

# CONN YAK



C O N N E C T I C U T S E A K A Y A K E R S

October 2001

Many ConnYak members started paddling over 15 years ago, when a kayak on a car was an extreme rarity. Back when ConnYak started in '95', a large paddling group was in the teens and the average paddle among friends was far less than 10. A paddling group was a small pod and brought very little attention. It was rare to see other kayakers and when you did, we migrated together to check out boats and compare notes. "Can you roll?" "I saw a kayaker do one three weeks ago!" Much of ConnYak's current protocol is based on these small numbers.

However, as we all know, we now have a situation where the amount of paddlers is causing space problems at launch sites as well as the various crowding concerns that we have written about and discussed. The massive growth of our club has occurred partially due to the efforts of us advertising our existence as well as the enormous popularity of paddle sports in general through osmosis. This is actually an old story and one that never seems to get addressed primarily because the paddles are picked days before newsletter deadlines by myself and a few others. The criteria is usually "where haven't we paddled yet".

There are running clubs with thousands of members, the difference being that they don't run a marathon every

## Wake-up Call

by Jay Babina

weekend. And when they do, the town braces for it with streets closed off and permits etc. The runners sport is primarily a solo one for good reason.

Several times in the past we have discussed the large group problem and the same answers always emerge. Stagger the groups or more than one paddle on weekends. The problem with the staggered group launching is that a major part of our concern is totally using up a launch site parking lot as well as our (usually one) landing spot. (which we did on the rescue clinic) Paddlers also like to get up, drive to a location and go paddling. The 10 o'clock launch time is comfortable with almost everyone considering drive time etc.

The idea of several paddles on a weekend sounds viable, however everyone may decide that the Antique Boat Parade in Mystic sounds like a nice idea on that weekend rather than the swamp in Madison and 99% of the paddlers arrive there. We'll probably try this out and maybe it will prove to be a more power-

ful solution to our problems than I imagine.

We can't afford to cause any more bad will with boaters. Yes, we have rights too, and yes, we're launching boats too and yes, we pay taxes too, however as a club, we can't instigate that kind of confrontation and should be aware of our actions. "TRAILERS ONLY ON THIS SIDE" will be a reality piece of signage at launch ramps sooner than we think. Since they pay boating fees and registration, they have a loud voice if push comes to shove with the state - and that's one fire we don't want to fuel.

We're currently dealing with a kayaking population explosion not just with our club, but everywhere. At Stony Creek during the summer, the paddle boats just keep coming and coming and coming. This is a spot with no parking lot and the attention it creates is only going to hurt kayaking opportunities down the line. Every water front home has at least three paddle boats parked on the shore. Stores are selling hundreds and tour groups are introducing people to the sport on a regular basis. Paddle boats are everywhere - stores, instruction, rentals, guided tours and breakfast cereal ads. Is anyone at fault? Of course not. No more than the drivers education teacher or the local Ford dealership is responsible for traffic on I-95. It's just the way it is. We (ConnYak) would certainly be at fault continuing the way we are going with our heads in the sand and running marathons every weekend. This is truly a major concern and we have to come up with some sane solutions quick especially considering the growth rate of the club.

I for one, felt very guilty at the parking lot at the rescue clinic forcing some boaters into the street. I personally don't want to ever do that again or be responsible for it. There are places that can easily accommodate that size group like Haddam Meadows or Bluff Point, and I know that's where it will be next year -

*Continued*



Jeff Dickson (r) demonstrates with Dominic Settle at the Rescue Clinic with 63 paddlers attending.

**Wake up Call Continued.**

who would have imagined 63? A week before, we filled two parking sites in Mystic and two weeks before, we topped off the lot at Barn Island with our 30+ kayaks. One thing we can do is double up our cars in spots that accommodate boat trailers and autos rather than using one spot per auto and that's a practice that should be adopted by all paddlers who paddle together. That literally cuts our parking usage by 50%.

I don't think it's totally necessary for ConnYak to have club paddles every week. I know this sounds like treason, but I think one of our founding goals is to network paddlers and opportunities; not to create a riot or destroy opportunities for the future. Maybe paddlers can announce their intention to paddle and have paddlers contact them to join in - making it up to the coordinator to cut it off at any amount. This would definitely dictate the need for more leaders or dedicated people to come forth and do this. It would also mean more using of the bulletin board for these connections since more people would do it if it didn't require a month's commitment.

Or... maybe 4 paddle locations could be posted on a given weekend. This way, people who enjoy paddling with some select friends could contact each other and pick one of those sites. This would alleviate the personality part of the problem and hopefully the chore of cutting off group sizes would be alleviated. If there has to be a group leader, the idea of multiple paddles won't happen because history has shown that almost nobody wants to do it or take responsibility. I think democracy on paddles will work fine considering that the overall skill level and sanity of the entire club is now pretty good.

I'm personally very happy that there's the Tuesday Night Paddlers and the Paddlers Network who run events and offer good alternatives to CT paddlers. Maybe more independent groups is what's needed. It certainly takes a lot of pressure off of us to be the one weekly recreational outlet for CT paddlers. Maybe someone could start the late Saturday and the early Sunday Paddlers.

Ultimately, groups will need to have cut-off amounts. How exactly this gets handled, I'm not totally sure. One thing for sure, ConnYak can no longer be the

free-for-all that it has been especially with novice summer paddles where our attendance is massive. You can pretend that this is not true and an exaggeration of mine, but if you look around the launch parking lots with any kind of sensitivity to others, you'll find we're really making it impossible for any boaters who arrive after 10 am.

How would feel about kayakers if you lugged your trailer boat and family to Barn Island and there were no parking spots left at 10:00 and car top racks filled every parking place? You might want to call the DEP and complain or at least make an inquiry - wouldn't you? Especially since you just sent in your boating registration and trailer registration and paid your vehicle town tax fees and are lugging a \$17,000 investment.

Maybe in the late fall or winter when the hardy remain we will be able to have open or... "all's invited" events. However, they will have to be planned at sites that can handle it. I do think we can have large social paddling events at some of the sites that can accommodate us.

I enjoy the friendship of my fellow paddlers as much as anyone else and certainly have met an enormous amount of friends through the club and want to continue with that. However, somehow we have to address the overcrowding situation since it is becoming detrimental not only to us but to the sport in general and we can't afford to instigate overcrowding at launch sites especially every weekend. We are also alienating many of our own members who like to paddle with their friends at ConnYak but don't want to deal with groups of this magnitude.

Ultimately, we're all victims of the paddle sports population explosion. It may be more prevalent in CT because our state is small and relatively crowded in it's ratio of water users to access locations. Never-the-less, it's true.

These are my personal views. I think we'll have to discuss these issues in upcoming meetings before next season. We knew this was happening last year but like a lot of problems, we decided that if we don't pay attention to it, it will somehow go away. Well, it hasn't and it's now larger and ConnYak continues to grow. We can't continue this way and pretend that it's not happening because we're only building resentment from boaters and ultimately jeopardizing kayaking opportunities for the future.

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## **Mike Falconeri talk**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 7:00 PM**

**OLD SAYBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Mike Falconeri of Urban Eskimo Kayaking will present a slide show and talk on his circumnavigation of the USA. This is a first-ever paddle that covered a total of 4500 miles from Washington State to Portland, Maine which was done in a period of nineteen months with two starting periods due to rough seas and paddling disasters. His slide show and talk has been adapted to music and will include some original guitar music written and played by Mike. This presentation is sponsored by North Cove Outfitters. Admission fee is \$6. with proceeds going for expenses and to Mike. For further info, contact N.C. Outfitters 860-388-6585.

### **DIRECTIONS -**

**Several blocks past N. Cove Outfitters (75 Main Street) is the Town Hall on the left. Take a left on the street before the Town Hall - Chatfield St. - Old Saybrook Middle School is on the right side of Chatfield Street.**

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## **Launch directory**

Considering we'll be running multiple paddles on various weekends next year, we'll publish a launch site directions directory in the winter. Basically, it's the directions to all the launch sites we use. (No further paddle site info) You'll keep this forever and ever. We'll send it to new members as they join. We'll also put a "Launch Site Directions Page" on our web site for convenient print out.

This way we alleviate those redundant directions in the newsletter allowing for more paddles to be listed and have plenty of room for all the exciting articles everyone loves to read. If someone has an unusual lake they want to paddle we'll just publish the directions and add it to the web site.

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## **GREENLAND STYLE INSTRUCTION**

Paddling and rescue techniques, hand rolls, paddle stick rolls, and many other traditional rolling techniques taught by Donald White and Fern Usen, BCU Coach and ACA Certified Instructor. Call 860-643-8303 for appointment, or email: fernusen@aol.com. Free consultation for safety questions.

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## Hey Buddy, can you spare the time ?

by Phil Warner

As a diver, I've learned that solo diving breaks the foremost rule of the sport. You entrust your life to your buddy and vice versa. Diving is considered a high risk sport because if you run out of air, you're history.

In sea kayaking there isn't the same level of risk; however, we are placing ourselves in a foreign environment where if something goes wrong it can have dire consequences. As we progress with our skills, we accept a higher level of risk, gradually. To some, this is part of the excitement of sea kayaking.

Safety is our primary responsibility when we are on the water – to ourselves and others. In an effort to minimize the burden on the more experienced paddlers, who are usually looked to for assurance, I would like feedback on a "Buddy System" for ConnYak trips.

The buddy system will ensure that no one is paddling alone and will reduce how much a trip "leader" will have to focus on everyone else during the paddle. If someone has a problem during a trip, they can return to the launching area or "safety" with their buddy. In this way, instead of canceling a whole trip because of a minor injury or if someone is uncomfortable paddling in the conditions encountered, the two buddies or a small group can escort the paddler in distress and no one has to paddle back alone. Obviously, for a major accident or injury, the trip is over and the focus is returning everyone safely.

The buddy system will work if buddies of equal skill paddle together. Other variations work just as well, such as paddling with a friend, family member, significant other or spouse. You might even consider paddling with someone you don't know (or would like to), this integrates the members of the club. (A stranger is just someone you haven't met.) The goal is to paddle with someone you are comfortable with because you may need to ask them for help or come to their aid.

More experienced paddlers will always keep an eye on the group in general. A lead and sweep paddler will be used to keep the group together while on the water. The "Buddy System" will help those feeling unsure to paddle with more confidence and safety.

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## President Retires

*ConnYak members, due to increased demands on my time both professionally and personally I am no longer able to devote the time to the club that I believe it deserves. Because of this I will not be standing for re-election in the upcoming election of officers. I have enjoyed my time as president it has been rewarding, satisfying. It has provided me with the opportunity to meet many fine people and gain new friends. I thank you all for your support over the past years.*

*Elections will be in January. - Edwin Milnes*

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### Pool secured for winter

Dean Bertoldi secured the Wallingford pool for Sundays in January and February for our winter practice sessions.

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### Greenland skin boatclasses

Mystic is offering skin boat building classes for people with no previous wood-working skills. The cost is \$950 for non-Mystic members. Courses start in January. There's also Greenland Paddle making courses. Check out their web site at [www.Mysticseaport.org](http://www.Mysticseaport.org).

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## CONNYPAK 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.

**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.**

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## CONNYPAK MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

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

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## EVENTS/ PADDLES



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### HADDAM MEADOWS-CT RIVER SATURDAY, OCT 6TH - HADDAM (N)

Paddle up river have lunch and back on the other side. No fixated destinations.

Pack lunch. In the water at 10 a.m.

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#### DIRECTIONS -

**Northbound on Rt.9,-Exit 7 off Rt. 9 - go to the end. left on 154. 3 miles to Haddam Meadows - watch for entrance to park on right.**

**Southbound on Rt.9, take exit 10 to southbound Rt. 154 to Haddam - watch for entrance to park on left.**

**Inland from East Hampton side of the river - cross bridge at the Goodspeed - 1 mile to junction and a right on154.**

*Haddam Meadow State Park has no admission fee.*

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### MIKE FALCONERI TALK

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 7:00 PM**

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### HAMBURG COVE FOLIAGE

**SATURDAY OCT. 27 - ESSEX (N)**

In the water by 10:00. Paddle to Hamburg Cove with lunch on Nott Island.

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#### DIRECTIONS -

**From Exit 3 off route 9, go to stop light and go east on West Avenue in to Essex Center - to the rotary at the head of Main Street and then go north (left) on North Main Street for 1 short block and turn right onto Bushnell Street. Just before entering the Dauntless Boat Yard there is a dirt road to the left, leading a short distance to the boat launch and parking area.**

**In the water by 10:00 a.m. (pack a lunch)**

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## connYak Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 18 - 7:00  
WALLINGFORD PARK AND RECREATION

General meeting - discussions on up-coming events, controlling paddles, groups, and other business.

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#### DIRECTIONS TO WALLINGFORD PARK & REC.

**Exit 15 (Rt 68) off I-91 in Wallingford. West on Rt. 68. (toward Wallingford) Approx. 3/4 mile take a right at the Fire Station (Barnes Road at the light). Take your first Rt. off Barnes on to Fairfield Blvd. Wallingford Park & Rec. is the 2nd building on the left up the hill.**



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

# CLASSIFIED

Kayak 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. Surf kayakers@aol.com

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

2 Walden Vista Expedition 12.5' kayaks (lime, grape) \$600 ea. (203)389-1230 email [ensign@southernct.edu](mailto:ensign@southernct.edu)

13' Mad River Compatriot; light green with wood trim, 42 lbs., mint condition., \$500, Clark 203/271-2484

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

Valley Anas Acuta, Ex cond., Day hatch, \$2500. Vyneck - Nigel Foster, 19" beam, \$1200. 860-441-8416W or [jonandlisa@msn.com](mailto:jonandlisa@msn.com)

P& H Serious (M) \$1200 white/white, skeg. good condition. 203-481-32210

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

Current design - Caribou, fiberglass. Ye./yel. 45 lbs. hard chine \$1895 203-985-9288 [areimann@snet.net](mailto:areimann@snet.net).

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

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](mailto:jbrooks@wesleyan.edu).

Ocean Kayak-17'9"—Valley Aquila - Blue and white 1800 - 203 226-6926 —[pascale@earthlink.net](mailto:pascale@earthlink.net)

Kokatat, Gore-Tex, front entry, dry suit, never used. Size-Medium. \$400. Call 860 767-0696.

Wilderness Systems Sealution: 16.5' x 22" Glass, Light, All grey. VCP hatches, no rudder, Compass and spray skirt. \$900. (860) 521-9054

Looksha IV, kevlar, plus extras. \$1900. 203-335-6289

Wilderness System Tchaika, glass with float bags, (no hatches - no rudder) excellent condition, \$750.00 - 860-444-6950 9-5 or [riley@uconnect.net](mailto:riley@uconnect.net).

P& H Serious \$1200 firm. Also Lendal carbon fiber paddle. Boat in Chester, CT - I'm in N. Carolina. 806-526-5776 - ask for Dave or Nancy. Also Yakima rack for Sea Kayak for sale.

Old Town Otter kayak, 9.5', excellent condition \$175. (860) 346-7428.

## INSTRUCTION

Urban Eskimo Kayaking Classes  
Mike Falconeri Nancy Lovelace  
203-284-9212 860-228-0105  
[www.uekayaking.com](http://www.uekayaking.com)

SEA KAYAK SKILLS WORKSHOPS  
Saturdays - Noon to 4  
10/6, 10/20, 11/3 - 11/17 12/1 - 12/15  
ESKIMO ROLLING  
Sundays - 9:00 am to Noon  
10/7 - 10/21, 11/4 - 11/18, 12/2 - 12/16  
SAFETY AND RESCUE  
Sundays - Noon - 4  
10/7 - 10/21, 11/4 - 11/18, 12/2 - 12/16

## 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](mailto:CONNYAK@CONNYAK.ORG)**

**WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD: [WWW.CONNYAK.ORG](http://WWW.CONNYAK.ORG)**

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



Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.



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