

The Chesapeake Paddler



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CPA workshops Zoom to global audience



Hundreds of participants from across the globe tuned in for two workshops on Cold Water Safety and Common Paddling Hazards that were co-sponsored by CPA and the National Center for Cold Water Safety.

Even though the pandemic has caused cancellation of CPA's traditional in-person workshops, the now ubiquitous ZOOM meeting has allowed paddlers from across the globe to get together to share information.

In early 2021, CPA and the [National Center for Cold Water Safety](#) held two events, the traditional *Cold Water Safety Workshop* and a new *Common Paddling Hazards and How to Avoid Them* seminar.

Once limited to small in-person gatherings of folks from

the Chesapeake Bay region, ZOOM has allowed CPA to connect virtually with hundreds of paddlers from as far away as Southeast Asia, South America and both coasts of Canada. Attendees varied from new-to-the-sport to "seasoned outfitters" and all had much to contribute.

CPA's Catriona Miller posted notices of the first workshop on more than 30 paddle-related groups and word spread quickly. There were more than 280

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From the CPA Coordinator**Trip Planning Meeting and journeys with my father**

You must love this time of year as the days get longer and spring is getting closer by the minute. This is the time of year where CPA starts planning events for the upcoming season beginning with the Trip Planning Meeting. It is scheduled for March 31, 2021 at 7:00 PM EST and it will be via ZOOM. Click [here](#) to register



Bill Smith

The planning meeting is where the current or new trip leaders start populating the calendar. This is by no means the only chance to list a trip, but it is a great start. Let this be the year that you lead a trip and show us your favorite place to paddle. Your place may be routine to you but most of us have yet to see it so please share.

This past year CPA saw a lot of new faces with some old timers joining us again or some new paddlers, either case, welcome. Some of the paddlers I met have a long history of paddling and some are new to the sport. I am one that started at a very young age since I was about ten years old.

How I got my paddle on

My father had just changed jobs when my grandfather offered him a partnership in his long-established roofing business. This meant he had more time to spend with his growing family since he was well on his way to becoming the father of nine children including seven boys.

About this time the world's first Kmart was opened about a mile from our home. This meant nothing to my father who would not be caught dead in such a place until my mom mentioned they even sold canoes.

My father made a bee line for this new store and came out with a canoe, paddles and a few horse collar PFD's. I remember him justifying this purchase to my mom with "I always wanted to canoe and now that I am thirty, I do not have too many years left where I can still do this." I doubt if my mom bought it, but at ten, I sure did. I even

felt sorry for him.

When the weekend rolled around, we were off to the river. Being the oldest I was drafted first along with my brother Joe who is a year younger than me. It did not matter that it was still April in Michigan, which can rival January in Maryland. I remember our paddling clothes were sweatpants, sweatshirts and last year's worn-out sneakers. Canoes did not come with an owner's manual back then, so you were on your own.

The river we paddled on was the Huron River which is a beautiful river. We would start from Hudson Mills and take out at Delhi rapids. This was our favorite section, so we paddled it frequently. At ten years old the rapids at Hudson Mills and Delhi seemed like class five rapids, but in reality they were class 1-2 at the most. The riverbanks were almost entirely wooded park land with a section through the quaint town of Dexter, Michigan so the scenery was excellent.

Along this trip was a paddle-in campsite which was rare in the early 60's. My father would tell us that we would paddle in and camp once the weather got warmer. When summer rolled around, I asked my father if we could canoe camp this coming weekend which he replied we would go when he got home from work the next day.

I was so excited that I spent the day gathering our gear. I do not think we even owned a tent or sleeping bags, but I managed to put together a suitable replacement and it was warm enough to sleep under the stars.

When my father finally got home from work, he told me maybe another time, but my mom let him have it so off to the river we went since you cannot break a promise to a ten-year-old. After paddling to our campsite and settling in for the evening my father was soon snoring.

As the faint moonlight came up, I looked towards the river and could make out the silhouette of a person standing there. I was petrified, and my father was sound asleep. My ten-year-old brain started imagining the worst. I recalled that the Huron River dumps into Lake

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[Coordinator, from page two](#)

Erie and that people had recent sightings of the Lake Erie monster, the Michigan version of big foot. But the Lake Erie monster was mean, not like the gentle giant out west, and never mind that Lake Erie was about 70 river miles away. I must have finally drifted off to sleep because when I woke in the morning, I realized the person standing there was the sign for the campsite.

The Later Years

Over the years I continued canoeing with my father and when I was not available, as my younger brothers came of age they also paddled with him. My sisters always had an excuse why they could not go.

I used to think I was the only one that continued paddling as an adult but that is not true since all my brothers own one or more kayaks, one brother even

made a cedar strip and canvas canoe.

My father continued to paddle until he was 56 years old when he had a disabling construction accident that left him a quadriplegic. I remember visiting him a few years after his accident and he was studying a map of the Sand River which dumps into the north shore of Lake Superior in Lake Superior Provincial Park. He told me this trip was the top of his bucket list. He gave me the map because he told me I am the only one that would think about doing such a trip.

I paddled the Sand River with a friend shortly after his death and thought of him often while on the trip especially during some of the 29 portages. I felt like he was with me in spirit on that trip, I will always remember that trip as my favorite.

Maryland Bill targets helium balloon releases

The explosion of discarded helium-filled balloons has become a major threat to birds, marine and other wildlife. The Maryland State Legislature is considering a bill, HB391, to impose a statewide ban on the deliberate release of helium-filled balloons. Release of a single balloon would incur a fine of up to \$250.

As reported by Tim Wheeler in the *Bay Journal*, Delegate Wayne Hartman, the bill's sponsor, testified that helium balloons can drift aloft for miles. If they land in water they can float for weeks and travel hundreds of miles.

Hartman pointed out that marine life often mistakes the balloon material for food or becomes entangled in the ribbons which results in numerous fatalities.

A report by the group *Oceana* found that balloons are the most common wildlife encounters with plastic. Sea turtles accounted for more than half of the incidents and nearly 90% involved endangered or threatened species.

Top right: Balloons adrift on the Bay are a common encounter while kayaking. (photo: Bill Upton)

Bottom right: A horseshoe crab tangled in a balloon ribbon on a Delaware beach that was rescued by a passerby. (photo: balloonsblow.org)



[Workshops, from page one](#)

participants in the *Cold Water Workshop* and more than 330 in the *Common Paddling Hazards* a few weeks later.

National Center for Cold Water Safety Director and CPA member Moulton Avery led both workshops but there was ample discussion by CPA officers and participants. It was all geared to making paddle sports safer and more enjoyable.

Many of us started kayaking with the “ignorance is bliss” approach: a cheap kayak, one paddle, a cotton sweatshirt, a PFD stashed on the deck and away we went. We made mistakes, sometimes got into trouble but hopefully learned our lessons and put those days behind us.

But for some, ignorance becomes deadly. Sudden changes in weather, wave conditions or a capsize into cold water can be life threatening. “Kayaking is a deceptively easy sport to get into, but things can go wrong very quickly,” explained Avery. “That’s why it’s easier and safer to use these workshops to learn from other people’s mistakes rather than by making them yourself.”

Overall, Avery classifies paddling hazards into three main categories: cold water, adverse weather and



With the proper gear and education, extending your paddling season to winter can be a fun experience, like these paddlers enjoying a frosty outing. (photo: National Center for Cold Water Safety)

hazardous water. Using extensive research into the effects of cold water on the human body and analysis of kayaking trips that went wrong, Avery outlined what he calls common contributing factors that lead to accidents.

“In just about every incident, survivors say ‘I never thought’ followed by ‘the kayak would capsize’ or ‘the wind would rise’ or ‘it would be so hard to put on a PFD while in the water,’” said Avery. Things like not having a radio to call for help, not wearing a PFD, not checking the weather, or not dressing for the water temperature are all factors that contribute to accidents.

“The good news is that in almost every case we can do something about those factors and affect the outcome so that we stay safe and alive,” said Avery. “With the proper gear and training, we have the ability overcome or avoid many of the hazards out there.”

Since cold water incidents lead to the most fatalities, the first workshop was an in-depth review of how cold water affects your body, common misconceptions about paddling in cold water and how to prepare to stay safe.

“Cold water causes the most fatalities because it doesn’t always look dangerous,” said Avery. “Especially in early spring when the air gets warm but the water is still cold.” Underestimating the danger and common misconceptions about when you need to dress for cold

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An Eventbrite data map from the Cold Water Workshop shows participants from across the globe attended via ZOOM.

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CPA Secretary Sue Stevens, left, and CPA Treasurer Rich Stevens share some of the essential equipment such as a VHF radio, PFD light, compass with a signal mirror, whistle, knife and other gear they carry on their PFDs.

water are major factors in accidents. “You have to treat any water temperature under 70 degrees as dangerous and dress for it,” said Avery.

Cold water safety comes down to what Avery calls the [Five Golden Rules](#):

- 1) Always wear your PFD
- 2) Always dress for the water temperature
- 3) Field-test your gear
- 4) Swim-test your gear every time you go out
- 5) Imagine the worst that could happen and plan for it

In the *Common Paddling Hazards* workshop, Avery took a broader look at paddling hazards and how to avoid them. Common to all the hazards is underestimating or not being aware of possible conditions. “Many paddlers run into trouble when they think they are safe because they plan to stay close to the shoreline but they don’t have the experience or gear to handle changing conditions.”

Many accidents happen when paddlers capsize in cold water and succumb to swimming failure or cold shock, even when they are close to shore. But there are other conditions that get paddlers into trouble. That’s where the skills to be aware of and anticipate adverse weather and hazardous water come in.

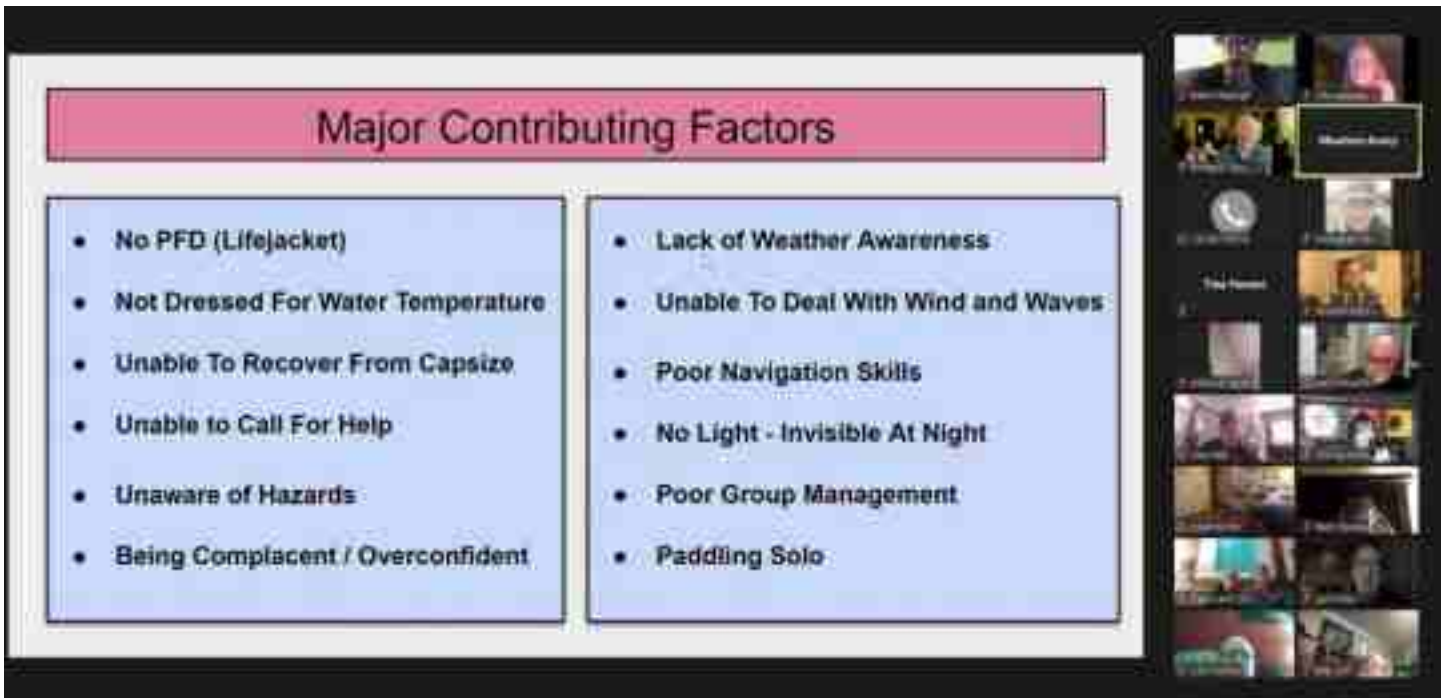
Avery reviewed several incidents where paddlers were able to handle the conditions they launched in but got into trouble when conditions changed. Sudden storms can create strong winds in a matter of minutes, turning calm waters into a sea of large waves.

Wind blowing from the shore can create a “wind shadow” where the wind is calm close to shore but can quickly increase beyond a paddler’s ability not far from shore.

Other hazards include getting into rough surf when rounding a land mass that is blocking waves or strong currents and shorelines with bulkheads that reflect

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[Workshops](#), from page five



The above “contributing factors” are common to most kayaking incidents. The good news is that taking some simple steps like always wearing a PFD, carrying a VHF radio or learning to analyze conditions and your abilities before setting out can greatly reduce the risk of a serious accident.

waves or rocks that make it impossible to land if you get into trouble.

In most cases, following a few simple rules can avoid disaster. Wearing a PFD at all times and dressing for the water temperature can increase your chance of survival if you capsize or are separated from your boat because of wind or weather.

Having a way to call for help, such as a VHF radio, can cut down the time to get rescued. Being aware of weather conditions, tides and currents and the ability anticipate the worst possible conditions help you plan a safer trip.

“Overall, you don’t know what you don’t know when you are starting out in kayaking,” said Avery. “Taking these steps before you get into trouble can save your life and those you paddle with.”

For more information about paddling in cold water visit the [National Center for Cold Water Safety](#). The *Cold Water Workshop* will be offered again on March 18, 2021. Register for the event [here](#) or on the [CPA website](#). The workshop is open to non-CPA members and everyone is encouraged to share the registration information with other kayak groups or individuals who may be interested.

Share your paddling adventures!

Do you enjoy reading about the paddling adventures, local and distant, of other members? Do you like getting new ideas for paddling trips?

Are you advocating for paddling access or amenities in your area?

Have you pondered questions relating to kayak gear? Variety is the spice of life, and of newsletters.

Please write an article reflecting your thoughts, experiences, and discoveries to share with our paddling community.

We all become a bit wiser and excited to be on the water again. We need your input to make *The Chesapeake Paddler* the best it can be.

Submit stories or ideas to news_editor@cpakayaker.com. We look forward to sharing your story.

CPA in good financial shape for 2021



CPA membership has held fairly steady. The 2020 number reflects a one-year extension of all members in 2019 so there were no membership drops in 2020 that happen in normal years.

CPA Treasurer Rich Stevens has completed the final financial report for 2020. CPA is on a calendar fiscal year so the financial report given at the Annual Meeting each November is preliminary.

Because most CPA in-person events were cancelled in 2020, members were given a free one-year extension but CPA finances remain in good shape.

From the Treasurer's report:

"In 2020 everything was pretty much upended by the corona virus. We were able to sponsor a very successful Cold Water Workshop and SK101 through the hard work of some of our volunteer members as well as holding a trip planning meeting. Almost all of our other trips and events ended up being cancelled after mid-March.

"SK102, Gear Day/Fall Out of Your Boat Day, a Navigation Workshop, the KIPP Series, a Spray Skirt Workshop, and the holiday party were cancelled as well as a new Maryland Fun Day kayaking event.

"Most of the Piracies went dark with all but a few continuing with only a limited number of brave people. Most members paddled in peer groups, with family, or just a few close friends. There were only a small number of trips that took place.

"The Annual Meeting was held on Zoom. However, we covered the ongoing expenses of our newsletter and other printing, as well as banking and office expenses. Our insurance liability policy is paid and up to date.

"We are current in filing the necessary state and federal tax returns. The following is a condensed listing of all of the major account transactions for the period from the last Annual Meeting plus some financial charts."

Click [here](#) for the full report.

Two QCC 500's and gear for sale

For sale: Two QCC 500's in very good condition, Kevlar with some carbon. Two carbon fiber Werner paddles 230cm, also in near perfect condition. All manner of skirts, PFD's, covers, pumps, floats, dry bags, clothing and whistles.



Call or text Tom at 443-813-1602, Baltimore City.

Comments needed for two water access points

By Lisa Arrasmith
Public Water Access Committee

Heads Up! There are two opportunities to comment on upcoming public water access points: Hawkins Cove in Annapolis, MD and Sparrows Point Park on Bear Creek in Baltimore County, MD.

**Hawkins Cove, City of Annapolis
Anne Arundel County MD**

Hawkins Cove is a dilapidated park off Spa Creek in Annapolis, MD. It is around the corner from Truxton Park. The City of Annapolis is planning a restoration and renovation of the park and is seeking input at the first state of the process. <https://www.annapolis.gov/1765/Hawkins-Cove-Restoration>

This is a two-part comment process.

Part 1: Hawkins Cove is heavily silted in and needs to be dredged to be navigable even for kayaks, let alone big boats. Dredging is expensive. Luckily, the state Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF – more on WIF on page 9) can fund dredging.

Please email these three elected officials and tell them to use Waterway Improvement Fund money to dredge Hawkins Cove and improve navigability and public water access. The County Executive's FY22 budget is now before the County Council and WIF allocation will be done in the budget.

County Executive Steuart Pittman
countyexecutive@aacounty.org

Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley
mayorbuckley@annapolis.gov

District 6 County Councilwoman Lisa Rodvien
lisa.rodvien@aacounty.org

Part 2: Annapolis has a form for input on desired Hawkins Cove features and amenities. Please fill out the form at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfLIWYD0fSfWellyIT2ltgONHG3F_fw9P1YCDezpUYDOJW5jQ/viewform

There's a box at the end for ideas that aren't on the checklists.



An aerial view of the Sparrows Point Park site (photo: Baltimore City Government)

Input suggestions: 1) Use state Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) money to dredge Hawkins Cove and improve navigation 2) Install a kayak launch beach separate from the fishing pier. The new Downs Park onto the Bodkin launch is an excellent model for a kayak launch at a low water site 3) Enlarge and upgrade the fishing pier 4) Install some benches and picnic tables so people can enjoy the park 5) Install a porta-potty so everyone can enjoy the park for more than an hour.

Sparrows Point Park in Baltimore County MD

Sparrows Point Park will be a new Baltimore County park on the site of the former Sparrow Point steel mill. The initial design does not make the most of the park's waterfront location on Bear Creek. Email suggestions for improvement to

sparrowpointpark@baltimorecountymd.gov or take the SurveyMonkey survey by clicking the yellow TAKE THE SURVEY box on the Baltimore County site linked below: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/recreation/countyparks/sparrows-point-park-project>

Suggested input: 1) A public boat ramp, paid for with state Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) money. 2) Separate the fishing pier and kayak launch. Fishing lines and kayakers don't mix 3) Put in a kayak launch beach instead of a floating dock. Homeport Farm Park is a great example of a kayak launch beach. 4) Create a unloading zone with a turnaround near the fishing pier and kayak launch 5) Put in ADA parking spots near the boat ramp, fishing pier and kayak launch

AA County funding**The haves get more, the have-nots pay for that more****By Lisa Arrasmith****Public Water Access Committee**

The Waterway Improvement Fund and stormwater fees should be reliable sources of funding for public water access projects. Unfortunately, in Anne Arundel County sometimes these public funds get directed to fixing private community beaches instead of providing public water access in our public parks.

Waterway Improvement Fund

Money in the state Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) comes from the 5% excise tax on big boats. The WIF is meant to benefit the big boats that fund it through new public boat ramps, existing boat ramp renovation, other big boat access facilities and improved navigation. The WIF is sloshing with money after the boating boom of 2020.

This press release lists the 2020 WIF awards: <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2020/07/02/maryland-waterway-improvement-fund-awards-13-5-million-2/>



Public park projects like erosion control at Weinberg Park should be higher priorities than projects that benefit private communities.

As you see, Anne Arundel County directed \$250,000 in public WIF money to a “(b)each nourishment project” at Cape St. Claire, a water-privileged community with two private community beaches, a private community fishing pier and a private community boat ramp. If I had bought a big boat last year I’d be livid.

The 2021 Anne Arundel County WIF allocation must be spent on dredging Hawkins Cove and other projects that primarily benefit big boating. These big boat projects also benefit kayakers. When the county builds a new public boat ramp there’s also a new kayak launch over on the side. When the county opens a waterway for big boat navigation, kayakers get to use it too.

Stormwater Fees

Stormwater fee or rain tax, call it what you want, it’s the line on your property tax bill that goes to fund water clean up around the state. In Anne Arundel County the



Other public park projects that deserve more funding include renovating the dock and dredging at Hawkins Cove Park. (photo: Anne Arundel County)

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[Funding, from page nine](#)

stormwater fees go into the Watershed Protection & Restoration Fund.

The WPRF usually funds stream retrofits, taking houses off septic, stormwater pond updates, outfall modernization, all great stormwater projects.

Unfortunately, the county has also been giving grants to fix private community beaches. Cape St. Claire received a \$298,868 grant from the county to fix its private community beach. (Which beach? Cape St. Claire has two).

Meanwhile, there are mature hardwoods falling onto the beach in Weinberg Park on Rock Creek and any erosion control project is years away.

Loch Haven is a subdivision next to South River Farm Park with a private community beach, private community marina and private community boat ramp. Loch Haven received a \$129,000 grant from the county to fix its private community beach. Meanwhile, the county hasn't put a dime into South River Farm Park for public water access in the 36 years since it bought the park in 1985.

Using public money to replace private money on projects primarily benefiting private property is terrible public policy and terrible environmentalism.

These public funds must be used for projects that directly benefit the public, such as Weinberg Park, the Almhouse Creek side of Historic Londontowne and Robert Eades Park on College Creek in Annapolis.

What you can do

If you live in Anne Arundel County, email your elected officials, tell them there's a problem and offer them a solution. Now is the time to speak up. It's budget season in both the county and the state legislature.

Constituent voices matter. Both the WIF and stormwater fees are being allocated during the budget process for FY22 (started July 1, 2021).

You only have to look up your elected officials once! Email County Executive Pittman, your county councilmember, state senator and state delegate(s).



Funding for public ramps should be a big priority as it increases water access to the general public and can be used by car-top boaters. (photo: Maryland DNR)

Here are the links:

County Executive Steuart Pittman
countyexecutive@aacounty.org

Your county council member:
<https://www.aacounty.org/departments/county-council/councilmembers/who-is-my-councilmember/index.html>

Your senator and delegate(s) in the Maryland Legislature:
<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/Members/District>

Tell them there is a problem with spending WIF money and stormwater fees to fix private community beaches! Tell them to spend public money on public parks instead! Suggested parks:

- 1) Use the Waterway Improvement Fund to dredge Hawkins Cove and build new public boat ramps.
- 2) Use stormwater fee money to fix the extreme erosion in Weinberg Park, fix the extreme erosion on the Almhouse Creek side of Historic Londontowne and renovate the outfall at Robert Eades Park.

If you don't live in Anne Arundel County? If you're in Maryland, keep an eye on what your county does with WIF and stormwater money. Bad ideas are catching.

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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ATTENTION CPA MEMBERS!

EFFECTIVE January 2021, all *Paddler* newsletters will be sent via email with a link to the current monthly issue and no printed copies will be mailed to members.

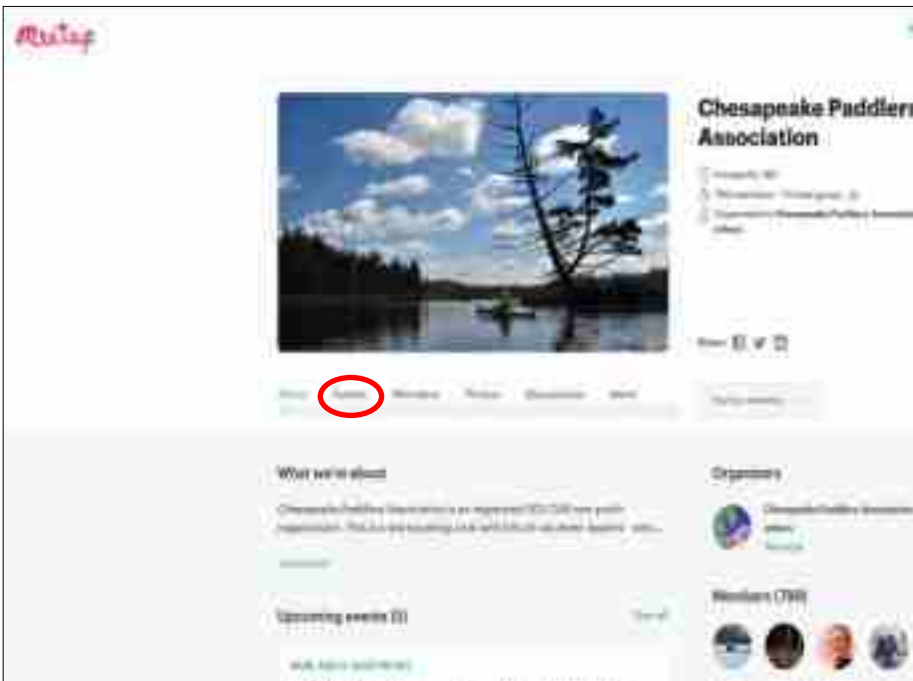
Please be sure to keep your email address current to keep receiving the *Paddler* newsletter and for reminders of when your membership is up for renewal by contacting the CPA Secretary at membership@cpakayaker.com.

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.

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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Upcoming CPA events**Trip Planning Meeting, Kayak Camping Intro, no SK102**

Because of the pandemic, CPA is limiting in-person events, including cancellation of the popular SK102 for 2021. CPA is, however, scheduling events that can be done via ZOOM which are announced on the [CPA Meetup page](#) and the [CPA website](#) (doesn't require a sign-in). Upcoming events include *Intro to Kayak Camping* on March 16 (register [here](#)), a repeat of the *Cold Water Workshop* on March 18 (register [here](#)) and the Trip Planning Meeting on March 31, 2021 (register [here](#)).

All persons participating in any in-person CPA activity should read and agree to the [CPA COVID-19 event guidelines](#) before attending.

Paddle sports community mourns two losses

The paddling community is mourning the loss of two members who have passed away, the legendary Aleksander Doba and New York's Steve Blumling. Doba was 74 years old and known for not one, but three Atlantic crossings in a modified kayak. Remarkably, Doba made all three crossings in the last ten years.

[Reports](#) say that after reaching the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro he yelled "Wild Africa" and minutes later he sat down and passed away. Doba once paddled with the Pirates of Georgetown.

Steve Blumling was killed in a tragic fire along with his six-year-old son. Blumling was one of the co-founders of the Gerry Blackstone Manhattan Kayak Circumnavigation and was instrumental in keeping it running. Several CPA members have participated in the event.

Top right: Kayaking legend Aleksander Doba (photo: [Polish News](#)).

Bottom right: Steve Blumling (photo: [Greg Porteus](#)).

