

CONN YAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

February 2002

Winter Kayak Maintenance

by Paul Donoski

Not all of us are up to building his own custom kayak over the Winter like Dick Gamble and Jay Babina. But we can and should perform some maintenance and improvements to our kayaks. Even our paddles and gear require some inspection and loving care once in awhile.

Here is my list of regular kayak Winter maintenance. I usually just pull my boat into the garage on some padded supports and have at it.

HULL REPAIR

Give the bottom, sides, bow, stern and deck a thorough inspection for cracks, deep scratches and nicks. You can get the necessary repair materials at boat shops like West Marine and Boaters World. They have fiberglass and gel coat repair kits. You may have to sand damaged areas first to blend in your repair material properly.

Even if my hull doesn't require any repair I always give it a coat of wax or 303 UV Protectant during the Winter. You can also use auto or boat polish

and/or rubbing compound to bring back that new shine and clean up any salt deposits and pond scum.

RUDDER / SKEG REPAIR

Inspect the cables and lines on your rudder for wear. If questionable then replace them. A light coating of silicone grease can go a long way for smoother operation. Retractable skegs can develop kinks in the flexible cables especially where they connect to the skeg itself. I found out how to remove my Dagger skeg by getting the service manager from their Web Site.

You may have your eye on the new Seal-line Rudder which has received good write-ups. Now's the time to replace your old rudder with this one which has solid foot pegs for control and rolling.

KAYAK RIGGING & BUNGEEES

The deck rigging lines and bungee cord frays and wears with time. Inspect your lines and replace those that are questionable. Often the lines are just loose from the factory and need to be tightened. bungee cord knots have a way of loosening up as well. This usually involves no more than a simple tightening of the knot. You may also want to add some extra lines or bungees for better gear storage.

HATCH COVER LEAKS

Put some fresh water into your hatches and determine where those water leaks are. Sometimes they can be from a cockpit bulkhead or hatch cover. Marine grade RTV can solve a lot of problems. Some hard hatch covers require a neoprene cover to make them watertight. These neoprene pieces tear and wear easily. You should be able to order replacements from the manufacturer of your boat.

THE KAYAK SEAT

There is not much maintenance with a kayak seat which is often molded plastic or a nylon back band. Possibly you haven't been satisfied with the support or comfort of your current seat back. In that case it is time to look at a replacement or different type of back band more to your liking. Your best bet is to sit in a variety of kayaks and find a back that you like. I bet you can find the same back or a comparable one for your kayak.

Don't forget to improve your cockpit fit by adding some foam for hip and thigh support. It's amazing how this will improve your control and rolling ability. There are numerous articles and members in ConnYak who can help with proper fit.

FOOT PEGS

Inspect your foot pegs for salt buildup and corrosion. I don't like the foot pegs in my wife's new Impex kayak so I am changing them over to Dagger foot pegs which mount on the same center distance.

EXTRA OPTIONS

This may be the best time to add items to your boat such as a deck compass or extra storage clips inside the cockpit for your pump or water bottle.

PADDLES

Winter is a good time to refinish your Greenland paddle if you like a finish. It is also time to carve that storm paddle or carve a new one slightly longer or shorter than your current paddle.

I have been wanting to make and add bungee drip rings to my Greenland pad-



Paddling in the Thimbles - Judith Meyers and Richard Taylor photo - Tom Maziarz

Continued -

dle for over a year now. Well they are on my Winter list of paddle improvements.

GEAR REPAIR

It's also a good time to inspect and seal any tears or leaks in your favorite spray skirt. I have seen a few spray skirts in the Club that look like they belong in the Smithsonian.

- Check your paddle float to make sure it is OK. We may use it only once or twice a year at rescue clinics. Some day we may really need that float only to find out it won't hold air any more.
- Now is a good time to take a close look at that 10 year old PFD. With some loving care it may serve you well for another 10 years or really be time for replacement with one of the newer designs with extra pockets and features.
- Take the time to check out your safety gear like flares and strobe lights. If questionable it's time to replace them entirely or at least the batteries.

DRY BAGS

Most paddlers can't even tell you what's in their dry bags. It's a good time to air them out and refresh your memory. It's also a good time to check your first aid kit or make a simple one from things you have.

CAR RACK AND CRADLES

Car racks are usually never checked for tightness until the entire assembly is falling off the car. Make sure it's secure and all the tightening bolts are still in place. Also check your straps to make sure they'll make it through another year.

Well, I have taken you through my winter maintenance list - now if I could only get somebody to do my kayak.

- PD

Drysuit seal replacement

OUTERWARE REPAIR - MADISON, CT
Authorized Kokatat repair and other brands as well. Zippers, seals etc. -
203-421-8485

Custom Spray skirts

Got an odd size or hard to find spray skirt size?
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COPING WITH FRIGID DIGITS

Judith Meyers

"Cold hands, warm heart" is a statement of fact if you are a sufferer, as I am of Raynaud's Syndrome. Raynaud's is a (often hereditary) disorder of the circulatory system where exposure of one's fingers and toes to even moderate cold can cause the body to overreact and go into survival mode; that is, withdraw blood from the extremities and redirect to warming the trunk and heart. The symptoms once exposed to cold are a blanching of one or more fingers, joint by joint resulting in numbness and stiffness. Once the blood flow is restored, the fingers become grey, then bright red. There is also some pain involved as circulation is regained. Allowing your fingers to remain blanched for a prolonged period of time can result in a weakening of the fingers and a diminishing of the sense of touch. In the extreme, the loss of blood flow can lead to frostbite or even gangrene.

As the season waned, and the air became colder, I heard complaints of cold fingers from a number of my Connyak buddies. I write this article to share some strategies I have learned from more than 30 years of living with this disorder. Mitts and gloves; choices are very personal. What works for one person may not be the best choice for another. I have yet to try all the available options. However, the two main ingredients that work for me are flexibility and layering. My present favorite outer glove is the neoprene ALEUTIAN. Stiffness in a glove will restrict circulation, which is why I was not happy with my CHOTA gloves. I bought the ALEUTIANS a little large so that I could layer inside. ALEUTIANS are bare neoprene on the outside which sheds water rather than holding it. Polyester and Capilene liners are effective, but by far my first choice for ultra cold protection is a thin wool liner. I also carry spares in case something gets wet.

Keeping warm from the inside is at least as important as the choice of outerwear protection. Keeping your heart rate up is the best defense. If you are in the water, but waiting for your buddies to get ready, keep moving. Don't keep a tight grip on your paddle either. Relax your hands, wiggle your fingers.

I like to carry disposable heat packs with me. You can stick them inside your gloves, then wrap your hands around your paddle. Cold feet are not usually an issue in kayaks, but when hiking, I

have used heat packs inside my boots as I have Raynauds in my feet as well.

By far, the quickest way to restore circulation is to put your fingers in warm water. I carry a thermos of hot liquid, and can dip my fingers in it if necessary.

This is my first winter with a dry suit. I am absolutely delighted with it. It keeps me warm and dry and is far more comfortable than I expected. It would be a shame to have that wonderful dry suit and still not be able to enjoy a winter paddle because of digit distress.

Over-Mitts

Judith's article was of particular interest to me since I'm usually the first paddler who switches to mitts in the late fall. The paddling mitts really take a lot of the freedom and joy of paddling away although I'm happy they work. The reason that mitts work well is because they don't get the evaporative cooling that goes on at each finger when a glove gets wet. Even dry, a mitt has less surface contact with each section of the fingers.

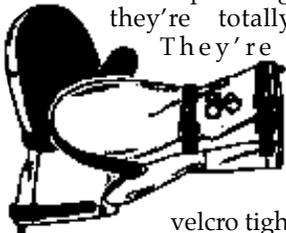
A while back, Sea Kayaker Magazine ran an article and test on paddling gloves and quite a few of them leaked. I know from experience that eventually they all leak. There's just so many little seams on a glove that it's impossible to retain water-tight integrity after some paddling usage. I used to go over all my glove seams with Aquaseal.

Because a glove leaks, doesn't mean it won't work. Hopefully the heat of your hands will heat the moisture and create a barrier just like a wetsuit does. The problem arrives when you can't generate enough heat in your hands to overcome the conditions.

Recently I found a great Over-mitt for paddling. I usually use my Seda neoprene paddling mitts which although work well cause a lot of frustration when I put them on since they have tight wrists. Further frustrating is putting the spray skirt on with them. Last year I bought the NRS Mitts which I like better since the wrist is looser and the mitt has a curved paddling-shape which is easier on your forearms. Never-the-less, it's still a mitt and presents the lack of dexterity of no fingers.

After paddling for an hour last week, I came in and experimented with another product. I put on my normal Chota paddling gloves and put on the OR (Outdoor Research) mitts over them. Fantastic! They're Mt. Baker Gortex fabric mitts - really big and baggy with a rubberized

palm that gives a good grip on the paddle. You don't really need Gortex, but these have taped seams guaranteeing water integrity and have the rubberized palm. They're actually for snowmobiles etc. - not a real paddling mitt although they're totally waterproof.



They're long, so the ends go up your fore-arms about 6 inches and they have a velcro tightening strap on the wrist and a sinching cord at the end. They worked great and you have the added advantage of having your hands in gloves for putting on spray skirts etc., and... they have enough room for a heat pack if you ever need it. I'm overwhelmed with them and I'm kicking myself for not trying them earlier since I've had them for over a year now. Campmor has them and they're \$54.99. You might find them at a local ski or camping/outdoors shop. Most importantly, they're super easy to put on and take off since they're loose and baggy and you can wear your favorite paddling glove under them. Basically, they're a waterproof wind blocker.

Pogies are similar as a wind blocker except they're fastened to the paddle and cold water can come in where they attach to the paddle with a velcro loop.

If you're paddling in the winter with gloves and experiencing no discomfort, I consider you lucky. However, if you find that your paddling gloves don't quite cut it on those windy cold days, here's an over-mitt that works great and one that you can easily take off and put on right over your paddling gloves.

- Jay Babina



NOVA SCOTIA EAST SHORE TRIP

A 5-day trip with 2 guides from Coastal Adventures in July-August 2002. Limit 10 persons, beginner-advanced. Registration deadline May 18. Contact trip coordinator Brooks Martyn for details, discounts. (860) 653-5899 or martynbw@aol.com

T-SHIRTS FOR ARTICLES

T-shirts for articles - If you haven't received your T's, they will be at all meetings along with hats for sale. Please speak up if we owe you a T for an article.

CONNYPAC POOL SESSIONS

SUNDAYS, JAN 27, FEB 3, 10

There's plenty of room at the pool to practice those things you normally never practice. Paddle float reentries, rolls, wet exit, bracing etc. Practice sessions are held at Sheehan High School (Wallingford) pool from 9 am to 1 pm. It's a great time to practice rolls, attempted rolls, rescues or whatever you want. The fee is \$10 - paid at the door - bring cash in an envelope with your name on it or checks made to ConnYak.

Directions: Exit 15 off Rt. 91. Rt 68 W. past intersections of Rt 15 & Rt 150. Take fourth left on to Hope Hill Road which is at the light. Sheehan High School is 1/4 mile on the Rt.

January Meeting notes

New president Wayne Smith was voted in along with other serving officers. The idea of more than one rescue clinic was brought up with no decision. The possibility of having a Greenlander as a guest to demonstrate techniques and presented as a multi-club gathering is being looked into. Discussion about whether we need or want to have a ConnYak table at various functions was discussed and concluded that with 400+ members we want our presence known but felt no need to aggressively push it. Our small turnout at meetings was discussed with no real conclusion.

CONNYPAC OFFICERS FOR 2002

President - Wayne Smith
Vice President - Phil Warner
Treasurer - Dick Gamble
Secretary - Jay Babina
Librarian - John Sweeton

Letter

I read your article (*Informing the under-dressed paddler*) with interest as I frequently feel the same way about telling a kayaker or another boater that they are dangerously lacking in knowledge.

It is indeed a mixed situation but you (or anyone else) should not feel you "ruined" someone's day because he paddled

near shore. You may indeed have saved his life. You also have given him a great gift if he is then motivated to read, take a course, or join an organization like Connypac which stresses safety as well as fun.

I think it is important not to be obnoxious, but spreading the word on safety to those you are still ignorant on the subject really is doing them a favor.

- Lenny Lipton

EVENTS



connYak Meeting Wed. february 20

General discussion on events, paddles.

7:00 WALLINGFORD PARK AND RECREATION

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.

Greenwich

small boat show

Sat & Sun, Feb., 9 & 10, 9 am - 6 pm

Greenwich Civic Center

Sponsored by the Small Boat Shop

Call for information

203-854-5223

Check the bulletin board for other impromptu trips listed by members - www.connypac.org

CONNYPAC MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

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

CLASSIFIED

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

EVENTS

Multi-Media Slide Show

by Michael Kodas

Kayaking-Climbing-Hiking February 19, 2002 7:00pm at North Cove Outfitters, Old Saybrook, CT. The show will include images of climbing Ama Dablam, a month long sea kayak circumnavigation of the Long Island Sound, and work on his book "Exploring the Appalachian Trail" Hikes in Northern New England. Tickets are \$5.00 and proceeds benefit the Ragged Mountain Foundation. Directions to North Cove can be found on www.northcove.com or by calling (860) 388-6585.

(Michael Kodas is an award-winning professional photographer, avid kayaker and climber)

Free lecture series

All at North Cove Outfitters - Saybrook
6:45 - 8 pm

Cold Weather Paddling
Tuesday, Jan 29

Rescue Techniques
Tuesday, Feb 12

Kayak Navigation
Tuesday, Feb 26

Kayak & Canoe trekking
Tuesday, Mar 12

Banff Mountain Film Festival Thursday,
February 28, 2002 at 7:00pm. Mary. S. Harkness
Auditorium, at the Yale Medical
School. 333 Cedar St., New Haven.

North Cove Outfitters is once again bringing the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour to Connecticut. The Banff Mountain Film Festival attracts the best in mountaineering and adventure films from all over the world. The night will showcase a two-and-a-half hour film that includes climbing, kayaking, skydiving, snow boarding, interesting environmental issues, and much more. Tickets are \$10.00 per person and are available the night of the show, or can be purchased in advance at North Cove Outfitters (860) 388-6585. Proceeds to benefit the Ragged Mountain Foundation. For directions go to www.raggedmtn.org and click on Banff.

Other showing dates and places: all 7 pm.

Friday, March 31 - Gideon Wells School
-Glastonbury

Sat., March 2 - Old Saybrook High School

Sunday, March 3 - Crazier Williams Student
Center - Connecticut College- New London



INSTRUCTION

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GRENLAND STYLE INSTRUCTION

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Certified and Donald White.
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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:

ConnYak, P.O. Box 197, Ellington, CT 06029

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
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