

Paddler Profile: Shelley Wiechelt

By Bob Browning

Lives in: Catonsville, MD

Real job: UMBC, Associate Professor of Social Work

Do you regularly attend a Piracy? No, but I enjoy paddling with the Pirates of Sugarloaf when I can.

Number of years paddling: 4.5 years of regular paddling. Paddled expedition trips for a few years before.

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I discovered

Ocean Woman Kayaking, which was a women only kayaking tour group, in the '90s. I paddled with them once every year or so on expeditions. After living in MD for a while, I discovered the many kayaking groups and clubs and began paddling regularly.

What boats do you paddle? Necky Chatham 17 (Steeler Gold, fiber glass, all around boat); Romany S (14 foot, Steeler Gold, polypro, rough water boat).

Rudder or skeg? Skeg

Type paddle used: I use an Epic euro paddle but recently started to learn to use my Gear Lab Greenland stick.

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? I have canoed, whitewater kayaked, and whitewater rafted some in the past.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? No, not regularly

How often on average do you paddle between May and October? I usually paddle 3-5 times per week during kayak season. However, this season I had a shoulder injury and so paddled much less frequently.

Do any winter paddling? I do winter paddle a bit.

Favorite local paddling location? Beverly Triton to Thomas Point Lighthouse

Favorite CPA trip you've ever been on and why? Magothy River with Bill Smith. Bill and I had a lot of fun helping new paddlers manage the Magothy; they had a great time and really grew that day.

Coollest paddling trip you've ever been on anywhere and why? Glacier Bay, Alaska – Although I have kayaked in many wonderful



places with wonderful people, nothing surpasses the spectacular scenery and interaction with wildlife that I experienced in Glacier Bay. We were visited by a regal brown bear in our camp and were blessed to paddle with a surfacing humpback whale near a glacier. We also encountered otters, seals, eagles, as well as other bears and whales.

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why?

We were paddling from Watts Island back to Beach Island, between Tangier

Island and the Virginia portion of the Eastern Shore http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1992-04-19/news/1992110088_1_watts-klinefelter-island, when the wind and waves picked up. We experienced large breaking waves in the channel and ended up somewhat off course. A day marker in the distance gave us a target to aim for and an indicator of exactly where we were on the water. We arrived at our destination rather spent but all safe and affirmed in our rough water skills.

Future bucket list trip(s)? Baja, Italy, Greece

Three things you like most about paddling? Stillness of calm silent paddling, exhilaration in rough water paddling, connection with fellow paddlers.

What do you like about CPA? The organization's commitment to promoting safe paddling in the region and having a great time on the water.

One unusual, non-paddling thing other people find interesting about you? I conduct research on trauma and addiction and have several published book chapters and journal articles. ♦

Do you know a paddler who would make an interesting profile?
Contact Bob Browning at:
BBBrowning43@verizon.net