

Chesapeake Paddler



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Full Moon Over Glass: A Night Paddle To Remember

By Rob Castle



The Chesapeake Paddlers Association's Pirate groups generally hang up their booties when Daylight Savings Time ends. While there are still quite a few members who will paddle right on through the remainder of the fall season and into winter, the regular meetings and paddles come to an end. The Pirates of Pier 7 typically practice the "paddle to eat" ritual every Wednesday.

One week before the dreaded end of Pirates season, a few of us sat around the picnic tables

thinking of some ways to extend our paddling activities. We decided that we would reverse the mantra of paddle then eat, and that the first end-of-season outing would be a night paddle. The announcements were posted on the CPA Forum and on the email list.

I was initially uneasy knowing that eating before paddling could be considered heresy by many. But then I reasoned that we were Pirates, and Pirates don't need no stinkin' mantra! With that small hurdle cleared, I planned to show

up at the appointed hour, eat first and paddle as the day slowly turned to night.

On the day of the night paddle, I had to work a little later than usual. That was okay because the object was to arrive close to sundown. It was a liberating feeling not having to worry about making it back to the launch before all the food was devoured. I pulled up to the launch area at Pier 7 and was greeted by...one person. I recognized two other vehicles and saw that their owners had already launched and were nowhere in sight. We debated briefly whether we would go paddling or not, but by 6:15 pm we were on the water and stroking toward the mouth of the South River.

As we launched, the full moon—huge and orange—was clearing the eastern horizon through a thin veil of low clouds. There was only a hint of wind stirring and the river was almost still as a pond. We spotted only a scattering of boats that appeared to be trolling the deeper water of the river, oblivious to our passing. We discussed our paddle plan briefly and decided that we would just paddle ahead until we felt like turning back. We

Coordinator's Column

Happy New Year!

2005 will be another great year for the CPA. We'll start the new year with two Trip/Event Planning Meetings—one at my home in Baltimore, Maryland on January 22nd and one at Dave Biss and Cyndi Janetzko's home in Falls Church, Virginia on February 19th (see page 4 for details). We'll hold a Steering Committee meeting before the Maryland Trip/Event Meeting.

Everyone is encouraged to come to the meetings to meet other paddlers and to help chart the CPA's course. We'll discuss trips and events we'd like to hold in 2005, then get them listed on the CPA calendar. Please start thinking about trips and events you'd like to organize, lead or volunteer to help with. I hope to see you at the meetings.

2005 will see the return of many CPA favorites, like SK102 at Lake Anna (May 13-15), the weekly Piracies and the Bay Swim support, plus tons of new trips and events.

We're planning a new "Skills for Safe Trips" class (March 26) and a swim support class. We'll open the CPA Store so you can pay your dues and order CPA logo gear online.

We'll add new members and increase awareness of the CPA, our fun activities, and safe paddling around the Bay and beyond. There are still a few paddlers out there who don't yet know all we have to offer!

I'd like to thank everyone for your management of and participation in CPA trips and events as planners, leaders, volunteers

and paddlers. Special thanks to everyone working behind-the-scenes to make the club and our events run so smoothly. As it always has, the CPA will continue to rely on our members and to offer great paddling and skills training opportunities for everyone.

Feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or questions. I look forward to working and paddling with you in 2005!

Happy, safe and warm paddlin', and see ya on the water!

Barry Marsh
CPA Coordinator, 2005

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had no real deadline to keep. As we traveled down the river toward the Chesapeake Bay, we chatted about various topics, but every few minutes one of us would comment on the absolute perfect conditions and the awesome beauty of this night. Paddling at night, especially under a rising full moon, one sees things much differently. Along the way, we could see the unmistakable white forms of a small flock of swans floating quietly in the night and reflecting the brilliant glow of the moon. We passed a

large raft of ducks sitting on the water's surface, seemingly oblivious to our presence. I think we both had the feeling of being invisible to the world around us.

After about an hour-and-a-half of paddling, we had reached the vicinity of Mayo Beach at the headlands of the South River. It was time for a short break; we picked a spot on the sandy beach in between two of the rock formations. After about 10 minutes, we were again in our boats to head back up river.

We paddled steadily, talking to each other and drinking in this most amazing experience. By 9:00 pm, we had reached the Pier 7 marina and glided silently up to the beach. As we each stepped out of our boats and walked up to our cars, my paddling partner said, "I sure am glad we did this." I could only reply, "Yeah, I am too."

It was truly a night paddle to remember.