

Paddler Profile: Aht Viravaidya

by Bob Browning

Lives in: Baltimore, MD

Real job: Curriculum developer for a Thai school

Do you regularly attend a Piracy? I go to Pirates of Baltimore from time to time. When I started paddling I went to then Pier 7 and Pirates of Georgetown a lot. It was a lot of fun. I hope to return and visit other pirates too.

Number of years paddling: 5 years

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I always wanted to paddle, because I wasn't allowed to do so when I was young. Bangkok, my hometown was surrounded by water and filled with small craft everywhere. I ran across the Watersedge meetup. I joined them and learned about CPA and I joined CPA too. I was introduced to all kinds of paddles, leisure on calm water, lively water on South river, Chesapeake bay, Andirondacks, many creeks throughout Maryland, Delaware and Virginia.

What boats do you paddle? NDK Romany LV/ 16'/ purple, Impex Force Cat 3/ 17'/ blue, North Shore Atlantic LV/ 15'11"/ red

Rudder or skeg? All have skegs

Type paddle used: Celtic 650 (Euro)

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? I have a BCU 2* certificate in both canoe and kayak. If I had unlimited time and resources, I would like to canoe, SUP as well as kayak.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities Just walk my dog daily.

How often on average do you paddle between May and October? I try to go at least once per week. There are many weeks I don't paddle and there are weeks I get to paddle three times.

Do any winter paddling? Kipburrrz and meetups.

Favorite local paddling location: Circumnavigation of Wye Island, Eastern Neck, KIP, to Thomas Lighthouse, Rocky Gorge, etc.

Favorite CPA trip you've ever been on and why: My first trip was with Ralph, paddling to St. Clements; it was a challenge because I hadn't paddled any "lively" water before, nor done any crossing, but it was okay because everyone was cool and Ralph made crepes for us on the island. His camping trips are also very relaxed and fun. I get to see things I haven't seen. Suzanne's and Saki's trips are also very memorable. I get to see spectacular nature as well as learning local history. I think practically all CPA trips are wonderful. I wish there were two or three trips to choose from per week.

Coolest paddling trip you've ever been on anywhere and why? Paddle to Fishers Island with Nigel Dennis and Eila Wilkinson. It was windy and rough, but they took time to talk to me, told me what to do in handling the situation, asked how I was doing, etc. Eila took me into the tide race for the first time. It was tense, fun and exciting, all at the same time. On the way back, I was with Nigel, the rest of the group was with Eila. They didn't catch up with us. I got to work on rolling in rough water one on one with Nigel while we waited for the rest of the group. It was a mighty good day!

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why? It was the CPA trip to Tangier, or actually the trip from Tangier, because it was stormy we took the ferry there. The waves that day were the biggest I have seen and I wasn't sure what I committed myself to do. After the comfortable night and fine dining we had to depart Tangier. We dodged the storms for two days. I could hardly make



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photo by Archee Jan Bloch

any distance and had to be towed for the first time! Moreover after we landed I got stuck in the mud, really stuck so that Jim Z had to help me out. It was an adventurous safe trip that I will never forget. Thanks Brian, Jim, Cat, Gina and Peter.

Future bucket list trips: Baja, Anglesey, Nova Scotia, Tybee, Florida, etc.

Three things you like most about paddling? Friendship, nature, and being happy with myself.

What do you like about CPA? Its core members and its core programs like KIP, SK102, SK101, SK203, etc. I have become a better paddler from paddling with them. They have introduced me to awesome places to paddle, education on paddling, leadership, navigation, etc. I am impressed how they get things done and work together to promote paddling. I am still learning from them every day.

One unusual, non-paddling thing other people find interesting about you ? I love classical music and I go to concerts everywhere from New York to Washington. 🎵



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We would like to know about you! Contact Bob Browning if you are interested in a being featured in the Paddler Profile or if you know of someone else he can contact. Contact Bob at: BBBrowning43@verizon.net