

Our annual course in Tybee Island Georgia scheduled for February, 2018 was met with a bit of an extra challenge: I sustained an injury while kayaking in San Francisco the end of January 2018 and surgery shortly thereafter left a gap in our instructing ability. Although Michelle is a fully competent ACA Instructor, she was left with instructor/student ratios that weren't acceptable to us. A call and letter to Gerry Polinsky got us back on track to conduct the course as planned. Hooray!



Gerry, of [Sea Sherpa Kayak](#), hosts a quiver of credentials, such as BC Advanced Sea Leader and ACA Advanced Open Water Instructor, but most importantly his easy going style was going to be the perfect ticket for our students.

Michelle and Gerry proved to be the winning combination! Additionally, Rebecca and Fred, who are successful instructors in their own rights, were along as assistants for their second time with us in Tybee, learning the ropes and adding to their experience. They were invaluable help in herding people, schlepping gear, and doing many odd jobs as they saw fit to keep the event moving along.





The cast of characters were: Gelena, Clarence, Mary, Keyena, Dianne and Kris. This instructor/student ratio really gives the learners the best opportunity to receive the attention to their skills and learning for the most successful outcome needed. Our students had quite a mix of experience, from first timers to the ocean to those who were tuning up their skills. All were there to have fun and learn at the same time.

A list of goals was made the first day; actually a bit different twist on this theme: first a list of "Nuts and Bolts Needs", which led into a complimenting list of "Needs" then finally a list of "Wants". It was very interesting to see that as the lists of "Needs" and "Wants" evolved, they all fed directly to the more simple list of "Nuts and Bolts Needs". Our building plan for success was evolving.



Although I couldn't be there for the on water portion, I was fortunate to hear of the daily activities via the daily debriefing of all the members. Gerry and Michelle led discussions to allow the students opportunities to reflect on their own experiences as well as share them with the others. Hearing different perspectives, enriched the learning of each individual and helped to shape the next day's events. Instructors met at the end of every day to debrief amongst themselves for the purpose of keeping track of theirs as well as the student's progress.





Housing for this event is always meant to be comfortable, and even with the additional body there was plenty of comfortable space for all. Meals by Michelle and with the help of everyone, were always appreciated. Two additional features of this particular house was the location very close to the Savannah River (for easy access to the environment) as well as the rooftop deck which not only provided a great view, day and night, but also allowed to supplement our navigation learning.

Let's not forget the real reason to be there in the first place: an active ocean environment where vigorous activity can be embraced and retreated from. Launching and landing in surf, surfing, boat control in wind, rescues in active environment, situational awareness, increased comfort..., etc led to a full week of enjoyment.



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