

CPA Paddler Profile ~ Marla Aron

Interview by Rick Wiebush



Marla Aron

Name: Marla Aron

Lives in: Ellicott City, Maryland

Real job: Researcher, policy analyst, project planner, and technical writer for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Do You Paddle with a CPA a Piracy? Pirates of Baltimore and Pirates of Pier 7

Paddling Buddies: The Pirates of Baltimore and Pier 7, and participants on CPA camping and kayaking trips

Number years paddling: 8

Boat usually paddled: Current Designs Suka, about 17 feet, yellow deck on white hull

Type paddle used: Euro and Greenland. I switch back and forth.

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I bought books describing kayak trips in the area and started paddling my way through the chapters. Then I took an L.L. Bean class with Dave Biss who taught me kayak safety and introduced me to the Chesapeake Paddlers Association. On my first CPA outing, I was unable to keep up with the gang, so I worked with Cyndi Janetzko to im-

prove my stroke. I got truly hooked after participating in one of Ralph Heimlich's camping-kayaking trips.

How did you learn to sea kayak? I am still learning. Dave Isbell taught me how to use a Greenland paddle; Rick Wiebush, Jay Gitomer, and Dave Wilson offered training on strokes and advance rescues.

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? Nope. Sea kayaking is my passion.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? Yes. Bike riding on rails-to-trails paths, hiking, and snowshoeing.

How often do you paddle in summer? Every Tuesday and Wednesday evening, and one or two days every weekend

Do any winter paddling? Yes

Go to pool sessions? Yes, Fairlands pool

Favorite local paddling: My favorites for paddling solo include Mattawoman Creek, Sassafras River, and Susquehanna River below Holtwood Dam.

Favorite non-local location: My favorites include Smith Island in the Chesapeake, the rivers and springs in Florida, east coast of Maine, and the Adirondacks.

Best paddling trip/experience ever and why: There have been breathtaking and hilarious moments on many trips. Breathtaking moments include: On Mattawoman Creek, hundreds of swans, geese, and ducks surrounded us as they took to the air. On the Myakka River, large alligators were everywhere. Hilarious moments include the misadventures of our group paddling the Juniper River (getting stuck in trees, losing paddles, falling out of boats).

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why: My first time kayaking was the scariest. A friend and I were in one tandem kayak and our teen daughters were in another tandem. Halfway across Tarpon Bay, Florida a storm blew in. The girls were screaming, the wind was howling, and waves were crashing. At an oyster bed we switched paddling partners so the girls were with an adult, then we paddled hard to get to shore.

Bucket list trips: Canals of Venice, Sydney Harbour, Belize, Galapagos Islands, Milford Sound, and Yellowstone Lake

Three things you like most about paddling? Remember the William Wordsworth poem that starts with, "My heart leaps up. . . ." Well, my heart leaps up when I am kayaking. I attribute this feeling to the endorphins from exercise, spirit of adventure exploring new places, and visual stimulation.

What do you like about CPA? I like the camaraderie of people who love kayaking as much as I do and who generously share their time and knowledge.

One thing other people find interesting about you: I don't know. Maybe it's that I'm a mosquito and chigger magnet.