



Journal of Paddlesport Education

A professional forum highlighting **Safety Education & Instruction**
for ACA Instructors, Clubs & Affiliates

January 2014

Welcome to the
**Journal of
Paddlesport
Education.**



Photo: Joe Winston

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“Wear Your PFD,” Sea Kayak ‘Elitists’ Urge

By ACA Instructor, Jeff Herman

The very first time I took an American Canoe Association (ACA) class, I thought the instructors were crazed sea kayak elitists with an insatiable and inexplicable fetish for PFDs. Seriously, I was just a fisherman, and these guys were preaching technique and safety and more safety. It was like attending a half day calculus lecture. In a word: Painful.

A few months later I spoke about kayak fishing for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. During the seminar, a TPWD official talked about drowning deaths and boating accidents. He highlighted the vast difference in statistics between those accidents where folks wore PFDs and those who did not. Accidents involving people without PFDs had a much poorer outcome than those accidents where folks wore life vests.

I soon reexamined my stance on the ACA. In fact, the more I thought about it, the more sense it made. The ACA’s sole purpose has always been to serve the paddling community. Kayak fishing was pretty new to the ACA back when I started, and they didn’t have a frame of reference for anglers. These days their instructors, like me, are much more aware of a kayak fisherman’s needs and expectations. Really, the ACA is comprised mostly of people who just want to make things better, to educate, and to inform their fellow paddlers.



The ACA National
Office has moved!

Please send mail to:

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Fredericksburg, VA

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Kokatat Instructor of the Month January: Hunter Yarborough of Sylva, NC

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ACA Member Benefit!

Check out Hobie Polarized sunglasses! ACA members are eligible for a 25% discount as well as free shipping!

Plus, a percentage of each purchase is donated by Hobie Polarized back to the ACA to continue our work promoting paddlesports education, stewardship, recreation and competition.

Click [here](#) to view their catalog.

Hunter is an ACA certified White-water Canoe and Whitewater Kayaking instructor, and can be seen paddling and instructing all over Western North Carolina; his favorite place to paddle. Class I-V, natural or dam released, wide open rivers or narrow creeks, Hunter has thoroughly explored the variety that the southeast has to offer. His hometown run is the North Fork of the French Broad River, just outside Brevard, NC.



Hunter still aspires to travel to the pacific Northwest, and has said, "I want to see the classics out there, and there is no better way to see it than by kayak and canoe!" Hunter was recently involved in community wide project of rebuilding a popular local play spot known as 'Eternity Hole.' He learned a lot about the construction of a quality play hole, but was even more impressed by the way the community came together to attempt such a project. Hunter said, "New school and old school boaters joined in to rebuild something that is important to all the local paddlers in my community. That was a great experience, to see that." The ACA would like to say CONGRATULATIONS to Hunter!



The ACA would like to extend a big THANKS to [Kokatat](#) for sponsoring our Instructor of the Month Program!

To read more about our past instructors of the month, or to nominate a great instructor, please see the [Kokatat Instructor of the Month Page](#).




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Discover marine life in a whole new light with NOCQUA Adventure Gear – the revolutionary, underwater LED lighting system that easily attaches and adjusts to any kayak, canoe, or SUP.

NOCQUA lighting systems are available in bright white (NOCQUA 2000) or our new 7 color Spectrum system. See marine life that is hidden in daylight and enjoy the water as you've never before. Perfect for exploring, discovering, and fishing, NOCQUA gives you a whole new paddling experience.

ACA members will receive 30% off all purchases at www.nocqua.com. Contact the [ACA membership department](#) for the discount code.



The ACA Adaptive Paddling Summit will be a national event that will address key topics related to paddlesports for individuals of all abilities. The ACA provides a range of recreational opportunities and has been established as one of the premier standards of paddlesports safety and education. As part of the ACA's leadership role in the paddlesports community, we have initiated this Summit to provide a resource for paddlers of all abilities.

The ACA is seeking individuals, paddling clubs, and organizations to present high quality educational sessions on a range of paddlesports topics:

- Conference Educational Sessions (classroom)
- Skills Courses (on water)
- Pre- and Post- Conference Courses

The ACA will be accepting proposals for the Adaptive Paddling Summit to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan on September 15-17, 2014.

Proposals will be accepted through February 3, 2014.

Download proposal instructions ([PDF](#))

All questions regarding proposal submission should be directed to ACA Education & Outreach Coordinator [Joe Moore](#).

Find out more, on the [ACA Website](#).



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SEI UPDATE

New ACA Liability Waivers!



Along with the usual membership renewal options, the ACA Waiver & Release of Liability form now allows for new or renewing members to indicate their choice of Rapid Media Magazine subscriptions. Starting in January 2014, the old 2012 ACA Waivers will no longer be accepted by the ACA National Office.

Paper waivers not for you? Try our new online waivers!

Instructor Trainer and Educator Conference—2015!

Taking feedback from this past years' conference in Bend, Oregon, we have determined that the 2015 ACA National Paddlesports Conference will be specifically geared just for ITs and ITEs!

Please take a few moments to complete this short, 8 question survey (*survey closes on Monday, January 6th*) so we can plan an event truly tailored to you, the Instructor Trainers and Educators who comprise the core of the ACA Instruction program!

[Your opinion counts!](#)

Save the Date!

SEIC MEETING

The next SEIC Meeting

will be held on February 21st in Columbus, GA.

Find more information, [here](#).

ACA Instructors!

Join the ACA's Promotive.com Team!

Promotive.com is an online marketplace for outdoor industry professionals who have significant sales influence in their personal and professional communities. Thanks to ACA's knowledge and influence in the paddling community, ACA INSTRUCTORS are invited to become a member of the ACA - Promotive.com team! The ACA team has access to discounts on over 300 outdoor brands including Yakima, Big Agnes, Marmot, Old Town, Necky Kayaks, Gregory, and so many more! Benefits include:

- Up to 70% off retail prices
- Membership to the team is free
- New products and brands are added every day

Visit our team page at www.promotive.com/aca



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The American Canoe Association is proud to count Subaru of America among its corporate sponsors.

[Subaru is the official vehicle of the ACA.](#)

As part of Subaru's support for the association, ACA members are eligible to participate in the Subaru VIP Partners Program. VIP Partners participants can save up to \$3,300* off the manufacturer's suggested retail price (depending on model and equipment selected) on the purchase or lease of any new Subaru from participating dealers. This discount is available to all eligible ACA members. No haggling is required.

Now that's a member benefit!

In addition to providing discounts to ACA members, Subaru is partnering with *your* ACA to support the ACA's stewardship and conservation programs. When an ACA member purchases a vehicle through the VIP Partners Program, Subaru makes a contribution to support ACA's stewardship work, providing the organization with much-needed resources for protecting our nation's waterways.

To learn more about the VIP Program visit: www.americancanoe.org/VIP



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'Wear Your PFD' Lead Article continued from p.1

Six years ago or so, I received my instructor certification through the ACA, and even since then, the ACA has changed. Today it's not just sea kayakers and white water paddlers, but also kayak fishermen and SUP devotees. Funny though, one thing that hasn't changed since that time is some people's aversion to having a conversation about PFDs. The same aversion I initially had the first time I took an ACA class.

If you made it this far, please keep reading. I promise no calculus lectures, just the retelling of a tale and some real life experiences of a paddle instructor. Even if I can't change your mind I hope I can clarify my perspective on PFDs for whatever that is worth. I do kayaking seminars every few months. I start them off the same way every time with a conversation about safety. Here is the riff I use:

"I suspect you drove here today. I also suspect you wore your seat belt as you drove to this seminar. I'd also bet that you did not get in a car wreck coming here.... (pause for dramatic effect) ... but you wore your seat belt anyway.

Yeah?

The same simple idea applies to wearing a PFD when you kayak. You have to have it on when you need it. Period. Just like a seat belt.

You can go kayaking a hundred times, five hundred times, five thousand times, and never need a life-vest, but the one time you do need a PFD? It had better be on your person (and not in a hatch or a tankwell) just like a seatbelt."

Yes, it is a personal choice and I don't think folks that go without one are bad people. I just think your assumption of safety is exaggerated. Additionally, it is somewhat disrespectful to the other paddlers with you, as you increase their risk by going without. If we were paddling together and you had a problem, I would certainly try and help. If you are wearing PFD, it would make it safer for others to assist you.

What I have seen personally when I teach deep water reentry, is that about 20 percent of the folks struggle with self rescue. Some folks even have difficulty with assisted rescues. In a real life situation, with no PFD, those odds just don't work.

That is my take on PFD's. If you still don't want to wear one that's cool. Let's go fish anyway. I'll meet you at the launch. Just know that at some point during the day I might start talking to you about seat belts.

*Reprinted courtesy of Kayak Fish, a new premium quarterly magazine available at over 3,400 retailers across North America. Learn more at www.KayakFishMag.com.



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