

CPA Paddler Profile ~ Joseph Messier

by Rick Wiebush

Lives in: Quinton, Virginia

Real job: Retired for now

Do you paddle with a CPA Piracy? Pirates of the James

Paddling buddies: Mary Larson

Number years paddling: 12

Boat usually paddled: NDK EXPLORER, 17 feet, red and white

Type paddle used: Euro and sometimes Greenland

How I got into sea kayaking: My first time in a kayak was about 1999 in New Jersey when I rented a recreation 11-foot kayak to take a trip down the Batsto River which I enjoyed very much and I have not stopped kayaking since. I moved up to my first sea kayak in 2001 after my wife and daughter gave me a small recreational kayak for Christmas. I brought it back to Dick's Sporting Goods to buy the longest kayak they had which was a 15-16 foot Wilderness Sealution II. I now own a small fleet of recreational and sea kayaks that I share with family and friends.

How did you learn to sea kayak? I joined the Jersey Shore Sea Kayak Association in 2002 and learned more about sea kayaking through peer paddles and taking training classes from various sea kayak instructors. I still have a lot to learn and places to experience which makes sea kayaking an interesting and fun sport.

Any formal training or ACA/BCU certifications: I have taken advantage of several training opportunities including the training by instructors of the University of Kayaking including Derek Hutchinson in New Jersey, and in 2008 the Intermediate Rough Water Symposium in Rhode Island, and 2011 at Kiptopeake Symposium.

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? No

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? Biking

How often do you paddle in summer? Six times per month

Do any winter paddling? Yes

Go to pool sessions? Yes

Favorite local paddling location within 1-2 hours of your house: James River

Favorite non-local location: Chesapeake Bay

Best paddling trip/experience ever and why? Milos, Greece was a great place to paddle and have fun. The caves, beaches, and restaurants were excellent. The week-long paddle down the Saguenay Fjord in Quebec was another great trip with the whales surfacing around us. A paddling trip from Crisfield, Maryland to Tangier Island and returned the next day via Smith Island.

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why? Paddling from Smith Island to Crisfield, Maryland a warning came up on the radio that a thunderstorm was approaching with over 58 MPH winds. I didn't recognize the counties it was reported in but the skies were getting dark. We all paddled as fast as we could to shore and made it OK. I know how dangerous the Chesapeake Bay can be when the weather turns bad, so it was a great relief to make it to land without any problems.

Bucket list trips: Baja, and near Ireland/England. My other bucket list trip was Florida, but I did that in January, 2013.

Three things you like most about paddling? Exercise, nature, and companionship

What do you like about CPA? Bringing like-minded people together

One thing other people find interesting about you: I retired from the Navy after 22 years in 1983. I retired again from Computer Sciences Corporation in 2008 after working over 25 years on software development for the Aegis Combat Weapon System.

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Three things you like most about paddling? Intimacy with the water and surrounding natural environments, dynamic and constantly evolving sport, enjoyable as a solo or group activity

What do you like about CPA? Camaraderie with other paddlers, opens my eyes to travel opportunities and training

One thing other people find interesting about you: I renovated a small, dilapidated cottage on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Lots of blood, sweat and tears (at times). It was a kayak outing in Rock Hall that first introduced me to the area and has led me to wonderful like-minded friends.



Joseph Messier in the 10,000 Islands, Everglades National Park, January, 2013 Photograph by Rick Wiebush