

The Chesapeake Paddler



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CPA's first post-lockdown day paddle

By Ralph Heimlich

After a rocky start under the various Bay-state shelter-in-place orders, kayaking was finally recognized as a legitimate solo exercise activity that could be done by individuals and related household members in early April. CPA decided NOT to schedule any group paddles under this interpretation since they would clearly violate the letter and spirit of the rule, but various individuals and families were kayaking all through April and early May.

On May 13, Governor Hogan [relaxed](#) the previous lockdown to allow opening state and local parks and marinas. Because of this relaxation, I went ahead with a previously planned day paddle on the Patuxent River on May 15.

Most experts agree that there is less risk of COVID-19 transmission in properly distanced outdoor activity



Bela Mariassy is back on the water for his first paddle since last October.

where equipment is not shared (see <https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/return-to-play>).

While at one time more than half a dozen people had RSVP'd to attend, due to various circumstances, only Bela Mariassy accompanied me. We paddled out of the newly-expanded beach launch at Hallowing Point on the eastern shore of the Patuxent, just below the Route 231 bridge.

In addition to the previous boat ramp wedged in close to the DNR HQ building, a 2015 purchase and a 2017 acquisition of [1.83 more acres](#) immediately to the south expanded the park to include a nice sandy beach launch. This area will be managed by Calvert County and upgrades to the roads, beaches, and facilities are planned, but haven't proceeded as yet.

By the time Bela and I arrived at the launch in mid-morning, a few fishermen were already set up on the beach, practicing minimal social distancing and with a



Ralph and Bela practice proper social distancing at the Hallowing Point launch site.

[See Paddle on page three](#)

From the CPA Coordinator

CPA moving forward in uncertain times

Summer is here but what a weird summer so far with the quarantine and social distancing. By now CPA has cancelled several early season training and social events including SK 102, KIPP, fall out of your boat day, navigation workshop and May fun day.



Bill Smith

The calendar has also taken a hit with several planned events cancelled or postponed. The thought that long-running events like KIPP and SK 102 were cancelled is heartbreaking, but they will rebound and be better than ever next year.

I look forward to the day when everything gets back to normal or close to normal since no one knows what the future is going to bring.

In May, Suzanne Farace with the help of Jennifer Bine, Kathy Bine, Jenny Plummer-Welker and Tom Heneghan hosted a virtual kayak camping workshop - cool idea and well attended. I applaud them for thinking out of the box and a job well done.

Events going forward

Now that some of the restrictions have been relaxed, I believe several trips can safely go on with a little careful planning and cooperation of the participants. This would mean smaller group sizes and a staggered launch but once you're on the water most people naturally stay a minimum of six feet apart so paddles are not clashing or boats running into each other.

Any lunch or break stop would need to be large enough so people can safely get out of their boats and not be on top of each other. The CPA guidelines for paddling during COVID-19 is published in this issue of the newsletter so take a moment to read this before planning a trip.

If you're like me the quarantine has had a negative impact on your state of mind and well being so going out paddling is a huge spiritual uplift. For this reason I would

encourage everyone to get out and paddle-even if it's a short trip. I usually lead 4-5 trips every year, but this year will be different due to an injury to my left elbow and right hand.

One of the longer trips I lead will probably be cancelled until next summer (Magothy River to Severn River) but I am hoping to feel strong enough to lead a few beginner trips by mid-summer and maybe still try to lead the Thomas Point Lighthouse paddle but it will probably be pushed to the fall instead of July.

The Magothy River to Severn River trip was unfortunately cancelled last year as well but due to extreme heat with an actual temperature of 100 degrees and 80 plus degree water; paddling is supposed to be fun so risking someone's life is not worth the risk.

Several years ago, I had an episode of heat exhaustion while paddling in Florida and can say it was not fun. Luckily, we had a bail out plan that saved the day.

The CPA steering committee has voted to extend all memberships one year to make up for the restrictive schedule and cancelled events as detailed in an article written by our secretary Sue Stevens.

Whatever you do this summer be safe and hope to see you on the water. ♡

Upcoming CPA Events

Due to the rapidly changing response to COVID-19, please refer to the [CPA Meetup Calendar](#) for the most up-to-date information on scheduled CPA events.



On the return, more people showed up at the launch where Ralph and Bela donned their masks and loaded up their boats.

Paddle from page one

scattering of face masks. We drove to a more distant part of the beach, unloaded with our masks on, and launched, heading north under the bridge and across the river to the mouth of Swanson Creek.

We didn't feel the need to wear masks when paddling. There were few boats on the water, and we coasted up the southern shore of Swanson Creek, on the border of Charles County's Maxwell Hall park, and by an eerily quiet Chalk Point power plant, apparently shut down while power demand remains low in the early Spring.

When we got to the landing for the Maxwell Hall paddle-in campsite (maintained by Charles County Parks and Rec), a family group was already set up to fish, so we stayed offshore and talked to them, but did not land. Paddling on, we went up the creek, looking for wildlife and passing a few observation points and rustic wooden boat slides along the way.

We eventually got so far up the creek that shoaling water forced us to turn around. We investigated one of the boat slides, and found that it was on private property, so didn't stay. We hauled out farther down the creek at an observation platform jutting over the creek, donned our masks and had our lunch, carefully maintaining our social distance.

The fishing family was still at the campsite when we

passed, so we didn't try to land. Not tired yet, we paddled south under the bridge and turned into the mouth of Indian Creek, with the village of Golden Beach on the south shore.

Years ago, I had led a kayak camper to the paddle-in site on Indian Creek, but we couldn't find the sign this time (not sure we went far enough up the creek).

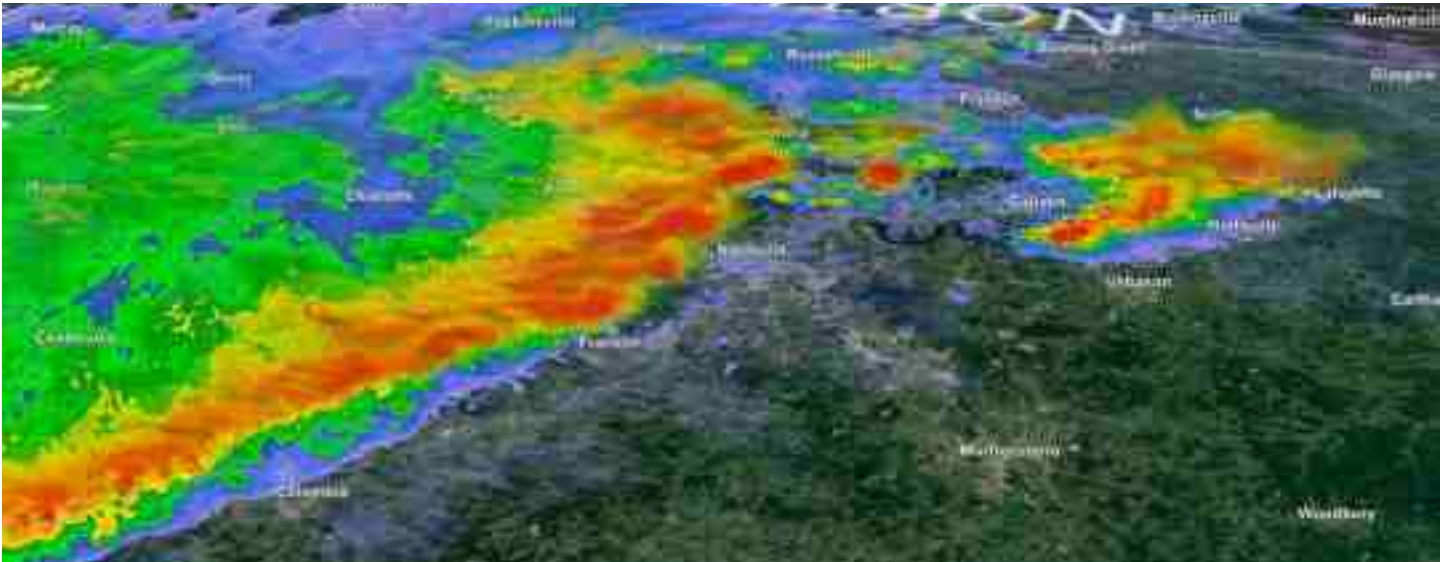
There are a number of small inlets and sloughs, and a nice, sandy point sticking out into the creek, but a couple in a canoe was already there, so we turned back across the river and made a bee line for Hallowing Point.

When we arrived at the beach, even more fishermen had arrived and located right next to our vehicles. We landed, donned our masks and proceeded to load up.

It was good to get out on the water again after a bit of a hiatus (I hadn't paddled since March and Bela since last October). We found that with proper attention to social distancing and use of masks at launching, lunching and landing, we felt reasonably safe in paddling on a day trip, following the [CPA guidelines](#) (see page 8).

On May 29, I have a previously scheduled car camper at Tuckahoe State Park in Maryland, with 7 people RSVP'd. I'll let you know how that goes.

Pictures at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qunEamSo3wLKawHi7>. ♠

A personal account**Near miss in a storm on Percy Priest Lake**

A massive line of thunderstorms heads towards Nashville on Sunday May 3, 2020. The storms contained a rare “derecho” that clocked winds at more than 70 miles-per-hour and resulted in a near miss for kayaker Kristen Hanratty. (graphic: Washington Post)

The following is an account by kayaker [Kristen Hanratty](#) of her experience surviving an encounter with a “derecho” thunderstorm on May 3, 2020 on a lake in central Tennessee. The story highlights the importance of always wearing your PFD and monitoring the weather forecast. Thank you Kristen for sharing your story so that others may benefit from your experience.—Editors

I almost drowned in Percy Priest Lake yesterday

A “Deadly Derecho,” some maniacal anomaly of a storm, wreaked havoc across Nashville while we were out on the lake. Here’s a story about wearing a PFD (personal flotation device/life jacket):

I’m enjoying a late afternoon paddle with two other friends. Noticing lightning from a distance, we check the radar. MASSIVE storm cell expected to hit downtown Nashville in 30 minutes, so we paddle like hell back toward the marina.

The wind made it all the more difficult, but we paddle with all the strength we have. We turn the corner of the cove to witness a black sky with billowing green-lined clouds. We all knew what that meant.

Wind speed picks up. The clouds move faster toward us. We decide to head toward the boat ramp instead. It was closer than the marina. Wind speed picks up even more,

making it nearly impossible to gain any amount of distance. The haphazard lightning, crashing thunder, darkness and clouds engulf us. The rain begins to feel like needles against our skin.

We realize we’re not going to make it to the boat ramp, we just have to get out of the water as quickly as possible. The wind pushes us east - away from the marina, the ramp, the shore. The only chance we have at getting to shore is at the edge of the cove.

One of my friends makes it to shore.

My other friend and I, do not.

70 mile-per-hour winds

Wind speed picks up one more time – 70 mph, I later find out – and immediately causes my kayak to capsize.

Before I’m able to resurface, my kayak is gone. My Playmate cooler bobs back up with me and I quickly grab it, knowing that it will at least retain a weak buoyancy until it fills with water. I’m surrounded by a sleeting blanket of white as rain and hail come down violently.

I can barely see anything around me, much less the shore, and I’ve lost my friend. I fight to keep my head above water against the brutally-angled winds and waves as the current pushes me out. Swimming in any direction

See Lake on page five

Lake, from page four

is not an option. I was going where the wind wanted me to go, while I use every ounce of my physical strength to get above water often enough to take a breath and my mental strength to subdue my impending panic. I needed a plan to stay alive.

I always wondered how people drowned in lakes. In this moment, it seemed exceptionally easy.

I see the neon orange stripes of a buoy in my potential path as the winds continue to push me out. It becomes immediately apparent that I cannot let myself bypass this buoy if I want to maintain any chance of survival.

With a lot of luck and vigorous leg-kicking I manage to position myself to grasp on to the buoy before the current pulls me past it. So there's hope. My body is exhausted, and it is increasingly difficult to keep my arm wrapped around the awkwardly-bobbing cylinder while managing the pathetic buoyancy (but buoyancy, all the same) of the Playmate cooler in the increasingly aggressive storm. With one leg wrapped around the chain of the buoy, I'm in the best position I can get to avoid drowning. I scream for my friends.

I can faintly hear my friend on shore - his intermittent yells in response to my screams for help. I still don't hear or see the friend that got stuck on the water with me. Her potential death crosses my mind. I hope she had enough time to put her life jacket on, as she was too far past the buoys when the wind kicked and her cooler didn't float.

Without her life jacket secure, there was no way she was going to make it in these conditions. I continue to scream, but the sky screams louder. My adrenaline is pumping, but I don't know how much longer I can hang on and stay afloat. I am realizing that I could die here. I could drown in this lake. This fake, man-made reservoir of a lake. I could be another body found in Percy Priest.

But I hold on just long enough. After what seemed like an eternity, the storm mildly subsides and I can faintly see the shore. I can see my friend getting in his kayak and paddling toward me.

I hear my other friend. I look behind me and she is paddling toward me as well, but on MY kayak. They



Percy Priest Lake is a reservoir in the north central part of Tennessee formed by Percy Priest Dam. The dam is about 10 miles east of downtown Nashville and impounds a lake 42 miles long. (photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

reach me at the same time. I throw myself up into his kayak and we quickly paddle to shore. The storm's not over, and there's no telling when those winds will pick back up.

I almost lost my life to Percy Priest yesterday, but I survived. We all did.

You're probably wondering where my PFD is in this story. Truth is, I didn't have one on my vessel. I didn't think I needed it for flat water on a sunny day.

"I'm a strong swimmer"

"It's a lake, not white water"

"The weather is sunny and mild"

Those are the most naïve thoughts that have ever crossed my mind. NONE of those facts made a difference when the weather turned quicker than we could act. That ignorance almost cost me my life.

I share this personal anecdote with the hope that it will alarm the inexperienced paddler, ground the invincible adventurer, and shock the proud outdoorsman. There is no excuse to not have a life jacket on your vessel. I hope that my near-death experience startles you enough to always remember your PFD, because you may not be as lucky as I was.*

**The U.S. Coast Guard and most states require PFDs be available on all vessels. CPA policy is to wear a PFD at all times as putting one on in rough conditions or once in the water is extremely difficult. If you become separated from your boat without your PFD on, you have likely lost both. – Eds.*

CPA memberships extended for one year

By Sue Stevens

As you well know, in light of widespread effects in the DC Metro of the deadly Corona virus, many of our club's spring kayaking opportunities have vanished off the CPA calendar. Our club leaders realized early, wisely, to cancel the 22nd annual SK102 weekend training set for late April at Lake Anna VA.

We agreed to cancel the popular Navigation Workshop, hosted by Paula Hubbard, and our early June Gear Sale/ Potluck/ Fall-out-of-your-Boat-Training Day led by Bill Smith and Jim Allen, as well as our new Bay-Kayaking - Fun Day Event. Marshall Woodruff and Jim Zawlocki, the Kent Island Paddle (KIP) leaders, wisely cancelled their popular season-long KIP series.

The Great Bay Swim Event, the Potomac River Swim, and CLC Boatbuilders weekend are cancelled. More kayaking day trips, as well as our mid-week casual Piracies, are not re-appearing just as the Chesapeake Bay has warmed and our days become long and sunny.

In light of this loss of the CPA schedule of fun activities and training opportunities, the Steering Committee has agreed to extend every member's current CPA membership for 12 months. For example: if your CPA membership was good until 5/1/2020 after the one-year addition from SK102 2019 – now, you will continue to be a CPA Member through 5/1/2021.

If your CPA membership may be expiring this month or later (per your CPA membership card), your CPA membership is good through next year. You will still receive several monthly email reminders to renew – next year closer to your new dues date from Membership Chair/Secretary Sue Stevens.

Everyone is hoping for better days ahead, and more chances for casual smaller group kayaking outings, perhaps with family members. The states' guidelines show that reducing group size, limiting contacts and staying local is the best way to go toward eliminating a lot of the potential virus exposure to all of our members – no matter what age group. Everyone is eager to improve their kayaking skills and wants to get out on the water but practicing social distancing.

We are hoping you also want to retain your CPA membership and CPA can give value for your longer membership. Stay kayaking – just not in close groups!

All active CPA members will continue to receive the monthly CPA Paddler newsletter – as well as see early news at registering for upcoming training opportunities through 2021. If you have any thoughts or questions, please contact: membership@cpakayaker.com.

All of our CPA members want to stay safe and healthy – let's look ahead for fun events later!

Coast Guard expands use of i911 system



A demonstration of how the Coast Guard uses the i911 system in Boston, Massachusetts. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicole J. Groll)

The Coast Guard is expanding the use of [a new i911 service](#) to allow faster location for a rescue. The i911 program allows Coast Guard rescue crews to use your smart phone number to pinpoint your location.

Once the number is entered, the mariner receives a text message authorizing them to share their location with the Coast Guard. Once shared, the internal cell phone's GPS, which uses satellites to pinpoint the mariner's location, is displayed on a screen for Coast Guard watchstanders to aid in the search for them.

Mariners are advised to learn how to enable their location service on their smartphones.

Apply now for spots on Mallow's Bay Advisory Council

The Mallow's Bay National Marine Sanctuary is seeking members for its [Advisory Council](#), including two members and two alternates representing recreational interests.

From the Mallow's Bay website:

"Council members will represent a variety of community groups. These 15 voting seats reflect the primary purposes of sanctuary designation related to maritime and cultural resource protection and interpretation as well as recreation, tourism, and economic opportunity.

"These seats include perspectives from a diversity of community groups related to other sanctuary management plan priorities such as education, research, and science."

The application deadline is July 1, 2020.

Click [here](#) to go to application webpage.

Sanctuary Advisory Council

NOAA is Recruiting Candidates for the Mallow's Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

NOAA is seeking applicants to fill the 15 seats of the Mallow's Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. The Sanctuary Advisory Council will provide advice to NOAA that supports the management plan. Members will serve as liaisons to a broad base of community organizations to facilitate public participation and engagement. Council members will be open to the public and help provide public advice to NOAA on issues, projects, and events.

Chart No. 1 available for download

MARITIME SAFETY INITIATIVE

NAUTICAL PUBLICATIONS

- U.S. Chart No. 1 Symbols, Abbreviations and Terms used on Paper and Electronic Navigational Charts

With more time at home, here's an opportunity to brush up on all those symbols on your nautical charts. You can download [U.S. Chart No. 1 Symbols, Abbreviations and Terms used on Paper and Electronic Navigational Charts](#).

The 131-page document explains the symbols depicted on nautical charts produced by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

CPA Guidelines for club paddles going forward

Governors in Maryland, Virginia, and other Bay states are beginning to set forth guidelines for reopening public access after the more restrictive lockdowns, including recreational access for paddlers. In light of these developments, CPA [adopts the guidance](#) for trip and piracy leaders below effective May 2, 2020:

1. No CPA trips, events or activities will be sanctioned that are not allowed under state or local stay-in-place orders in effect in the state where the activity is scheduled. That is, we will not allow scheduled Club activities where state or local emergency orders do not allow them. MD and VA statements linked below:

Maryland: [https://](https://governor.maryland.gov/2020/04/24/governor-hogan-introduces-safe-gradual-and-effective-maryland-strong-roadmap-to-recovery/)

governor.maryland.gov/2020/04/24/governor-hogan-introduces-safe-gradual-and-effective-maryland-strong-roadmap-to-recovery/

Virginia: <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/april/headline-856337-en.html>

2. Note that all participation in scheduled CPA activities under these guidelines is VOLUNTARY by the participants and implies no liability or guarantee of the safety of participating from COVID-19 infection. We, and all others, simply do not know enough to guarantee your personal health and safety in this emergency. If you DO NOT feel comfortable participating under these conditions, please DO NOT PARTICIPATE.
3. Participants have the responsibility to refrain from participating if they have a) been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, b) been exposed to sick people or the virus within the last 14 days, c) feel ill or have a temperature, regardless if they have not been tested or diagnosed with COVID-19, d) have underlying health conditions (pulmonary, cardiac or immune-compromised health issues) that would render them especially susceptible to COVID-19.
4. The number of participants is limited to the number allowed under eased stay-in-place orders in the various states and localities. If more participants are

anticipated (e.g., at a piracy), waves of launch times should be scheduled to avoid violating the maximum number of participants at any point in time.

5. Only activities that a) take place outdoors, b) allow for proper social distancing, and c) minimize face-to-face and hand-to-hand contact should be considered appropriate. That means no indoor meetings, workshops or training activities that would bring participants into close contact (less than 6 foot distance) with one another.
6. No social mingling or shared food or eating should be allowed at CPA activities in the initial phases of relaxing stay-in-place orders to minimize face-to-face contact and spread of the virus.
7. Participants in paddles or other activities should carefully observe all social distancing, disinfecting, and face and hand covering requirements suggested by the CDC and state health authorities for preventing spread of the virus.
8. Participants can seek help loading or unloading boats for activities at their discretion, taking care to observe appropriate social distancing and cleaning of surfaces on boats and equipment where others may contact them.
9. Carefully limit interaction before and after the planned activity (conversations, greetings, goodbyes, etc.) to those at appropriate social distances (greater than 6 feet) and with appropriate face and hand protection in place.

These [guidelines](#) are expected to remain in effect until greater relaxation of stay-in-place orders are enacted by competent state and local authorities in the affected locations. Be alert for changes based on second-wave pandemic spread which may require a retreat to previously more restrictive stay-in-place orders.

Bill Smith

Coordinator

For the Steering Committee

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.

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Monthly rates are as follows:

size	cost	dimensions (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 news_editor@cpakayaker.com for more information and for a 10-month discount.

Public service announcements and personal ads to sell kayaks/ accessories are printed at no charge; non-members pay \$10 for three months. Ads dated three 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... please tell us!

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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Launch of the month: Blackwater Trading Post Ramp



Site: Blackwater Trading Post Ramp
Lat/Long: 36.609 , -76.0853
Address: 5605 Blackwater Rd,
Virginia Beach, VA 23457
Type: Private ramp
Parking: Moderate
Restroom: Yes
Fee: \$4
Ownership: Private
County: Virginia Beach
State: Virginia
Water Body: Blackwater Creek
Map/Guide: <https://www.facebook.com/BlackwaterTradingPost/>

Blackwater Trading Post Ramp and other Launch of the Month entries are taken from the [Chesapeake Bay Access and Paddle-in Campsite Map](#), which is part of the CPA website. You can enter either the location or street address to find them in Google Maps. Try them out, and look for more in each issue of the newsletter. - **Ralph E. Heimlich**

The Chesapeake Paddler

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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; please notify the Secretary for changes to your email address. 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.