

CONNAYAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

June 2001

Last July I enjoyed a terrific 9 day kayak trip in the Queen Charlottes Islands, which are about 80 miles off the British Columbia coast and just south of Alaska. This was the best sea kayaking I've done, and I feel especially fortunate because I pretty much stumbled onto this outstanding kayaking spot.

Some people spend a lot of time investigating their vacations ahead of time – reading books, going over websites. I tend to be more casual and prefer to get my information by just talking to the natives. For my summer kayak trip I knew I wanted to go to either British Columbia or Alaska, and I started by looking at websites and ads in SeaKayaker magazine and then made some phone calls. I quickly realized that the best questions to ask were "Do you take beginners?" and "Do you have single kayaks?". Every outfitter I called took beginners and few had singles. I finally asked for the name of an outfitter who used mostly single kayaks and learned about Gabriola Cycle and Kayak.

Gabriola appealed to me right off because their policy is to have group members cook for each other. In addition, they offer mostly single kayaks plus a few necessary doubles. Gabriola's summer trips are in a place called the Queen Charlotte Islands. I looked at a map and was excited to see that the Charlottes were way off shore and mostly national parkland. I figured that the distance from a mainland, the longish distances we would paddle each day, and the cooking would select for the kind of people I wanted to paddle with. I was right.

There was only one week during the summer when I could make this trip – right after an ecology meeting in Snowbird Utah (yep, from one gorgeous place to another). I called and there was only one place left. That seemed like destiny, and so I grabbed that spot.

I had never been to B.C. before and really had no idea what to expect. From Vancouver I took an hour long flight to Sandspit where there is the airport, one Inn, some houses, and not much more. We were to fly out of nearby Queen Charlotte City the next morning, and so I hauled my gear into a taxi and arrived in the "City" by ferry. Queen Charlotte City is a nice little town with a busy harbor, occasional trucks carrying enormous logs rumbling through, one grocery store, and a few restaurants and B & Bs, I needed to buy food for my meals and was glad that I'd taken a few somewhat exotic things with me (e.g. dried pesto and dried tomatoes) because the most exciting item I found

QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS

by Charlene D'Avanzo

in the grocery store was a package of roll-ups (and I got the last one).

In the morning I met my groupmates at the seaplane dock. They looked like typical Connyakers as I had guessed, and we were quickly friends. We all stumbled onto the dock with plump garbage bags full of tents, food, sleeping bags, wetsuits and lots of gortex and fleece. I'd never been on a seaplane before and that hour and a half flight was a highlight of the whole trip. As we flew to the south end of the archipelago the pilot pointed out spots we would paddle by. He patiently answered my many questions about logging, wildlife, salmon, the weather, geology, and whether I might get nauseous during the flight (I didn't).

B.C. is of course very beautiful (like Maine with bigger mountains along the coast), and for me the most exciting aspect in the Charlottes was the lack of any roads whatsoever. We were in a Provincial Park - the Gwai Hannas National Park Preserve - that is closed to logging or any other business (except for a very few B & Bs). For nearly 75 miles north-south the only way to go from island to island is by boat.

The plane landed in a bay at Rose Harbor, near the southern end of the archipelago. Waiting for their flight home was a group of Gabriola paddlers who were happy, tan, and wanted to stay. They took off in the plane and we took forever loading all our stuff into their,

now our, kayaks.

The trip did not have a slow start. In less than an hour we were paddling against a relentlessly strong wind in the biggest waves I've experienced in a small boat. We had to make a mile crossing in open water to the island of Ninintins, a World Heritage Site and ecological reserve. Fortunately the island was big and even though the wind was blowing me far south of our campsite, I knew I could hit the island somewhere and paddle north in calmer waters. That is what I did and in hindsight the difficult crossing was a good start for me. I recognized my strength and knew that the Necky Arluk III was a very stable boat.

Ninintins is a magical place. Our campsite was a moss-covered, beachside terrace at the edge of an ancient cedar forest. We overlooked a tiny protected bay and were well out of the wind. The next morning we followed a path through the rainforest to the home of our guide, a Haida woman. (Canadians do not use the term "indian" and instead refer to native peoples as "the first people"). She led us to the site of a former thriving fishing village abandoned in the 1880's. There, in a clearing above the gravel beach, are a dozen or so magnificent and huge totem poles built by the Haida to honor their dead. The carved cedar poles show the faces of revered animals – bear, raven, whale – that literally face into the wind and spray each day and are well preserved after more than 100 years.

The next 8 days went much too fast. The wildlife was stunning: we saw several black bear (from a distance as we paddled, thank goodness), hundreds of bald eagles, and dwarf deer which eat kelp. As a marine ecologist I was enthralled by the Disney world so plentiful in the shallow water. Coastal British Columbia is well known for its diverse marine life and at high tide the flooded mudflats and rocks were alive with brightly colored starfish, chitons, ane-



Wayne Smith at the Thimbles.

Photo: Tom Maizarz

nomes, and urchins. The starfish most fascinated me. On the northeast coast we have one common shallow water seastar and it is a dull tan. In the Queen Charlottes there were purple, red, and green bat stars; yellow morning sun stars; gory blood stars; giant pink stars; and purple sunflower stars (and that's just the beginning). I gave up trying to identify them all and just enjoyed their beauty as we floated by.

The grand finale was Hot Spring Island which we reached with a day to spare. After paddling 60-70 miles in a lot of rain (we were pinned down by storms twice), we relished a day of merely sitting in delightfully warm pools of spring-fed water as we looked out onto the seascape and mountains in mist.

I would recommend this trip to anyone. Being in reasonably good shape makes the trip easier, but the two tandems do allow more novice paddlers to build up strength. This part of B.C. is temperate rainforest and so paddlers must be prepared to camp and kayak in rain. My 2 guides (for 10 people) were very experienced, patient, and nice. For more information call Gabriola Cycle and Kayak, Gabriola BC (250-2478277).

Confidence Need A Boost?

by Nancy Lovelace

We all start as beginners! As beginners our confidence sometimes needs a boost. A few things we can do to boost our confidence is to seek out ways to help our growth while learning new skills. Empower yourself! - read books and magazines, talk to people with similar interests, join a club, sign up for Urban Eskimo Workshops to develop the skills you need to build your confidence. Practice the skills learned. Being able to execute a new skill is a real confidence builder. Once learned, celebrate it! Tell your friends about your accomplishments. Allow yourself to be a beginner - have fun with it. Laugh and enjoy the learning process. Be kind to yourself. There's no time limit as to how long it takes to learn a skill. It's only important that you keep trying until you've accomplished what you started out to do. Don't apologize for being new to the sport of kayaking. Remember - we have all been there. We all started out as beginners and we all continue to learn.

Kayaking can be whatever you want it to be - peaceful, calming, meditative, solitary, social, intriguing, exciting, heart pounding..... So..... get out there, do it and enjoy it!

This summer, I will be introducing "Women Only Workshops". For information, please check out our website, sign our mailing list, or call me directly.

www.uekayaking.com 860-228-0105

email: NLOVELACE@aol.com

a different twist on the

Re-enter and Roll!

by Jeff Dionne-Dickson

I have been teaching people for several years a number of assisted and self-rescue techniques and, I must admit - they do work. For some people they work well and for others, it's quite a struggle and I find myself hoping they never actually need to succeed. Note the use of the word NEED - as in truly having their safety depend upon their success.

Remember that the sea conditions that lead to a rescue are certainly not going to be particularly friendly to the least bit of instability or hesitation on the part of either the victim or the rescuer. There must be additional choices beyond the standard T-rescue and paddle float/outtrigger self-rescue. I personally do not intend to rely on these methods alone if I ever find myself in a precarious position and I think others should have options too.

A certain amount of the reliance upon these methods results from the simple fact that they are still the method of choice as contained within the American Canoe Association curriculum. Sooner or later. I hope that this will change, but in the meantime I will give you my thoughts on where things should be headed. Don't get me wrong, I will continue to teach the standard methods because I think they have value and besides, the more options you have at your disposal the more chance you have that one will succeed in your particular situation.

- The Assisted re-entry and roll -

By far this is the easiest method I have ever encountered for getting back into a boat from a wet exit. I have given various lectures and seminars and often been disparaging of the Eskimo bow rescue as having little if any practical value in a real rescue situation. Paddlers are never close enough to you or you're never confident that know you're even in the water or will make it to you in time. I now realize how wrong I was. It is actually a great rescue technique that just needs to be utilized a little differently. Hence - the Assisted Re-entry and Roll. Assume that you have wet exited and your paddling companion is there.

Give this a try:

1. Give your paddle to your rescuer to store for you so it doesn't disappear - they can keep it under the bungees.
2. Put on your noseplugs (if you have them) - you're going to be upside down during part of this. Your boat is now floating upside down.
3. Line yourself up beside your cockpit in preparation to slide your legs into the boat. You will want one hand reaching under the boat to the far side of the cockpit combing.
4. Use your hands to control the boat while you slide into your cockpit in your normal sitting position - but staying upside down for now.
5. Secure as much as you can of your sprayskirt

back to the cockpit rim - the more the better, but even if you don't get any of it this, the method will still work.

6. Place your hands above water and await the bow of the rescuing boat - just like a normal bow rescue.

7. Use the bow of the rescuing boat as a platform to roll upright. If necessary, you can maintain this platform for stability while pumping out your boat or securing your sprayskirt or otherwise just getting settled around. It's just like a bow rescue except you did a wet exit and got back in the cockpit prior to the bow rescue.

A few hints: It helps to have practiced a bow rescue. It is not necessary to actually have a roll, but the body motion used to rotate from upside down to right side up is a whole lot easier if it has been practiced. It is NOT a strength move, it is an exercise in body rotation to create momentum. You begin by rolling the hips and let the torso and finally the head follow on the momentum that was created by the hip movement. If done well, you will feel almost no need for use of the muscles in the arms and shoulders beyond that needed to provide a little stability. The rescuer needs to stay pretty close because the clue that the victim is ready to come up will be the appearance of the arms above the water searching for the bow of the rescuer - the victim has probably spent a certain amount of time struggling with his sprayskirt and is probably close to being out of air - get there in a hurry. It is wise if the victim folds his hands into fists to protect them and moves them about to make contact with the rescuer. Even if the victim was not able to secure his sprayskirt, you will be surprised at how little water there is to pump out. I don't pretend to understand the hydrodynamics at work here, but much of the time my boat comes up with only a few gallons of water in it even when I cannot successfully secure the sprayskirt before rolling up. If securing the spray skirt is beyond your ability, get into the boat and do the bow rescue and get to the surface.

There is only the tiniest possibility of the rescuer becoming a second victim because actual contact with the victim and his boat are minimal. No lifting a heavy boat to empty it, no worrying about the victim accidentally upsetting the rescuer, no climbing of bodies up on/over and around boats while attempting to re-enter. My son who weighs 70 pounds and paddles a kids boat is completely capable of rescuing me using this method...and I weigh a lot more than he does.

The next possibility covers the true self-rescue situation. This is a kind of Unassisted Re-entry and Roll technique. You will need to have enough knowledge of a conventional roll to understand the body motion that is required. I personally prefer the sweep roll motion for this, but if you have a different roll with which you have some familiarity then I am sure you will be successful. You will need a paddle float for this - the additional support provided by the paddle float makes

this pretty much a sure thing.

You have tipped over and you are out of your boat. Its pretty chilly, the wind is blowing and you want to get back in in a hurry. Retrieve your paddle float, affix it to your paddle blade and blow it up. I roll up on my right side. Set up on the left - like most right handed people -therefore, I will attach the paddle float to the right hand paddle blade. I then orient myself beside the cockpit so that as I face the upside down boat, my paddle is between me and the boat, the blade with the float on it is toward the bow and my right shoulder is toward the bow. I know it sounds complicated but it will all make sense when you try it in the water.

From here, I put on my noseplug and slide under the boat and back into the cockpit. You will probably wish to secure the paddle with your left hand holding the paddle shaft and the cockpit rim while you are sliding into the boat. As in the assisted re-entry, secure whatever amount of the sprayskirt you can manage and then grasp the paddle in your normal roll position. It is not necessary to be concerned with blade orientation or the exact placement of your hands on the shaft. If it comes out to be a bit of an extended paddle roll that will add some leverage, but it really doesn't matter. Now - proceed to slowly sweep the blade with the float on it out to the side and around to the rear. As it approaches ninety degrees to the boat, you will find lots of leverage to roll your hips and easily move to an upright position. You will find that the paddle float provides a great outrigger to support you while pumping or securing your sprayskirt. I find it works well to place one end of the shaft on my shoulder and then I can simply lean on the float-supported paddle blade and do whatever is necessary.

I think you will find that it is a whole lot faster than any paddle float/outrigger re-entry can ever be and is much more stable during the process.

A few hints on this one - orientation is everything. Practice enough so that the set-up becomes natural. You don't want to spend a lot of time trying to remember which side you prefer to roll on, which end of the paddle to put the float on, how to orient yourself to the boat at the start of the re-entry. That all needs to be second-nature. Only practice will get you there. The placement of the feet is unimportant. It is not necessary to get them back on the footpegs in order to be successful. Personally, I tend to slide down into the boat quite a ways - so that my feet are past the footpegs - because it keeps my center of gravity lower and makes the roll easier. Your choice completely.

Also, the body knowledge of the rolling motion - how to start with the hips and follow through with the torso and finally the head needs to be a pretty familiar feeling. Its not a big deal to practice - you can use the side of a pool, the bow of a friends boat - whatever will provide some support while practicing the motion. You may even find that you accidentally develop a pretty good

roll while practicing. The more you rely on this body motion and the less pressure you place on the supporting paddle blade the closer it becomes to a true roll. You may find after a while that you can use a small foam block to speed things up.

I am convinced that either of these methods will get the victim out of the water and back into his boat in well under a minute. Pumping out the boat is a lot better than floating in cold water.

It is certainly my intention to pursue this with the ACA as well as including it whenever I do seminars or demonstrations. It is also our intent at Collinsville Canoe & Kayak to provide a class for those interested in learning in a formal setting. Meanwhile, you can try this on your own or with a friend. One strong caution - being upside down in a boat should be done where you are completely certain that you are in a safe water depth or with a whitewater helmet on.

Wood Boat Gathering

Bluff Point State Park
Skin, Strip, Stitch etc. Saturday June 23
non-builders - glass and plastic Paddlers welcome

tuesday Night paddlers

contact bill 860-535-4474
or. russ 860-621-0796

Mystic Area evening paddles
- calm conditions.



CONNYSKIP TRIP RATINGS

Any trip can change dramatically due to conditions - as in all sea kayaking. (I) is generally longer and more off shore with greater chance of rough conditions.

(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.

CONNYSKIP MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

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

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 during paddles.



PADDLES

NARRAGANSETT BAY, RI (N/I)

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Launch from Wilson Park, Wickford, RI. Wickford Harbor, out to Fox island and Conanicut Island (Jamestown), and back by way of Quonset point. Approx 9 miles. Pack a lunch, and plenty of water. Rain or winds in excess of 20 knots postpone.

DIRECTIONS - From New Haven, take I-95 North to Rt 138 East to Rt 1 North. Turn right onto Intrepid St. from RT 1 in Wickford (it's just North of the junction of RT 1 & 1A, near the fire & Police stations). Continue to the launch lot at the very end.

From Hartford, Take Rt 384 East to Rt 44 East to Rt 101 East. Follow to Rt 6 East, and then take exit onto Rt 295 South towards Cranston. Follow Rt 295 to end at Rt 95 South. From 95 South, Take Rt 4 (Left exit) south to Rt 102 East. Follow 102 to intersection with Rt 1 & go left on to Rt 1 north. About 1/2 mile, turn right onto Intrepid St. and Continue to the launch at the very end.

In the water by 10:30 a.m. (pack a lunch)

FOUR MILE RIVER - LYME (N)

SAT, JUNE 9 - COASTAL PADDLE

Rocky area with islands.

DIRECTIONS -

I-95 to exit 71, go south on Four Mile River Road (about 0.7 mile) to Rt. 156, turn right, short distance to the sign for boat launch (Oakridge Drive) to the left, take next right to the launch area.

In the water by 10:0 a.m. (pack a lunch)

GREAT ISLAND - LYME (N)

SATURDAY, JUNE 16 - 10:00 PM

Paddle coast N. stopping outside G. Isl. for lunch and more...

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.

BARN ISLAND - STONNINGTON HARBOR (N)

SATURDAY, JUNE 30 - STONNINGTON

Paddle to Stonnington Harbor. Lunch in harbor, maybe go N. or around break-walls etc. 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. (launch sign) off that to the Barn Island Launch.



CLASSIFIED

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

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

Touring/Surfing Sea Kayak: Sun Maximum Velocity 13' x, 25" in Xytec \$675. SurfKayakers@aol.com

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

DRYTOP - BomberGear breathable drytop (S)-(New) \$150. 860-643-8303 - fernusen@aol.com

2 Walden Vista Expedition 12.5' kayaks (lime, grape) with bulkheads and spray skirts. 42lbs. Used 4 days. \$600 ea. (203)389-1230 email ensign@southernct.edu

Like new Romany 16, tan over tan, with skeg, neospray skirt, aqua bound paddle. \$2100. 203-281-1529

For sale: 13' Mad River Compatriot; light green with wood trim, 42 lbs., mint condition., includes simple roof racks. \$500, Clark 203/271-2484

Werner Kauai 1 pc. paddle 220cm. Feathered maybe 10X; \$150. 203 457-9772 or andyb@asan.com

Kokatat, Gore-Tex, front entry, dry suit, never used. Size-Medium. \$500. Call 860 767-0696.

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

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

Current design - Caribou, fiberglass. Ye./yel. 45 lbs. hard chine hull, good stability \$1895 203-985-9288 areimann@snet.net.

2000 Necky Looksha Sport - expedition red polymer \$850 1-860-434-0221 or dwc@99main.com

Necy Looksha kayak-poly. 17 ft. two neoprene hatches, bulkheads, rudder, skirt. \$700. 914-967-3164

Necy Tesla-NM, Used Once. 17', Kevlar, Mango / white, blue trim, large cockpit, rudder, Ckpt. cover. Two Werner paddles. \$2,500. 1-860-526-3344

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

Current Designs Caribou "S" Kevlar. Yel/white, Compass New \$3110 in 3-01 sale \$2700. 860-563-3391

Heritage Nomad 16' fiberglass open-deck kayak. 42 lbs., Ex cond:\$1350. Mens 3 mm farmer-john wetsuit, small \$20.Jeff 860-267-9563 - jbrooks@wesleyan.edu.

Panache wood stripper, 18'4"x22 1/2", unused. Large volume boat, big cockpit,\$2600. Stripper canoe, 18', Light fast, excellent condition. \$650. (860) 653-5899.

Ocean Kayak-17'9—Valley Aquila - Blue and white 1800 - 203 226-6926 —pascale@earthlink.net



INSTRUCTION

Urban Eskimo Kayaking Classes
Mike Falconeri Nancy Lovelace
203-284-9212 860-228-0105
www.uekayaking.com

Wallingford Com. Pool 8:00 a.m. - 11:00
Safety & Rescue Workshop July 7, August 4
Rolling Workshops July 21, August 18
To register call Wallingford Parks & Rec.
1-203-294-2120

Skills Workshop - classes 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
Barn Island (Stonington) June 16, June 23
Norwalk Islands July 14 - Call Nancy for info.

Greenland style paddling and rolling. BCU
Coach and ACA Certified. fernusen@aol.com

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. Membership includes monthly newsletter, paddles, functions, etc.

Send inquiries to: Ed Milnes
35 Hampton Park, Branford, CT 06405

E-MAIL: CONNYAK@CONNYAK.ORG

WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD: WWW.CONNYAK.ORG

Send newsletter articles or classifieds to:
Jay Babina e-mail: jbabina@snet.net
7 Jeffrey Lane, Branford, CT 06405
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136



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