

CPA Paddler Profiles ~ Tom Blount

Interview by Rick Wiebush

Name: Tom Blount

Lives in: Olney, Maryland and Charleston, South Carolina (my business is based there).

Real job: Own a trucking company in South Carolina. Also, I'm a retired Navy engineer.

Member of a Piracy? Pirates of Sugar Loaf

Paddling Buddies: Rich, Sue, Suzanne, Ralph, but who I paddle with doesn't matter a lot. I pick trips based on whether it is somewhere new or interesting for me.

Number years paddling: Five

How did you get involved in kayaking? I started off kayak fishing, then joined the Washington, DC meetup group.

How did you learn to sea kayak? I learned a lot by just paddling and people sharing their experiences and tips, but I also did SK 102 and took formal classes at Sea Kayak Carolina.

Any formal training or ACA/BCU certifications: At Sea Kayak Carolina

Boat usually paddled: I paddle a Kevlar Gala Sport, which is from the Czech Republic.

Type paddle used: Both. I favor my Greenland paddle, but will use my Euro if I'm paddling in the ocean.

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

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? Hiking and camping (multi-day trips); fishing

How often do you paddle in summer? Three days a week, both weekend days and once during the week with Pirates of Sugarloaf.

Do any winter paddling? Very little, but I have paddled in Charleston in the winter.

Go to pool sessions? Yes, Fairland

Favorite local paddling location: All around Annapolis

Favorite non-local location: Sparkleberry swamp, near Charleston. I like it so much that I'm now organizing a week-long trip for people from this area and timing it in conjunction with the East Coast festival in Charleston in April.

Best paddling trip/experience ever and why? Last 4th of July, Suzanne Farace organized a trip to the Pocomoke River. I loved the Bald Cypress swamp. There were about 25 people on the trip. I got thrown out of camp for snoring.

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why? One New Year's Day several years ago, I was paddling in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. I was hung over and dressed totally inappropriately (no dry or wet suit). I hit a branch, went over and could not self-rescue, so I had to swim to shore. I got hypothermic quickly and the rest of the group had to take care of me. It took me two weeks to warm up. I've never paddled dressed like that again.

Bucket list trips: Adirondacks, Boundary Waters, South Florida for the mangroves

Three things you like most about paddling? 1) The connection with the water; 2) being with friends and socializing with like-minded people; and 3) learning new skills.

What do you like about CPA? The camaraderie, their sense of adventure and fun, and the unique social environment (being in nature; interest in skill development).

One thing other people find interesting about you: That even though I'm an engineer by training, I'm versatile, flexible and willing to try new things.



Tom Blount kayaking at Fountainhead
photo by Madeline Towle