paddling down the Missouri River to Saint Louis, then paddling up the Illinois River to Lake Michigan, around the Great Lakes, down the Saint Lawrence to the Atlantic Ocean,

down the coast of the Atlantic to Miami, Florida, reaching Miami on December 25th.

They covered 8,115 miles in their first year, but they were not through since they left Miami the following day paddling around the Gulf of Mexico to the mouth of the Mississippi River near Empire, Louisiana.

They paddled up the Mississippi to Lake Itasca, Minnesota. From there they paddled and portaged to Fort McMurray Alberta. From Fort McMurray they paddled to Tuktoyakruk, Northwest Territories where they ended the 1981 season with 7,908 miles for the year.

In the spring of 1982, they left Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories for Skagway, Alaska. From there they followed the inside passage and Pacific coast down to Seattle, Washington. Continuing down the Pacific coast to Long Beach, California and then down the coast and Baja California to Cabo San Lucas, reaching Cabo on January 1, 1983. They covered 5,839 miles in 1982.

Leaving Cabo San Lucas they paddled the sea of Cortez to the Colorado River via Yuma, Arizona, then paddling upstream the length of the Grand Canyon to Lees Ferry, Arizona. They continued up the Colorado River crossing the Glen Canyon dam. With special permission they were able to portage the dam via an unused tunnel then up a metal ladder to get around the dam.

The dam employees offered them numerous rides in the elevator, but they refused because they wanted to complete the trip totally with human power. From there they paddled up the Green River to South Pass Wyoming. During this paddle Steve and Verlen became separated. When they finally met again Steve was sick, so he flew home to Lansing Michigan.

From South Pass Wyoming it was a 68-mile portage over the continental divide, so Verlen was solo and performing the portage in shifts carrying the gear and then returning for the boat. During this period, his canoe turned up missing. The police put out a bulletin

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Coordinator, from page two

and some local churches were praying for his boat to turn up.

His Friend Valerie Fons was in Montana practicing for the AuSable River race. Valerie came to rescue with a replacement boat. As Valerie was returning him to the spot to begin his portage again, a truck passed with his stolen canoe strapped on top. A chase ensued where the police intervened and were able to get the canoe returned to him. Steve returned and was able to continue the portage for the final leg of the trip.

At the end of the portage, they were again paddling on

the Wind River which turned into the Big Horn River. They joined the Yellowstone River near Big Horn Montana where they paddled back to the Missouri River to the Garrison Dam, from here he paddled and portaged up the Souris River to Manitoba then following the border route returning to the Great Lakes. Paddling down Lake Michigan to the Grande River and paddled upstream to end the 28,000-mile trip in his hometown Lansing Michigan.

In later years, Verlen and Valerie would paddle from the from the Artic Ocean to the south end of South America, an 18,100-mile adventure.

Deadline for CPA nominations is October 1

By Ralph Heimlich

This is a reminder that nominations for next year's CPA Officers are open and the deadline is October 1, 2021. This is your opportunity to nominate people who you think will help play an active role over the next club year (November-November) to vote on issues, create fun activities and keep the participation of the club lively through 2022. Nominations can be emailed to our Membership Secretary Sue Stevens at: membership@cpakayaker.com

The Chesapeake Paddlers Association is a volunteer organization and the people who volunteer the most are the elected officers: The Coordinator, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and the Steering Committee members.

Now is the time to tell us who you think should play an active part in steering the club's activities. As always, in addition to balloting at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 7 (if we HAVE an in-person Annual Meeting), you may cast your ballot for CPA officers online or by



CPA Wants YOU!

mail. The full descriptions of the officers duties are available in the [CPA Bylaws](#) at www.cpakayaker.com.

When submitting nominations to the Secretary, please copy the person being nominated. Persons nominated should accept or decline their nomination, develop a "Stump Speech" giving their experience and reasons why members should vote for them.

These will be printed in the October issue of *The Chesapeake Paddler* and viewable online. In addition to mail-in ballots and voting at the November Annual Meeting, there will be an online

mechanism for voting. You will need your CPA member number to authenticate your vote. The votes will be tallied at the Annual Meeting and will determine which individuals will hold which positions for the coming year.

So, throw your paddling hat in the ring, or throw someone else in the ring, but let the best candidates win!

[Paddling, from page one](#)

after William Parker, one of the original founders of Anne Arundel County. He received a land grant known as Parkers Cliffs in 1651. After he returned to England, the land went to his nephew, George Calvert.

The area is one of the largest contiguous forest tracts in the county with a network of hiking trails in addition to paddling opportunities in the creek.

There's a large beach at the creek entrance that's a good spot to take a break and either make the return trip or head up the creek for a couple miles.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, my occasional trips to Parkers turned into a couple times per week, weather permitting. As spring's weeks went by, trees bloomed, Ospreys returned and then came summer heat and jellyfish.

Fall arrived, Ospreys left and before long it was back into the dry suit for winter paddling with the eagles that stayed year-round. Each trip started like another Ground

Hog day, but before long there was always something new to see among the familiar landmarks.

Some days it was a race to see how fast I could make it. Other days it was a lazy trip to just enjoy the calm or stop and look for shark's teeth. Sometimes the calm wind in the morning gave way to strong winds in the afternoon and a difficult ride home.

On one trip, just as I arrived the Chestnut Land Trust was leading a large group of kids into Parkers Creek. One of the kids was paddling the first kayak I ever bought that I had donated to them years ago. We had a good laugh and they went on their way.

During our brief vaccine freedom this spring and summer there weren't as many backyard trips as we all ventured out, but with Delta, for me it's back to staying local. Once again, the leaves are starting to turn and most of the Ospreys have left, but it's nice to be back.

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Looking north towards Dares Beach from the beach at the mouth of Parkers Creek. The beach is popular with local boaters, hikers and paddlers. (Photo: Bill Upton)

[Paddling, from page four](#)



Large cliffs are common between Breezy Point and Dares Beach. Be careful if you make a stop, those big rocks are from slides. (Photo: Bill Upton)

If you are interested in paddling Parkers Creek, there's public access at Breezy Point Marina (<http://www.breezypointmarina.com>). They have a large boat ramp and the launch fee is \$15.

Ironically, the new marina owner also commandeered the Pirates of Arundell's old home at Pier 7. Access on weekends can be tricky because the marina is next to the county's Breezy Point Park which gets a lot of use and the county sometimes limits traffic.

There's a description of the trip in [Sea Kayaking Maryland's Chesapeake Bay](#) by Michael Savario and Andrea Nolan (check out the [CPA online library](#) for a copy!). From the marina, it's a five-mile paddle to the creek entrance and about two miles to the head of the creek for a 14-mile total paddle.

Tips for paddling to Parkers Creek:

If you plan on going up the creek, time it to hit the creek near high tide. It gets shallow and muddy at low tide.

The cliffs look great but can be dangerous. If you stop to sight see or fossil hunt, beware of the large cliffs. They are unstable and those big boulders on the beach came from slides, which are common.

At about three miles from the marina, near the community of Dares Beach, the Bay to the east opens up and there's a lot of potential fetch. When the wind is from the south or east, the waves get bigger on this stretch than on the first three miles.

Also, the cliffs between Dares Beach and the creek are hard clay and they reflect incoming waves. On any east wind above about eight knots it can get like a washing machine.

And finally, because this is such rural area, there are few bailout points. Check the weather and wind forecast, it can go from flat calm to very rough in a short time.

For more photos, go to:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/ZRutud8WjfekYKvo7>

Paddler Profile

Meet Jean Wunder

Lives in: Baltimore, Maryland.

Do you regularly attend a CPA Piracy? Yes, I'm one of the Pirate Captains for the Pirates of Baltimore (POB) with Suzanne Farace and Bob Shakeshaft.

Number of years paddling?
About 12.

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I started with the Meetup groups. The purpose was leisure with the provision of being on the water under safe conditions.

What boat(s) do you paddle? I have an NDK Sportive and a P&H Quest.

Rudder or skeg? Skeg.

Type of paddle used? Primarily Greenland paddle.

Do you do any other paddling than sea kayaking? I've been doing some river runs in my plastic kayak out on the Potomac. It's a good way to practice certain paddle strokes.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities?
Hiking and gardening.

How often do you paddle between May and October?
2 – 3 times per week.

Do any winter paddling? I started paddling all season just this winter (thank COVID for that). I really enjoy it and hope to continue this coming winter.

Favorite local paddling location? Anywhere around Kent Island, especially the circumnavigation of Eastern Neck. It offers some beautiful scenery, and the conditions can sometimes be challenging.

Favorite CPA trip you've ever been on and why? The Pocomoke camping trip. This trip offered paddling opportunities both on the Bay and river. I'll never forget paddling around Mill Island and seeing these weird, worm-like creatures sticking to our paddle and kayak.



We discovered later that they could have been leeches! The camping trips are also a time to relax with fellow paddlers, go out for some eats, and learn more about the sport.

Coolest paddling trip you've ever been on anywhere and why? I had the chance to paddle in British Columbia two times on a guided trip for a week. Of course, the scenery is magnificent, and the abundance of wildlife is just amazing.

We got to see eagles, orcas, sea lions, kelp forests, and even got to see a whale breach about a ½ mile away. The "why" is always to have that

close connection to nature that is not really as possible in a motorboat.

Scariest/most dangerous paddling trip/incident and why? This story has certainly circulated within the kayaking community. It was the day of the total Solar Eclipse in 2017. Our plan was a short paddle out of Middle River over to Hart-Miller Island.

There, we would watch the eclipse and paddle back. Towards the afternoon, unanticipated thunderstorms started to come through, keeping us on the island for several hours due to intermittent lightning strikes on the mainland.

Watching the radar, we finally made a decision to just make the 1-mile crossing to Essex. Lesson learned: Be willing to change the plan.

As soon as we got on the water a squall came in, splitting up the group. Long story short, we ended up with five paddlers back at the dock, two in the water, one kayak with no deck lines, and a rescue from the Coast Guard. Lesson learned: Know the skills of your paddlers and the kayaks they are paddling.

In the end everyone arrived at the Island View

[See Profile on page seven](#)

[Profile, from page six](#)

Restaurant safe. While scary at the time, it gave me more confidence to use the skills I had to stay calm, assist where I could in making sure everyone was safe, and the knowledge to keep radio contact which could then be communicated back to the Coast Guard. Lesson learned: Never underestimate Mother Nature.

Bucket list trips? I've been following Nigel Foster on [Instagram](#). He has a trip to the islands of Raja Ampat, Indonesia. Maybe when I retire!

Three things you like most about paddling? Connecting with nature, learning new skills, and sharing a love of the water with other people.

What do you like about CPA? Safety, paddling with a variety of folks, and educational opportunities.

What other paddling clubs/groups do you belong to? Various meetups; Cross Currents Seakayaking's Uncon, and Marshall's Kent Island Practice Paddles (KIPP).

One unusual non-paddling thing we'd be surprised to know about you? For a short time I used to rock climb when I lived in New Paltz, NY.



Delmarva Paddlers Retreat postponed

The area's premier Greenland enthusiast event, the [Annual Delmarva Paddlers Retreat](#) scheduled for October 7-10, 2021 in Lewes, DE, has been postponed.

Organizers had hoped to safely hold the event with a smaller group and a requirement that all participants be fully vaccinated. But with the increasing uncertainty around possible breakthrough infections, they decided to postpone it to October 6-9, 2022.

(Photo: Delmarva Paddlers Retreat, with permission)

Upcoming CPA events

Chesapeake Paddlers Association
 Annapolis, MD
 799 members · Private group
 Organized by Chesapeake Paddlers Association and 56 others

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About **Events** Members Photos Discussions More

What we're about
 Chesapeake Paddlers Association is a registered 503 C(4) non-profit organization. This is a sea-kayaking club with lots of volunteer leaders - who...

Upcoming events (5) [See all](#)

MON, AUG 3, 12:00 PM EDT

Trips and Piracy paddles are being scheduled, stay up-to-date by visiting the [CPA Meetup page](#).

Check back often, events are subject to change because of COVID-19.

All participants should download the [updated CPA Waiver](#) and read the [CPA COVID-19 event guidelines](#) before participating in any in-person Club activity.

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.

Websites: www.cpakayaker.com, [CPA Facebook page](#); [CPA Meetup page](#)

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Email Distribution, Dues Payments and Ad policy

All *Paddler* newsletters are sent via email with a link to the current monthly issue. Please be sure to keep your email address current to keep receiving the *Paddler* newsletter and for reminders of when your membership is up for renewal by contacting the CPA Secretary at membership@cpakayaker.com.

If your CPA membership has expired, or will expire soon, please send in your dues to: CPA, P.O. Box 341, Greenbelt, MD 20768-0341 or use the [Online Membership](#) option to use PayPal or find more information about membership.

Display advertising that relates to the interests of our readers is accepted, contact the editor at news_editor@cpakayaker.com for ad rates and specifications. Public service announcements and personal ads to sell kayaks/ accessories are published at no charge; non-members pay \$10 per ad.

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VACANT — Please consider volunteering

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The Chesapeake Paddler

The *Chesapeake Paddler* is published 10 times a year, with combination issues in Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb. The deadline for submitting copy is the 15th of the preceding month. Articles and illustrations (graphics, photos) should be submitted as separate attachments to: news_editor@cpakayaker.com

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