

# CONN YAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

August 2000

## MY FIRST EXPEDITION

Charles Walsh

Perhaps because I'm slightly dyslexic, I always seem to get tides backwards. Staring at the tiny-print tide chart I keep plastered to the refrigerator held by two magnetic beer can openers does no good. The longer I stare at it, the greater chance I'll get the tide backwards - ebbing when it should be flowing, coming when it should be going.

So I should not have been so surprised last Wednesday when the water level at the spot in Guilford where I planned to launch was full to the brim instead of nearly empty as my chart study told me it would be.

The place in Guilford is my brother's house which is on a small harbor. Although the higher tide made launching easier, the tide would make the paddling on my intended course from Guilford to my home in Stratford much harder. I would be bucking an eastbound current all the way as Long Island Sound escaped into the Atlantic.

My aim in making the 20-mile water trek was to determine just how far I could go before dark or exhaustion set in.

"You got a cell phone?" my brother asked as I haul my kayak off the car.

"Nah," I say. "Won't need one. I'll be sticking pretty close to shore."

Despite my reminding him that when cell phones get wet they tend to fry like soft-shell crabs on a Weber grill, he insists I take the thing along.

As I slip into the kayak seat, my left foot slips into the very cold water, soaking my sock and deck shoe with salt water that still feels like mid-February although it's May.

It's a near perfect day for the trip. The sun, which the next day would disappear forever, is shining brightly as I head towards Stony Creek and the Thimbles Islands two miles to the west.

Behind me, I later learned, my brother is snapping my picture, "In case," as he put it, "it was the last time I ever saw you."

My supplies include one peanut butter and jelly sandwich made with a recently defrosted poppy seed roll, a bottle of tap water, a plastic bottle of No. 30 sun block

lotion and an extra shirt and pants. I'm wearing a red life jacket that I know will not keep me warm if I go in.

Any serious kayaker witnessing this departure would probably call the Coast Guard to report me for reckless voyaging. In a half an hour, I'm in the Thimbles, which at the time of year are mostly empty of their summer residents. The houses perched on the glacier-smoothed rocks are mostly boarded up.

Gliding past one of the larger islands in the Thimbles, I spot a woman seated on a porch who glances up from her book to eye me suspiciously. A billboard-sized sign reads: "Private. Keep off. Beware of dog."

But when I skim too near the island, a large German shepard leaps out onto a rock, snarling and barking like a broken chainsaw. It looks to be fully capable of grabbing me and/or the boat and feeding us to the seagulls. I escape with a few vigorous strokes of the paddle and was relieved the dog didn't swim after me.

The rest of the trip, past the mansions and greatly enhanced beach cottages that are crammed shoulder to glorious shoulder along the shoreline, goes from point to

### Rescue Clinic

Sat. Aug - 26 clinic and paddle

point. Uncas Point to Joshua Point. Flying Point to Johnson Point. Sound End Point to Morgan Point. On and on it goes.

The peanut butter and jelly sandwich and my water are long gone as I finally scrape onto the sand of New Haven's Lighthouse Point, where I pull out the cell phone and beg my wife to come and get me in West Haven.

My arms have turned to lead and my back feels like the dog has its teeth into several of its vital muscle groups and won't let go.

On the beach in West Haven, not far from Bradley Point, the strollers out after work look at me like I'm a shipwreck victim which is pretty close to how I felt. I made it about half way of my intended journey.

As I struggled to load the kayak on the roof of my wife's Saturn, I noticed the tide is just starting to turn. Perfect timing!



The best seat in the house for viewing the Tall Ships Parade - ConnYak-Wed. paddle. - photo by Tom Maizar

---

# 1st Annual Rescue Clinic / Paddle

Sat. Aug - 26

*Non-participants welcome*

(The water is as warm as can be.)

We'll be launching at the Great Island Launch in Lyme and paddle out to the sound heading north along the shore for a paddle and turn back and land on the sandy beach where the gut meets the mouth of the River. We'll have lunch and practice rescues (paddle float and assisted) draining boats and helping each other re-enter kayaks. Jay Babina, Dean Bertoldi and others will lead the demonstration and all experienced kayakers are welcome for input or demonstrations etc. It's a great time for a swim - close to shore, smooth sandy beach in calm and easy conditions to try or practice these things. If you want to just lay on a blanket and watch - that's fine too.

You'll find that everytime you do a rescue, it's always a little different due to conditions, boat style, size and physical condition of the victim as well as your own strength etc. Sometimes just getting your boat in position to do a rescue can present problems. Hopefully with the contributions from a lot of paddlers, we can all learn from each other and have fun doing it as well.

It will also be a good time to practice your roll if you need help or just some applause.

## **DIRECTIONS - GREAT ISLAND**

*I-95 to exit 70. go south on rt. 156 (Shore Road) approx. 2 miles to Smith's Neck Road (boat launch sign on the Rt.) Follow it to the end - to the launch ramp.*

---

## **PUMP - MISSING IN ACTION**

I discovered that my pump was missing after the Sat., July 8 trip at Four Mile River. I think my name is on it.

Call: 413-562-1267.- Susan Young  
email: sbyoung@panda.uchc.edu

---

## **A Recreational Paddle-**

The weather all week was like "California Dreaming", so Friday evening I put my Otter, by Olde Town, on top of my Jetta, and Saturday morning I was in Long Island Sound by 8:15am. The sun was glistening off of the water like diamonds, and the cool morning air was wonderful. I had in my possession my whistle, bulge pump, dry bag with I.D., L.L. Beane knife, sun block (30), and ice tea and a glazed swirl donut. With me in my top of the line life preserver, I felt alive and ready for a "journey".

To my total delight, that is exactly what I experienced. The paddle out was perfect - visually colorful, calm, much like a Norman Rockwell painting. I had never seen small boats hooked up to clothing line type ropes, and tied to them with lines from the boat. I watched a soon to be fisherman ready himself for his sport of choice by "pulling" the boat onto the beach, load up, and push off.

I continued out to the deserted part of the island, and found an easy access spot. After pulling my kayak onto dry land, I explored a small portion of the area, and then watched the sound slowly come alive as the morning wore on, with gradually more and more boaters leaving the harbor. As I sat on a beautifully aged log, eating the most delicious donut, and sipping my ice tea, gazing out over the sound, I knew "it just couldn't get any better than this."

Upon leaving my "island", I continued to head out to the end of the point, where there appeared to be a row of jagged rocks protruding out of the water. I was curious about them, and wanted to get a closer look!

Now, many times, I will go out in my kayak by myself, due to a short notice decision to go, unable to find anyone that could join me, and the type of paddle that I am looking to do. I have always been aware of dangers, but never wanted them to control my life, and cause me to not experience "adventures".

As I was heading out to the rock area, I met a fellow kayaker (in a sea-going kayak) coming back from the point, and asked how the conditions were. He shared with me that the sea was a bit choppier, and the wind was strong, so coming back was more work than going. I immediately decided to change course, and, instead, have some good fun, and hopefully a great experience by heading in a straight line across the water directly towards the Clinton Beach. This way I could be challenged by the wind, get a little roughing up and tumbling about, but in a much safer area, and with help much closer by, due to the much increased traffic now leaving the Clinton Harbor.

The two issues that surfaced while putting this article together were these; the safety status of the person, and the safety status of the kayak. I am 53 years young (until August, anyway) and do not want to cause myself unnecessary trauma, and I realized that I can no longer do the same athletic activities with the same quality that I could 20 or 30 years ago. I decided to stay in an area where I could get the pleasure of the paddle that I was looking for and be physically able to not only endure, but enjoy my time in my kayak. I also had to consider the style of the kayak I owned, and what I was expecting from it.

As a recreational kayaker, I keep reminding myself of my personal experience (I have not taken a professional course; all I know is by watching others, overhearing others, and trial and error), my health and exercise history, the conditions in the water and weather, and what my Otter is designed to handle.

In sharing this wonderful and great paddle experience, I hope to help remind those who may read this of the two topics of safety that arose, so their future paddles will all have happy endings. Here's hoping all who read this have similar experiences, and can look back on the summer of 2000 as a very safe and successful kayaking summer!

- Susan Cross

# PADDLING ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

by Clark Bowlen

PEI paddling is fair weather paddling. The water in the bays hovers around 70 and off shore it is in the 60's. On a calm, warm, sunny day one can paddle to barrier beaches in shorts and a tee shirt (though we wore our wet suits) to explore the shallow bays behind or the open ocean in front. Tides are modest--3" to 3'. The water flows in and out of the large bays through narrow breaks in the barrier beaches, which by reputation had strong currents, though we encountered none.

Alternately, one can paddle inland tidal rivers through the bucolic country side, where shores are lined with potato fields and dairy cattle. Or if one is truly adventuresome, paddle down a fresh water river and out onto its salt water delta.

Shell fish farms are everywhere, growing the famous Oysters and Island Blue mussels. The latter we were told in the promotional brochure, are large and sweet with shiny blue shells, unlike those small, gritty, mottled-shell natural mussels that we are accustomed to. And by gosh if they weren't.

There are several Provincial Parks and one National Park that provide nice camping facilities, and in some cases water access. Our site, though exposed (more on that later), had a gorgeous view of Malpeque Bay, the Hog Island barrier beach, and the setting sun. Water access is reasonably good, though some public ramps claim to charge. We found enough road-side sites to avoid having to ask if sea kayaks were free.

We had only one problem--the weather was not fair. It was either very rainy or very windy or both until Thursday. Winds were 20+ knots out of the NW or SW, and were, apparently, hard to forecast. All day Thursday, for instance, the marine forecast said light and variable, and the inland forecast said 15-20 knots. Fortunately, the marine forecast was right and we believed it, so we got our barrier island day. Unfortunately, PEI is a low island, so on days when the 20-25 knot forecast was right, the inland waters were not well sheltered. Or they seemed to be until the wind shifted, which we discovered on Tuesday.

A storm on Monday forced some of us into serious tie-down work even on good quality three-season tents and forced others to retreat to some nearby cottages--which turned out to be a great place for the tenters to visit for supper.

Would I go there again? No. Even if guaranteed five perfect days? Yes, because it is 700 miles from my house and there are barrier beaches on the Cape and bucolic paddling on Lake Champlain, both of

which are less than half that distance.

There is one thing I'd go to PEI for though, if I loved surfing--the off-shore break. It seems to run the whole length of the north shore, about a hundred yards out. With two days of strong north west-erlies, there was an unbroken line of what looked to be 4-5 foot spilling waves as far as we could see in both directions. I suspect PEI is a surf destination, because the person in the welcome center, who asked if we were surf or sea kayaking, could only say "oh" when we said "sea," then told us she loved surf kayaking.

## WANTED - CLASSIFIEDS

It should be obvious that we have limited space in our classifieds. We will run "wanted ads" however, they will be the first to go as we run out of space since items for sale is a much more focused offering to members, and if people have an item to sell, they advertise it.

## ConnYak t's and hats

\$5 will get you the best T-shirt of any kayaking club in CT. We also have more ConnYak hats. They are \$8. - have an embroidered logo and are available in three colors. One size fits all. Both will be at all the paddles and events.



## CONNYAK TRIP RATINGS

Any trip can change dramatically due to conditions - as in all sea kayaking.

**(N) Novice:** Novice paddlers are expected to be able to keep up with the leisurely group pace or will be turned back.

**(I) Intermediate:** Fully capable of self rescue, confident paddling stroke and braces.

**(A) Advanced:** A dependable roll, able to rescue others, strong, experienced paddler.

**Note:** All paddlers are responsible for their own safety, including dressing for immersion. You must wear a CG approved PFD and a spray skirt. The boat and equipment must meet CG requirements, including an appropriate signaling device. Beginners must have taken a basic course and be proficient in performing a wet exit, paddle float re-entry and carry a pump. Kayaks without bulkheads should have floatation installed. (always carry extra dry clothes, food and water) Paddlers are expected to show a sense of awareness as far as staying with the group.



## AUGUST TRIPS

### GUILFORD (N)

SATURDAY, AUG. 12 - GUILFORD

Paddle towards Branford with lunch at Jousha Cove. Tide will be going out for a dry launch at the E. River launch site.

Pack lunch. Launch at 10 a.m.

### DIRECTIONS - EAST RIVER LAUNCH - MADISON

Rt. 95 - Exit 59 Goose Lane-Guilford

End of exit head south (towards water) 50 yards to light.

Take a left on Rt. 1 - proceed 1/4 mile under RR bridge. Continue until you go over a small bridge (Neck river) take your 1st right on Neck Rd. (bear right) Follow Neck rd. to the end and you'll be forced left on to Ridgewood Ave. Continue on to the Madison Boat Launch.

Launch time 10:30 a.m. (In the water)

### BARN ISLAND - LAUNCH (N/I)

SATURDAY, AUG 5 - STONINGTON

Probably towards Watch Hill- Napatree Point etc. - according to Conditions

Pack lunch. Launch at 10 a.m.

### DIRECTIONS -

I-95 to exit 91 in Stonnington. At the end of the exit ramp, continue straight across on to the road in front of the ramp. Take your 3rd rt. on to Farm Home Rd. and continue until you hit Rt 1. Take a rt. and a left at the light. Take your first immediate rt. off that to the Barn Island Launch.

In the water by 10:00 a.m.

### RESCUE PRACTICE / PADDLE

SATURDAY AUG- 26

Check the bulletin board for other impromptu trips listed by members - [www.connyak.org](http://www.connyak.org)

### Aug. 19 & 20 - Derek Hutchinson

Sat. is sold out - Sun. a few spots left

The lessons with Derek Hutchinson at a cost of \$60.00, can be reserved for \$30.00 per person per day with the balance due (\$30.00) before the day of the lesson. Remember class size is limited. For more information call Ed Milnes at 203-488-0894. (checks made payable to ConnYak)



## CLASSIFIED

Wilderness Systems Alto with rudder. Yellow Skirt and floatation bags. \$650/obo. Call (203) 457-9983.

Kayook plus with rudder. 8 months old, like new, \$900.00. 860-526-1410, 860-663-2069

Ocean Kayak Frenzy with backrest-1 year old \$325 and Ocean Kayak Yak-Board \$250. 203-235-6721 after 6

Current Designs Slipstream 16' X 22", Glass, one year old. Day hatch, skeg-spray skirt. \$2,000. Men's XL Gore-Tex drytop, one year old, \$250. Call 203-256-1913

Diriogo, 17.5' Sea Kayak, hand made in Blue Hill Maine. Kevlar/Fiberglass w/wood trim & rudder. Like new condition, \$1,200.00 203-734-4452 or kck@ashcreek.net

Recreational Rowing Skull - 17' x 22" hand-crafted okume marine mahogany only 43 lbs, mahogany sliding seat, basswood skulls - \$1,300 (860) 873-3854.

Nautraid One Expedition (foldable) 15'3" red & black \$1800. or best offer. 860-521-6070

1999 Necky Looksha Sport, 14' 4" X 22.5" beam, poly, teal (green) rudder, like new, good novice or intermediate boat, \$850, Paul 860-669-8125

Solstice GT, Current Designs. Fiberglass, red over white. Excellent condition, used 2 seasons. Norwalk, (203) 855-9707, \$1700.

Old Town Heron Sea Kayak. Excellent Condition. With Rudder. \$825 Call 1-860 535-4473

Kokatat nylon drysuit - women's \$150 203-248-6051 or hs15@connix.com

Dagger Sitka 17' 11" by 22". Yellow/white with rudder. Excellent condition. Call 860 672 6137 or JKling@SNET.NET

Arctic Hawk - Wilderness Systems, Kevlar- 38 lbs., tan w/green trim, mahogany inlay. \$1950. 860-450-1026

Necky Santa Cruz, bulkheads, spray skirt, very stable, paid \$700. sell for \$495. 860-827-1111

Sealution, Wilderness System-fiberglass, orange on top with fixed compass - \$1200 Please call 860-693-0211.

NRS Black Rock dry pants, mens large. Never used. \$85. Call (860) 653-5899.

KLEPPER Aerius I folding Sea Kayak. Expedition hull, rudder. \$2400. 212-245-0025 or ABirdson@aol.com

Wold Ski Custom Terminator, Surf Kayak, Kevlar, 29 lbs, green over yellow, will do fantastic things in the waves. \$500 W (860) 441-8416 H (860) 535-8416

Extreme - new, Green & White, Fbg, Rudder, Compass, \$2300, Futura II - Excellent, White, Fbg, sit-on-top, fast, highly rated, \$950, 914 698 8354

Necky Arluk 1.9 kevlar 17'x22" 45lbs new in 1996 ex. condition. call 203 656-0946. mmarkb@juno.com

Wilderness Systems Pamilco double-2 person \$500. Jim 203- 345-0090

Feathercraft K-light- 5 yr. old w/rudder - sea sock, cover, with instructional video. \$700. 203-259-1903

Wilderness Systems Tchaika, fiberglass w/rudder, neoprene sprayskirt yellow/white used 4 times. \$1,500 (203)483-7705.

Wilderness Systems Tchaika, fiberglass, rear bulkhead & hatch. \$800 (203)344-9325.

## INSTRUCTION

Learn or enhance your skills with the art of Greenland style paddling and rolling techniques. BCU Coach and ACA Certified Greenland Style instructor Fern Usen can be contacted at fernusen@aol.com for private or group workshops.

## CONNYPAK MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

Information regarding events, trip schedule updates, cancellations, changes etc. will be heard at this number.

Send newsletter articles or classifieds to:  
Jay Babina e-mail: jbabina@snet.net  
7 Jeffrey Lane, N. Branford, CT 06471  
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136

## TO JOIN CONNYAK...

ConnYak is a non profit club that is open to all paddlers interested in sea kayaking from any location. ConnYak annual membership fee is \$15. Send inquiries to: Ed Milnes  
35 Hampton Park, Branford, CT 06405

**E-MAIL: CONNYAK@CONNYPAK.ORG**

**WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD: WWW.CONNYAK.ORG**

**Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.**



c/o Ed Milnes  
35 Hampton Park  
Branford, CT 06405