

South River to the Eastern Shore

By Naysa Narena

On April 3,

Neysa Narena and I put in at the head of the South River and headed down the river in a following wind in my Pigmy Osprey double. Wind speeds gusted up to about 30 knots and we were "booking." We put in at about 11 a.m.--planning a fairly quick trip to Quiet Waters Park so I told Darla, my wife, we would be back around 5 p.m. I was not going to push Neysa for a longer trip as I had never paddled with her before and I was more interested in trying out the boat...I thought. We made it to Quiet Waters in about 50 minutes...that's about an average speed of 4.5 knots! I could not resist...after lunch, I suggested that if she felt comfortable and able, we could paddle to the lighthouse. Neysa was up for it and had indicated that she had paddled in heavy winds before. Just to be on the safe side, I decided that we should paddle into the wind to make sure that she was comfortable with the boat and that we could make decent progress into the wind. Neysa and the boat were fine...so we turned around into the following wind and headed for the lighthouse.

As we left the windy South River something strange happened...the wind suddenly died down! An omen? Again, I could not resist...would Neysa be up for crossing the bay? She gave a thumbs up without much thought and we headed to the Eastern Shore. As we passed the lighthouse, I took a 5-degree bearing with my new uncalibrated boat compass. Dave Mood and I made this trip two summers ago but I had forgotten how far it was to Queen Anne's marina on Price Creek (and how far it was to the lighthouse from Quiet Waters!). We didn't pay attention to the time that it took us to cross the bay and we should have. We paddled about a half a mile just south of our mark before I recognized the marina.

As we approached, we noticed quite a few people on the front lawn in front of the restaurant and a live band playing some tunes...I thought we had arrived just in time for a wedding! It was about 3 p.m. when we landed on the beach and after kayaking for about 5 hours we were pretty grubby [Ed's note: speak for yourself!] and in need of restrooms. Neysa, in her drysuit, looking more like the Pillsbury Dough Girl. [Ed's note: it's the dry suit] and me in my spiffy wet suit [Oh brother!] and dorky OR hat, [Okay,...that's better] decided that we didn't look too conspicuous and wound through the crowd into the restaurant in search of restrooms. As it turns out, this was a typical Friday afternoon at the marina...they know how to party!

Needless to say, the 13-mile trip back was a long but interesting one. After munching on some snacks (even Neysa's tofu dogs looked pretty good!), we headed back. A large barge passed us in the channel and I tried to capture a picture of it with Neysa furiously ['Expertly'] paddling in the foreground but it was the last frame on my roll and half of it was destroyed in the developing process. Just as we crossed the channel we heard a siren coming from what looked like a patrol boat off into the distance...I didn't think we were paddling that fast!!

By the time we entered the mouth of South River, the sun was falling fast and presented a very pretty sunset...the kind where you have a long thin horizontal cloud passing through the middle of the sun,...and about a half an hour later, a very sharp crescent moon within a faint silhouette of the full moon! We arrived at our put-in at about 7:15 p.m. We were a bit late and tired but had a very nice trip. Those impromptu trips can be exciting, after trip calculations were confirmed, we did 27 NM at an average speed of 4 knots...not bad!

2010-04-16