



Where's the Rest of Your Paddling Club?

By Catriona Miller

By 10 pm, we (Jim Zawlocki, Reggie and I) reached the Canadian border. The border patrol agent asked questions like "How many kayaks are on your roof?" "How do you all know each other?" When we responded that we were in the same paddling club, he asked "Where's the rest of your paddling club?" So. **Where were all of you???** Why weren't you up in Canada with us? Eventually, he was satisfied and we got to the French River trading post on Georgian Bay at around 4 am. Jim had called ahead to reserve a room, which they left unlocked for us. We piled

into the motel room.

After everyone woke up, we got Jim a fishing license, bought all the required permits (Some of the area we were going to be camping in was Crown land, other areas were part of the [French River Provincial Park](#) – permits were \$10 a day per person, but had to be bought in different locations), and headed over to Hartley Bay Marina to launch. We planned on doing a loop heading down the French River into Georgian Bay and coming back up the French river on a different fork 7 days later to get back to Hartley Bay Marina.

Though we were pleasantly surprised by how warm the water felt and how warm the day was, we still packed all our warm clothes and dry gear. After filling the boats to utter capacity, we headed down the French River. That area of the French River had long thin grass-like plants growing in the water that would wrap around your paddle and then fling back into your face. Not quite my favorite activity! We left at midday, so I was initially disappointed with the scenery: The lighting was harsh and I didn't take many photos. As we went further down the river, it became rockier and more picturesque. There were so many rocks around that we would be kayaking and then all of a sudden our kayaks would be beached on a rock that we hadn't seen. I was going to have no problems finding my way home: I left a breadcrumb trail of gel coat down the French River and through Georgian Bay. At various points along the sides of the river, we would see wrecks of old metal boats. While investigating one, a beaver splashed and jumped in next to the kayak.

A nice fisherman directed us down the Fork of the French River that led to Dallas rapids, where we arrived just before sunset with enough time to scout out a nice landing (gravel beach) and nice campsites (we ended up carrying our gear up some rocks to camp on a rocky ridge). There are something like 973 designated campsites up in that area and they are marked with little red signs and numbers on trees. This was our first experience with camping on granite and weighing down the tent with chunks of rock instead of staking it down. I was feeling a bit dehydrated because the water we had gotten from Hartley Bay Marina had a very unpleasant taste, so I made a large pot of soup using the heaviest ingredients in our food bags, gnocchi, dehydrated mushrooms, tree ear fungus, and with bits of salami and instant pho packets as the base. It was a full moon that night and the moon rising over the French River was gorgeous.

After dinner, the evening entertainment was R and Jim Z setting up the bear bag. Jim Z plopped this huge mesh bag with several dry bags in front of us and said "okay, I'm ready." I could barely pick up the bag and his food stash was larger and heavier than ours. Boy Scout that he is, Jim had taken an extra couple of WEEKS of food! There were quite colorful curses coming from Jim and R as they tried to hoist our collective food bags up on a bear hang high enough to be effective. R tried stepping on the rope at some point to keep the bags from sliding down and the rope burned completely through the bottom of his shoes. It was pretty entertaining to listen to from the comfort of my tent as I read a book on my Kindle.

We woke up in the morning and scouted the rapids, complete with a memorial (grave) stone on one of the rocks. We were excited when it seemed that some canoeists were going to run it, but they decided to portage instead, despite our encouragement. Jim had brought his wheels to help with portages, but that area was way too rocky to use them. Since we had carried our gear to the rocks above the rapids, we decided to carry it down to a beach beyond the rapids, then paddle our boats down, and repack below the rapids. We'd all brought helmets and I'd brought a fiberglass Lendal paddle, so we all took turns with that. R was the first guinea pig, there was a collective cringe when we heard his kayak hitting a rock as he dropped down the rapid. Having confirmed that our guinea pig survived and his boat was mostly unscathed, Jim went down the rapid next. His QCC500 was so high-volume it seemed like he just floated down the rapids. Then it was my turn.



Cat on the Dalles rapids, French River, Georgian Bay photo by Reggie Reid

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Georgian Bay (Continued from page 6)

We repacked the kayaks on a rocky shelf below the rapids. I was amazed by how many frogs I was seeing and found a rusting 1950's soda can in the water by my feet. This is when we first realized how slick the rocks are when wet. They were smoothly polished rocks that had a thin layer of sediment or growth on them that was just slicker than snot! We began to joke that the most dangerous part of our trip was getting in or out of our kayaks and that was when we needed to be wearing our helmets. From the mouth of the French River, we crossed over to the Bustard Islands. We split off into our typical formation at that point – I went in a straight line to our destination, Jim Z headed for the nearest land and continued along the shore, and R paddled in between back and forth. We paddled through a maze of gorgeous granite islands into an inner island to camp.

The next morning, we paddled out of the Bustards intending to stop at [Bustard Rock's lighthouse](#). It was an absolutely stunning day, breathtakingly calm – the water was completely placid and reflective. We paddled slowly, taking gorgeous shot after gorgeous shot. They didn't quite do it justice, so of course I took some video as well. We paddled over to the Bustard Island Lighthouse. Coming around the island lighthouse, there was a channel between it and the next island. It was hard to get any more picturesque. I decided I was having lunch on the island next to the lighthouse.



Bustard Rock Lighthouse photo by Catriona

We camped on another island, and as we were paddling out the next morning, a motor boater warned us that there were supposed to be thunderstorms in the afternoon. He told us to head around Grondine Point and stop on Hen island, the beginning of the Chickens. At this point, we knew that we couldn't land on the mainland, because it was a First Nations reservation. Hen was a popular camping island, as it was the first one after a long stretch with no landing. It had flat granite campsites and a sand beach up the backside. Of course, we landed on the rock shelves on the sides and fought the slippery rocks instead. As we ate and swam, the winds picked up and there were small waves as we left Hen.

Around 4 pm, the sky was darkening and we heard thunder. We headed for Prince Edward Island at that point and decided to get off the water. We approached Deer island and Jim got out to check a nearby island and heard a squall warning come over the radio. Jim began barking orders over the radio with colorful expletives to help us understand the gravity of our situation. We headed around the back of Deer Island and found a muddy area to pull the kayaks up to ride out the storm. Jim wisely picked an inner campsite and I picked a more exposed one, wanting the mosquitoes to be blown away. The squall held off until after we cooked dinner and ate it. We had a terrific lighting show with lightning in two different directions as we ate. We headed for the tents and had a thunderstorm that night, but nothing serious. The next morning, Jim Z decided to lose some of the weight in his boat by making us all blueberry pancakes!

We had a nice lunch on Green Island, collecting rocks and fossils. It interesting seeing a different kind of rock island. It did seem to be where birds went to die, because I kept finding bird skeletons. The wind had picked up in the interim and there were nice waves off Green now – we headed inland towards the nearest set of islands, frolicking in the waves.

R called over the radio that he'd found a nearby island with nice campsites and sand beaches. We paddled over and Jim decided he was going to have a nice campsite on the sand. I tried to help R set up a camp on the rocks in a 20 knot wind. After much fighting, we decided that maybe our tent would do better if we moved it into a little pocket in nearby trees. While doing that, I heard Jim shouting about having mice down on the beach. As we were cooking dinner, mice would run straight up to our cooking pots.



Where's Waldo I? Find the two kayaks in this picture photo by Catriona

The next morning, we woke to the pitter patter of raindrops on the tent. As we were making breakfast, I was astonished to see a humming bird zoom by. The weather dried out a bit and we decided to paddle out to some islands off the end of Prince Edward Island.

We had a decision at that point – turn up earlier to go up the French River in a fork that Jim thought had a couple portages over some rapids (We did run into some canoeists a day or so later who said they'd managed to paddle up it) or head back towards the Bustards and go up the same entrance that we had come out. Instead of portaging up at Dallas rapids, we could paddle up to Bass Lake, where there was a fishing camp that had a boardwalk that you could wheel kayaks over. We decided one portage was better than potential multiple ones and headed towards campsites at the original fork of the French River. The campsite we had that night was in a grassy hollow surrounded by rock. Thankfully, it was a cool night and the mosquitoes left us alone. After several nights

of camping on warm stone (which stored heat during the day: We quite often would lie on the rocks to warm up), we camped on the old soft ground. Dirt is uncomfortably cold!

The portage at Bass Lake went well enough. Both my boat and R's were reasonably light by this time, so we just lifted them onto Jim's kayak wheels and took them to the other side. Jim emptied his boat into a handy wheelbarrow so we could take it to the other side. At that point, we had about a 10 mile paddle to Hartley Bay Marina. We still ran aground on the rocks, we had that long aquatic plant to deal with, and Jim's radio eventually ran out of power. We arrived at Hartley Bay at sunset and the marina had my car waiting near the docks for us. We got the kayaks and gear loaded by about 9 pm. We got back to Maryland at 11 am, without losing anyone, accidentally or deliberately. **Total paddling**, 115 miles in 8 days, 7 nights. No gel coat left on Vela's keel. More pics available at: <https://picasaweb.google.com/lmmunoGirl/GeorgianBay#> and the full post is online at <http://www.cpkayaker.com/forums/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=7013>

Chesapeake Paddlers Association Calendar

Date	Title	Summary
10/4-7	Delmarva Paddlers Retreat	Annual gathering of Greenland Style Kayakers
10/13	EN 3 12' Eastern Neck Paddle	This is a great trip and location, what kayaking is all about, so join us for the adventure and paddle.
10/19-21	Blackwater/Honga/Hoopers Weekend	The participants on this trip will paddle in the Blackwater N.W.R and the Honga River/Hooper Island area and stay at a rental house in this area.
10/20	Fall Colors of Fountainhead	Observe the fall colors on the scenic Occoquan Reservoir
10/20-21	Joint CPA/Jersey Shore Paddlers Weekend	Joint club paddles(4different trips available) with Jersey Shore Paddlers Assn on the northern Bay and Susquehanna River
10/21	Upper Chester Day Paddle	Paddle the Upper Chester River
10/31	Halloween: Pier 7 Crazy Hat Night (Closing)	We all wear silly hats on the closing paddle of the season
11/1	Pirates of Georgetown Halloween Event	Come in costume (your boat too) for the closing event of the season
11/4	CPA Annual Meeting and Paddle	Come and see paddlers without their skirts (DETAILS P. 3 and 8)
11/7	Pier 7 End of Season Dinner	at Old Stein in Edgewater--You MUST sign up by 10/31 to attend. See Pier 7 Forum for more information. http://www.cpakayaker.com/forums/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=6940
11/8-13	Chickahominy River Car Camper	Camp and paddle on the Chickahominy and James Rivers in Virginia
11/18	EN-4 12' Eastern Neck Paddle	Our Super BIG Fabulous Fall Eastern Neck Paddle. This is a great trip and location, what kayaking is all about, so join us for this adventure.
12/1	CPA Holiday Party	Aye...ye be invited fer some holiday spirits at the Annual CPA Holiday Party

Remember to check details, trip leader/organizer and contact info at the CPA Web Page

<http://www.cpakayaker.com/> and the calendar at <http://www.cpakayaker.com/index.php?page=calendar> for upcoming CPA events.

Stump Speeches (Continued from page 5)

the club - and will be a great asset to the Club for this coming year.—nominated by Sue Stevens

Catriona Miller says..."I've spent the last year, helping out with every major CPA event - sk101, registration and teaching at SK102, and ran my first events - the boat workshop and Gear Day. With Suzanne's help, I created a new CPA facebook page, kept it current, and hopefully posted interesting information to it over the course of the last year. Now that I've learned the ropes, I intend to continue with the same activities next year, working to improve the events."

Robin Deykes for Steering Committee! Robin has the enthusiasm and energy to keep this great club moving forward in the 21st century. nominated by Steve Bethke **This nomination has been Declined.** Robin Deykes says..."This October I celebrate my 1st full year as a CPA member, and what a wonderfully full year it has been of adventures, learning opportunities, volunteering, and new friendships. I'm extremely honored to be nominated, but will pass this year, and look forward to participating and contributing to CPA in other ways in the year ahead. "



Where's Waldo II? Belá Mariassy in the swell off Cape Cod photo by Brian Blankinship