

# CONNAYAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

September 2000

Take 12 strangers whose only link is membership in CONNAYAK, transport them 500 miles to the Easternmost tip of the United States and bivouac them in a seaside park infested with swarms of bat-sized mosquitoes. Then on a daily basis present them with the challenge of paddling in massive rip tides, racing currents, swirling eddy lines, and boiling whirlpools. Sound like a sequel for Survivor? Nope- it was the July 2000 Clark Bowlen Cobscook Bay trip.

Right up front, this was a world class trip with a world class leader. The trip started to get sweet when, after a 7-hour grind on the turnpikes, we hit Route 1 in Ellsworth, Maine. Within minutes we were motoring along the seacoast, through small 19th-century towns where development and industrialization have not made significant inroads and where many of the residents still work the sea for a living. With evening approaching and still over a hour from our destination we stopped at the Sea Hag restaurant, a small cottage set back from the road, in Jonesboro. Although the sign clearly stated, "Open 6 A.M. to 2 P.M." my paddle partner, Bill Whitcomb, went to the door and knocked. We were invited in and offered the luncheon fare of the day, our choice of rice and beans or spicy chicken and rice. While we were chowing down on a heaping platter of the chicken, the owner/hostess/waitress approached the table with a plate of hot biscuits and a pot of raspberry jam and in a genuine down-east accent said, "This don't come with the meal and you didn't ask for it, but you're

## 6 DAYS ON COBSCOOK BAY

Brooks Martyn

gettin' it anyway." This was to be our experience with the locals throughout the week. The relatively small number of tourists who make the trip are very welcome and are treated cordially.

Our destination, Cobscook Bay State Park is located about 4 miles north of Whiting, Maine. It occupies 888 acres on the shore of the Bay and has 100 campsites, water taps, immaculately clean out-houses, and a centrally located shower room. All for just four bucks a night. The campsite that our group occupied was one of the larger ones and easily accommodated all of our tents, boats, and cars. It came complete with bold red squirrels, raiding raccoons, and the afore mentioned swarms of mosquitoes. Our meals were cooked community style under one of the two shelters on the site.

The tidal fall in Cobscook Bay is around 24 feet. The huge volume of water that enters the Bay from Pasamaquoddy Bay funnels through a narrow inlet called the Reversing Falls. At low tide the Bay is a huge mud flat and as the tide rises the current races, the water swirls and boils, presenting an ever-changing paddling environment. After high slack tide, the process reverses. Without a skilled and knowledgeable guide, paddling in this area would be severely limited and some-

### Picnic Rescheduled Sunday, Sept. 10

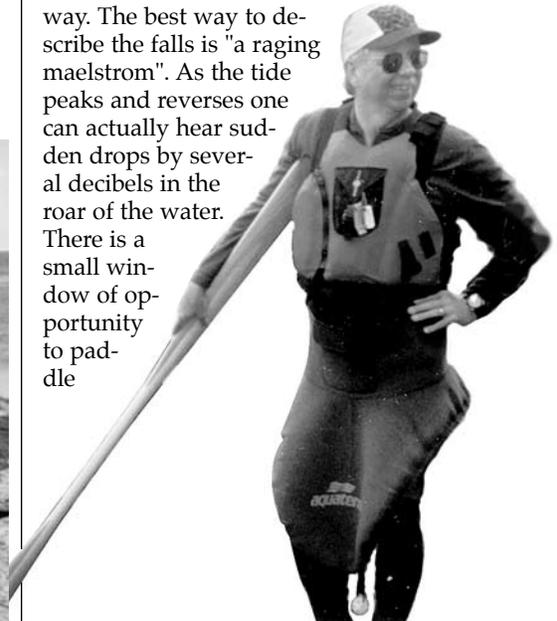
what hazardous for the average kayaker. It is necessary to time one's excursions to coincide with the tide and the wind.

Day one was an introduction to fast water sea kayaking. We launched at low tide right in front of the camp and Clark took us due east to a small bay where the eddy lines were gentle and the current was mild (relatively). Here we practiced eddy turns and ferries. As the tide rose we paddled a few miles to the entrance of Whiting Bay, to a gap about 100 yards wide between two rock outcroppings. Bald eagles soared overhead and numerous seals checked us out as we paddled to the Narrows, which was to become the graduate school for the kindergarten course we had just completed. Three paddlers went over here, two made it back up with great effort, while the third had to be rescued. An hour later at high slack tide, the water was dead calm.

Our paddle to the reversing falls the next day put our newfound skills to use. We paddled to within a few hundred yards of the falls in an eddy current and the majority of us prudently hauled our boats high up into the meadow and walked the rest of the way. The best way to describe the falls is "a raging maelstrom". As the tide peaks and reverses one can actually hear sudden drops by several decibels in the roar of the water. There is a small window of opportunity to paddle



Group minus 2 at East Quoddy Head light, Campobello Island.



Group leader Clark Bowlen

through this area at low slack tide; we didn't do it. Maybe next trip! While in our dry suits a couple of us decided to take a dip to cool off, as the air temperature was in the 80's. The necessity for immersion clothing became apparent very quickly in the 50-degree water.

On day three, July 4, we loaded up the cars and drove east to Campobello Island, New Brunswick, Canada. The maritime scenery here is breathtaking. Aqua culture is a growing industry in this area, where salmon are raised for market in huge pens set out in the bays. Our goal for the day was to go outside the East Quoddy Point lighthouse to the area where whales come to feed on herring. High winds blowing against the incoming tide created steep, closely spaced standing waves and Clark wisely decided to stay inside the protected bays with our group. On the way back to camp we made a side trip to the pristine Quoddy Head State Park, near Lubec, Maine. This is the easternmost point of the United States, where the rising sun first hits. The view was spectacular. That night we ate our fill of sea food at Uncle Kibby's Restaurant in Lubec, then drove to the docks to observe the fireworks display. Before the festivities could start a dense fog bank rolled in. One of our group started the rumor among the assembled crowd that since we could not see up through the fog the fireworks would be shot off horizontally. Soon after a sheriff straight out of a Burt Reynolds movie drove up and dismissed the crowd.

The day trip to Deer Island, Canada, was the crown jewel of the trip for me. We loaded up the boats early on Thursday morning and drove north to the quaint town of Eastport, where we boarded the small ferry for the trip to Deer Island. Our goal was to circumnavigate nearby Provost Island. This paddle was to put to the test all of the accumulated skills of the week. We had to round the dock where a large ferry was loading cars. The captain must have been bored that day or at best has a warped sense of humor, for just as our nine kayaks paddled behind his boat he gave a blast on the fog horn and revved up the screws. He succeeded in scaring the bejibbers out of ten Yanks.

Day five was a return to Campobello. Bill and I chose to pack up and make the long grind back to Hartford. I will rate this trip on a scale of 0-10 as follows: mosquitoes-0; campsite-10; companions-10; paddle experience-10; scenery-10; group leader-15. Thank you, Clark. As for the Survivor thing? The chicanery, alliances, scheming, and backstabbing will all manifest themselves at sign-up time next year when the word gets out about Clark's trip s.

- Brooks Martyn

## A LABOR OF LOVE

When I first took a look at the extensive plans for building my kayak, I wondered how I would ever get through this. That is probably because I read the plans from beginning to end trying to visualize each step along the way. Although I have had some prior experience building strip canoes, this task had many challenges ahead and a lot of planning. Prior to even beginning the project there were some helpful tools and other necessities that I either needed to purchase or make myself. Because my financial manager (my wife) watches every penny that leaves this house, I chose Option B for most things I didn't already own. These included a new strongback, 4 stands to use at either end of the table saw and router table to mill the wood, a makeshift steambox, and a fairing board. However, a few new tools did manage to cross the threshold of my front door. Another obstacle that I had to contend with was exactly where my new toy would be built. Well, I settled on the basement.

At this point, January, 1997, I was busy working full time and we just found out that our family of two was going to become a family of three. Therefore, the project proceeded very slowly while I only dabbled at it during spare evenings or a day off here and there. Each step along the way had its challenges and frustrations. There were even some times when I had to re-do something stupid I did! Well, I have always learned from mistakes. There are some things I would do differently and others that I was right on the money with. However, I cannot describe in words my feelings when beginning a new step and figuring out a problem that I felt stuck with for days. Seeing the boat progress from the rough sawn lumber and station plans to a kayak is what makes me

want to start another one tomorrow! This kayak was finally completed in September, 1999. I got to test it out on a couple of ConnYak paddles last fall.

My purpose for rambling on about this experience is to share the fact that building and paddling your own kayak is not something that is only reserved for certain people. You do not have to be a master carpenter or have all the extensive tools that make me drool every time I watch those building shows on TV. Basically you at least need access to a table saw, and a random orbit sander. Most everything else can be done with hand tools. You can even purchase your wood already milled for you if necessary. If you have an interest and appreciate the beauty of hand-crafted wood, then this is something that you can do as well. There are many plans and books out there explaining the process in a very easy and exciting to read format. The internet is probably a good place to start. Feel free to E-Mail me and I would be glad to share some of my sources. The main thing is to find a boat that you like and will enjoy having around for years to come. Oh, whether you like it or not, people will stop you and admire your work when they see you bringing your boat outside for its final sanding or are on your way to a paddle. My only advise to you is do not be in a hurry. Take your time. You will not stamp out a well crafted boat in a month. Be precise in your measurements. Line things up. Put it down and look at it again in the morning. Remember, "measure twice - three or four times and cut once!" And if at all possible, try the boat you are going to build to see if it agrees with your paddling ability and desires.

Happy building! - George Meyers  
E-mail: Butch32@AOL.COM

## Paddling with Derek, Backwards

Over the weekend of August 19th & 20th, and with much thanks to ConnYak, some of us had the opportunity to paddle and learn with Derek Hutchinson.

Having had the opportunity to hear Derek speak, I knew this class would be entertaining, but when we began by paddling backward down the lake, I also knew it was not going to be ordinary. Classes were set up in two separate sessions with 12 individuals per class. Each day was a complete class allowing 24 individuals the opportunity to experience the unique teaching style of the only Senior Instructor in the BCU. By the time my class ended Saturday afternoon I had stood up in my boat, stood up ON my boat and for good measure, learned a technique that would allow one to per-

form certain bodily functions which could be important on a trip of any duration. Somehow along the way I also learned new paddle strokes and added much finesse to some I thought I possessed.

Understand this was not a boring cookie cutter class, taught over and over again by an instructor who had been doing it far too long. This was pure fun; entertainment plus education and time well spent. Derek's goal, and well achieved in my opinion, was to take paddlers of all levels and convert us to a new level of paddler, expanding our horizons in the process.

Thanks Derek and ConnYak.  
Let's do it again!

- Don Milnes



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## "WEATHER" TO CAMP OR NOT

The turbulent May weather pattern threatened to cancel the 3rd Annual Seldon Island campout, but six diehards went anyhow. Another ten club members joined us for the day paddle.

Deciding to forego an upriver paddle to the Salmon River, we headed down river toward Gillette's Castle. Off in the distance, through the mist and cold drizzle, we saw Dick Gamble who had paddled 1 + hours from his home in Essex to join the group. "Ahoy!" said Dick.

The morning's highlights included paddling the quiet waters through Chapman Cove, a stop at 11:02 for lunch, and a discussion about club member Jon Sweeton who's truck had broken down en route.

After lunch a smaller group paddled the Deep River shore to Pratt Cove, one of the many picturesque coves on this part of the river. I also led the group to check out a 9 ft. stone pyramid overlooking the river which I had built for a client the previous summer.

Circumnavigating Seldon Island we landed at the reserved campsite, along with a father and son in a canoe, and set up camp in a downpour. It would have been an extra long night spent in our tents if it wasn't for Clark Bowlen bringing a large tarp for the group to hang out under. Minutes later the red nose of Jon Sweeton's Nordkapp could be seen through the fog. The group was complete.

The rest of the night was spent huddled under the tarp eating, laughing and telling tall tales. The next morning, the father, son and dog Oliver stopped by. As we had shared our campsite with them, our generosity was returned with a recital of a passage from Hamlet by the young boy.

On that note, and regardless of the weather, we paddled up river into Whalebone Cove in Lyme before heading back to the launch.

The decision to paddle or cancel due to inclement weather is not always an easy one for a trip leader. As I pondered the question "to camp or not to camp" that Saturday morning at 5:30 a.m., I'm glad we decided to go for it!

- Dave Hiscocks

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## I - O - U - T's

Newsletter contributors - email or contact us with your T-shirt size and we'll get them to you if you haven't collected them yet. (small articles = sm. T-shirt etc.)

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## CONNAYK MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

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

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## Picnic Rescheduled rain or shine

Brodie Park, West Hill Pond, New Hartford  
Sunday Sept 10th 10-4 Lunch 12:00 on.  
Group paddle around lake at 2:00

The decision to make a second attempt at our picnic was an easy one considering the numerous requests that followed our first cancellation. We were just as disappointed as everyone else and had to go with the always questionable "live doppler" forecast - which turned out to be wrong. With no tarp and rain contingency plan, it was still the best move considering all the food purchases we were about to make.

However, the six volunteers who orchestrated the original picnic ran out of steam and are making it a "bring your own food and drink" affair. ConnYak will supply a gas grill, shrimp for barbecuing and all the friendship you could possibly want.... the rest is up to you. If you feel generous, you can bring some things to share. We have secured a much better area at the same location. It's a great crystal clear lake to practice rescues and rolls or just play in your boat.

We have already been talking about a catered affair for next year at a location where we might have a pavilion as well as a place to paddle.

### - Directions to Brodie Park -

Go to the center of New Hartford, Route 44, and turn south onto Route 219 at the stoplight. Go 0.8 mile and turn right onto West Hill Road. Be careful to stay on this twisty, climbing road for 2.5 miles to Niles Road and turn right. Just 0.1 mile on the left is the entrance to Brodie Park. As you enter the park bare right at the fork and go past camp buildings on your left and continue down the gravel road to the parking area at the beach. If you want a chair, bring one.

If you are coming up Route 8, take exit 46 to Route 183 and go left a short distance to West Hill Road and turn right. Stay on West Hill Road for about 1.5 miles to Niles Road and turn left

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## ConnYak Meetings start in Oct.

We have speakers scheduled for Oct. and Nov. If you have any suggestions for demonstrations, lectures etc. contact us.

**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.**



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## SEPTEMBER TRIPS

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### NORWALK ISLANDS - (N/I)

Norwalk, CT.

**SATURDAY, SEPT 2**

Open ocean paddling, route determined by conditions - Sheffield Island and others. Return about 3:00

**In the water promptly at 10:00. Pack a lunch**

**DIRECTIONS** - Take Exit 16 off I-95 East Norwalk. Go south on East Ave. .05 mile to small cemetery on left. Go left at south end of cemetery then make a quick right on to Gregory Blvd. Follow Gregory through traffic light. Take a right on Second St. (first street. after the light). Follow to end of street. Launch on beach at end of street. Park on surrounding streets.

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### CONNAYK PICNIC

New Hartford, CT

**SUNDAY, SEPT 10**

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### GREAT ISLAND - LT. RIVER - (N)

Old Lyme, CT

**SATURDAY, SEPT 23**

Ct river to Lt. river and back through marshes etc.  
**In the water promptly at 10:00. Pack a lunch**

**DIRECTIONS** - 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.

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### GROTON - DUMPLINGS - (I)

Groton, CT.

**SATURDAY, SEPT 30**

Open ocean crossing to dumplings (Islands)  
Itinerary may change according to conditions.

**In the water promptly at 10:00. Pack a lunch**

**DIRECTIONS - AVERY POINT** - Take Exit 87 off east-bound I-95 and follow the signs (Rt. 349) to the University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus. After you pass the campus, we believe Bayberry Lane is the second right. Look for the boat launch ramp sign.

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

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## CONNAYK 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.



# 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

Diriego, 17.5' Sea Kayak, Kevlar/Fiberglass w/wood trim & rudder. \$1,200.00 203-734-4452 kck@ashcreek.net

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

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

DAGGER MERIDIAN KEVLAR 43 lbs. 16' x 22". Yellow / white. Spray skirt and cockpit cover. \$1600. Call David at (860) 388-4991, or email dmiller04@snet.net

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

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

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

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

Old Town Canoe. 17' OTCA, wood/canvas, 1968 vintage, refurbished, immaculate. Some interesting extras. \$2900.00, or will consider trade/cash for high end Kevlar kayak 203-458-3666 or RichBECSI@aol.com

Touring/Surfing Sea Kayak: Sun Maximum Velocity 13'length, 25"beam in Xytec (very light almost unbreakable, seamless plastic - 46lb) with bulkheads & hatches. \$675. SurfKayakers@aol.com

## INSTRUCTION

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

### KAYAK SKILLS & ROLLING

Urban Eskimo Kayaking

Mike Falconeri/Nancy Lovelace

Skills Workshops: Sept 16, Oct 21, Nov 11, Dec 2

Safety & Rescue: Sept 17, Oct 22, Nov 12, Dec 3

Rolling: Oct 28, Nov 18, Dec 16 & 17

Sheehan High School pool in Wallingford

Call for specifics - Nancy at 860 228 0105

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@CONNYAK.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