

Kent Island Paddle challenge celebrates a dirty dozen

Inquiring paddlers are told straight-up that the KIP “is not for everyone.” That’s an understatement. But for those who put themselves to the test, camaraderie, crazy skills, and enduring growth await

By Marshall Woodruff

Our 2017 summer series is over. It was a great twelfth season for this most unusual program. The KIP series is for paddlers who want to build their skills and knowledge of paddling and to have a distance challenge. For those who join, it is intended to be a bonding experience and an opportunity to meet their goals. For the practice sessions, KIP is an effort to paddle together, geared towards those who want to practice and get in shape over several months in preparation for a personal distance paddle. As advertised, the practice series is a group effort; the final paddle is a personal effort. In the end, each paddler's speed and distance is up to the individual. A big tip of the old paddle to our new KIPPERS this year, Pattie Jones, Shelly Wiechelt, Sue Sierke, John O'Hara, Kathie Koenig, and James Kruger. These kayakers committed to travel to Kent Island to paddle once a month from April through September.

Another big tip of the paddle to the mentors who were there each month. Without them this program would not be so successful. The group includes Old KIPPERS, some who have been involved for the past twelve years and others who just joined. Each one brings something distinctive to the effort, but dominant themes are a love for paddling, an eagerness to share their skills and learning, and a desire to give confidence to the next group. The committed KIPPERS include Carol Collins, Ed Johnson, George Banks, Jim Zawlocki, Pat Kennedy, Paula Hubbard, Rob Bowen, Robert Golden, Tim Dole, Kathy Kozub, Samm Magsin, Jean



The KIP series is a team effort. Paddling together once a month beginning in April, participants improve skills and endurance as they approach the goal of circumnavigating Kent Island in September. Photos/Kathy Kozub



KIPPERS Nancy Eichert and Kathie Pattie Jones give the thumbs up.

Wundtch, Gail Davidson, Jimmie McArdle, Denise Parisi, Tom Kerbaugh, Rick Leader, Aht Virav, Jaclin Gilbert, and Nancy Eichert. If I missed anyone, I am sorry! Thanks to all for making it one of our best years. We were able to improve our rescues, paddling techniques, towing exercises, contact tows, and follow-the-leader paddle and to learn to work as a group, a great skill to learn.

A big thanks to our Cabana Crew, Kathy Kozub and Pat Kennedy for being there. They were important as land support, checking the

KIP - Kent Island Paddle, reference to the series, 12 being the number of years of the series

KIPP - Kent Island Practice Paddle, reference to each practice paddle, KIPP - 1 '17, 6 in all

KIPPERS - those paddlers who worked hard and completed the series

Old KIPPERS - those paddlers who come back year after year to share with others

paddlers in and following them around the island from one spot to another, sharing a great day and all working as a team. From the paddlers' view, seeing the cabana team waving the orange flag as they passed by reassured them that someone was there to help if needed.

It is hard to believe our twelfth year is over - from the first meeting in April every month through September, culminating in our final paddle around Kent

Island Saturday, September 23rd. Each paddler had their own personal goals. Whether they completed the thirty-four mile paddle

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or not, they still came to the series monthly, paddled in the conditions that nature presented, and put up with all that the Old KIPPERS dished out. It is not easy to learn to paddle as a group, to look out for each other, to listen without question to the lead paddlers, and to keep going. However, at the end of this paddle you could see in the faces of the paddlers pride in all they have learned and accomplished. With a commitment to the series, the rewards were to become better paddlers, find new friends, and achieve new goals in our shared sport.



The plan for September 23rd was to paddle out of Matapeake, north to Love Point, past Kent Narrows, toward Parson's Island with an eight mile crossing to Kent Point, north back to our put in, Matapeake! We encouraged all the paddlers to group up with others sharing the same idea of speed, cadence, goals and how to achieve them. The groups functioned well, this time with four teams, each having a leader. Each group was responsible for the kayak and equipment check and their adventure. What a great job from the leaders, Jim Z, Robert Golden, Rob Bowen, and Denise Parisi.

We couldn't have asked for better weather, light clouds, breeze, waves, not too hot, a great day for a long, very long, paddle. All year we have preached about hydration and everyone took it to heart.

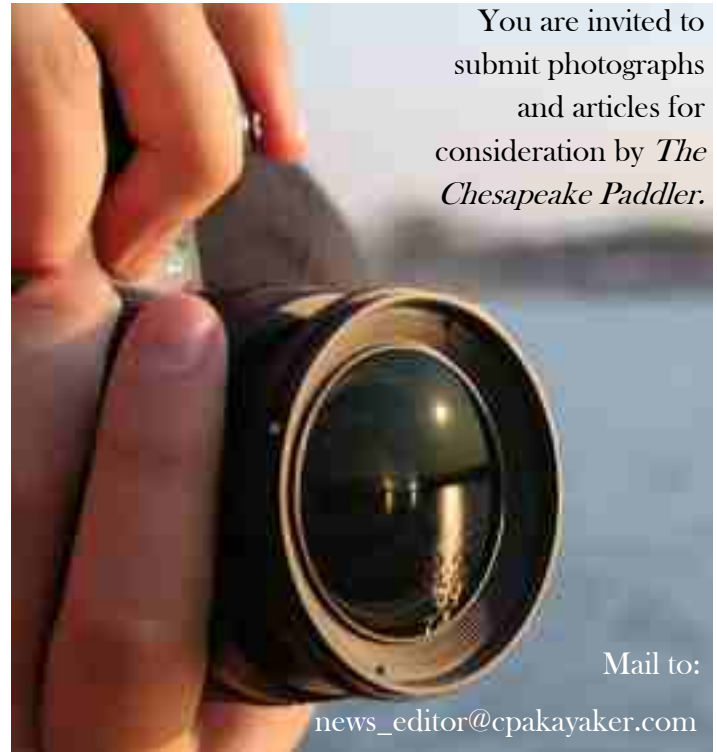


*Happy KIPPERS
(left to right)
Tim Dole, Sue
Sierke, Jim
Zawlocki, Samm
Magsino, and
Tom Kerbaugh
are all smiles
during the Kent
Island Paddle's
twelfth series.*

Everyone had plenty of water and lots of nibbles to eat as they paddled. Helpful in paddling and recovery was all the water they drank, a lot, not just sips. It takes practice to form good habits of when to drink water and how much to consume. Having good snacks easily available and pacing eating and rest stops really helps.

What better way to end our paddle than to share food, drinks, dessert and to relive the day's paddle. We went to our usual spot, Rams Head. They always welcomed us with great service. Dessert was our "KIPPER Cake" decorated with the CPA logo. And it tasted good!

All the faces displayed smiles of joy and exhaustion, as paddlers were busy with talk and laughter, revealing their happiness with their personal accomplishments and success. It was a great way to end the season with new friends and new KIPPERS. Thank you all for sharing the summer with us. ♠



You are invited to submit photographs and articles for consideration by *The Chesapeake Paddler*.

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First, CPA trip leaders use your profile to assess your skill level for trips. If your profile is blank or out of date, they will have a misleading impression of your fitness for the trip. If you've paddled a lot since joining our MeetUp, taken classes that improved your skills, gotten additional equipment, or just learned more about paddling safely, you should revise your profile. Pay particular attention to your answer to "How long have you been paddling and where do you paddle and on what type of water (flat water, open ocean...)" and respond as fully and accurately as you can.

Second, be sure the email you list is a current one that you check regularly. Your email is important because CPA trip leaders use MeetUp to inform participants about trip details (location, changes in plans, weather conditions, etc.). Also, check the various settings about what emails to receive from MeetUp. All of the reminders may be too much information for you, but you also don't want to miss emails about trips you've RSVP'd "Yes" to.

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