

Chesapeake Paddler



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Greensboro to Denton Choptank Paddle Fest

By Robert Golden



Robert, Greg and Jenny demonstrating kayak rescue to the crowd photo by Diane Stoecker

The Caroline County Chamber of Commerce organized the first Greensboro to Denton Paddlefest on the Eastern Shore's Choptank River I would hope, and suspect it will be, an annual event from now on. Greg Welker and Jenny Plummer-Welker had been asked to provide a kayak rolling demonstration, and I managed to get my paddle in the door.

Though I didn't participate, the festivities started Friday night in Greensboro with a BBQ, live music, bonfire, and other activities. (see <http://www.dentontimesrecord.com/articles/2010/05/12/news/122941.txt> and <http://www.carolinechamber.org/events-detail.aspx?eventid=983fe5b7-27cb-4fcc-a8c9-195cd4ec3e12>)

From the sound of things it was a good time. The Saturday festival activities consisted of a paddle to Denton with three options: a 7.7 mile paddle race, a paddle poker event, and

finally a leisurely trip down the Choptank to the festival held at the Choptank River Yacht club. The Chamber of Commerce also provided trash bags to willing participants and had a prize for the most trash collected from the river.

Greg, Jenny and I met up with Ed Dryden, Diane Stoecker and Tom McRae at the yacht club around 9:30 AM. Our plan was to paddle up river and meet the paddlers heading down from Greensboro. There was the usual paddle chitchat which was then interrupted by a Kent Island Peer Paddle-like headwind. Around 10:30 AM we encountered what I believe were the only two race participants; a sit-on-top (SOT) kayak with an outrigger and a stand up paddleboard (SUP). I was surprised the SUP paddler was moving as well as he was, having never seen one before. I suspect the body makes a great sail for the downwind leg of a paddle, but I would not have wanted to paddle upwind. We began to run into the rest of the fleet of kayaks and canoes, chatting here and there before turning around and heading back.

We arrived back at Denton with an hour in hand before our demonstration time so we were able to wander the vendors and displays. I tried out a pit beef sandwich from a stand supporting the local hospice, and lemonade from a horse rescue support group. I dined while watching a Native American demonstration on the making of a stone knife, ax blade and arrow heads. There was an animal sanctuary display that had several owls present, including a pair of screech owls. I have heard the little critters for the past several weeks in the woods behind the house and now got to see what was making all that noise. There were two paddle sport vendors, in addition to several other vendors that I



Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*) photo by Ralph Heimlich

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Saki's original photo of Mallows Bay, Yvonne Thayer center

The Ghost Fleet of Mallows Bay

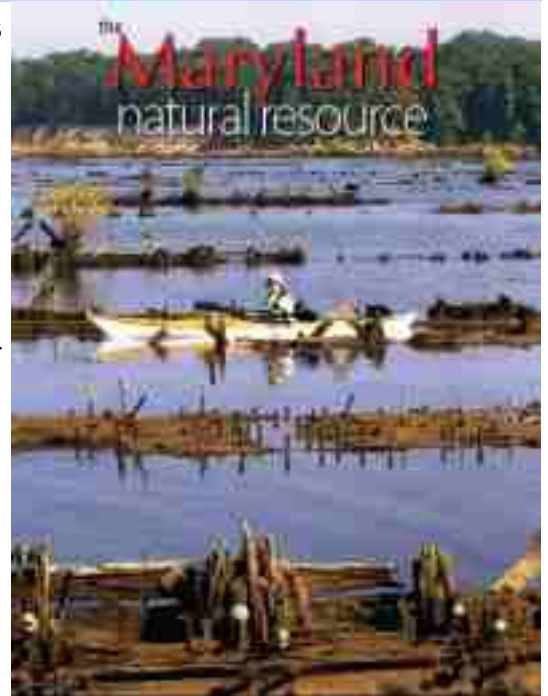
Alan "Saki" Sakakihara

I just returned from California to find the latest Maryland Natural Resource Magazine sitting in my mailbox. I entered several photos in their contest a couple of months ago but didn't win. But perhaps even better, I found that one of the photos I submitted to the

contest is on cover. It is from my kayak trip to Mallows Bay with Norma Broadwater and Yvonne Thayer. Yvonne made the cover! (right). Original photo on left.

The full magazine can be downloaded at <http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/naturalresource/spring2010/spring2010.pdf> and has an article on new boating access, including the new ramp at Mallows Bay, on page 14.

Saki



Denton to Greensboro Choptank Paddlefest (Continued from page 1)

didn't get to check out. Add in the live music of 'Vic Vacuum and the Attachments' and it was a great start for a first time festival.

For the demonstration Ed provided great commentary via a bull horn out on the dock while we conducted the show. I started us off with a paddle float reentry that got off to a bad start as the river current was pulling the kayak into the dock and moored power boat. Greg came to the rescue with a line tied to my bow and kept me in the center of the crowd as I gracefully (NOT!) executed my reentry. Once back in the boat it was time to fall out again, this time conducting a two boat rescue. After a successful two boat reentry, and given a hand from the crowd for being the willing victim I got the best seat in the house while Jenny and Greg conducted numerous rolls. At one point they were both executing rolls perfectly synchronized; perhaps a new sports competition synchronized kayak rolling. Afterwards Greg and Jenny answered questions for about another 45 minutes, as the great ambassadors for the sport that they are. One person in the audience has been working on an idea for a prosthetic paddle and asked Jenny and Greg to try out the prototype. They paddled about with it and offered up some good suggestions and improvements. As a finale, I watched Greg try and complete a roll with the paddle on the first try.



Robert and Greg complete a two-boat rescue photo by Tom McCrea

Jenny put her boat back on shore for display and to answer questions on kayak building, while Greg and I headed over to Watts creek for a little more time on the water. By 4:30 PM, the boats were on the cars and the vendors were closing up shop. Jenny scored some fries from the Board Walk Fry vendor. They were great and I was glad I didn't know about them sooner. I thought for a first time festival The First Annual Denton to Greensboro Choptank Paddlefest was a pretty good showing and a great time. I heard others echo this thought as well. Next year, it would make a great early season weekend camper (at Martiniak State Park) with a paddle to and from the festival on Saturday and a Sunday paddle at one of the other great local locations. Maybe we could even have enough volunteers to run a CPA booth at the festival. Let me know if you are interested in helping out.



Robert Golden demonstrating paddlefloat reentry at Denton *photo by Tom McRae*

Inside our June 2010 issue:

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- ◆ The Ghost Fleet of Mallows Bay
- ◆ 3rd Annual CPA Gear Day and Fall-Out-of-Your-Boat Day A Success
- ◆ Swim and Safety Support Opportunities
- ◆ Chestertown Tea Party Paddle
- ◆ Freya Hoffmeister In Annapolis June 26
- ◆ Warren Richey Paddle and Lecture at Pier 7 June 16
- ◆ Two New Kayak Launches and a Museum
- ◆ June and July CPA Calendar

The Chesapeake Paddler

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