

CONN YAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

January 2002

STONINGTON

By Joan and Bill Anthony

This summer we paddled for the third time in and around Stonington, ME and think the area is one of the best for kayaking in New England. Stonington sits at the bottom tip of Deer Isle, about an hour's drive down from coastal Route 1. For the past several summers, between time spent at a rental house in Port Clyde, ME and friends and relatives on the coast above Bar Harbor, we have stopped in Stonington for a few nights at The Inn on The Harbor, which sits right on the water in the middle of town.

The area abounds in islands. It is a virtual archipelago in our New England backyard. Most islands are private and have homes; but many can be accessed as they are owned by the State of Maine or are part of the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) which provides day use and/or camping on selected islands for its members. MITA provides stewardship for both the state islands and its member private islands. The state owned islands are open to the public; the private ones require MITA membership for day or camping use. Seventeen MITA islands are in the Deer Isle area, of which

nine are state owned. Of particular benefit is that the islands provide a huge paddling area protected from the Atlantic swells. The area is especially interesting because the islands have beautiful rock-lined coasts of fantastically shaped pink granite, from which the town derives its name and fame.

Two Augusts ago we caught up with friends of ours and two of their friends and the six of us set off for a day paddle, leaving from the launch area at Old Quarry Ocean Adventures. We had not previously met Geoff Havens and his wife, Karen, but soon learned that Geoff is also a member of ConnYak. We were pleased to learn that the water temperature was a balmy 62 degrees according to a message on a chalkboard at Old Quarry. (Joan had been surprised a week earlier when she had found the water at Drift In Beach in Port Clyde pleasant for a swim.) A word about Old Quarry: this one of the best-run coastal access points in Maine. A family enterprise, it offers a launching site, bathrooms, camping rentals, guided trips and plenty of good information. It also serves as a well-coordinated operation with which to leave a paddle plan, a must for both day paddlers and overnights.

We paddled out past some nearby islands and stopped on Hell's Half Acre, pulling up to a small sand and crushed shell beach. This small narrow island was covered with moss and pine trees

GOOD NEWS!

Days are getting longer again.

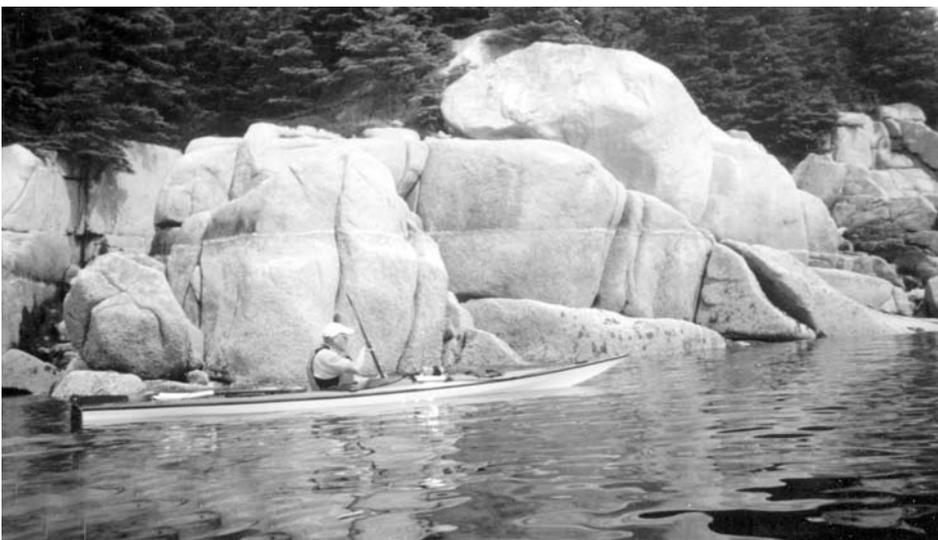
and had several beaches and a newly erected MITA tent platform. Paddling on past other islands, we saw often sighted osprey nests. We paddled between several small islands whose shores were guarded by huge, smooth granite rocks that often resembled animals. The opportunity to paddle so close to these massive granite and evergreen shores is exhilarating. Often large expanses of granite will show up below the clear water's surface giving it the appearance of a sandy, turquoise bottom. We landed at an island that had a small beach and found evidence of wild sheep in the form of tufts of wool, sheep droppings and a carcass or sheep pelt. A number of Maine islands have wild sheep, left over from when sheep were once grazed on islands because they were free from predators.

The town and islands around Stonington were once a bustling granite quarrying center, with schooners carrying the quarried stone to metropolitan centers on the East Coast for buildings and monuments. Now quarrying is done only on Crotch Island on a custom-order basis. But the rocks on many other islands show their evidence of past quarrying. On our lunch island, we found an iron wedge splitter still embedded in a granite ledge, frozen in time when work must have suddenly stopped.

The area is very active with lobster boats and if we saw one heading in our direction, we tried to keep together giving the lobsterman room to maneuver. Our group was in the path of a couple of lobstermen steaming back to Stonington harbor from behind us at a high rate of speed. One boat was very considerate and made a conscious effort to avoid us. The other boat came fairly close to Bill's boat, which was ahead of the rest of us, but he headed his boat into the four-foot plus wake and handled it easily. Stonington is on the lobster boat racing circuit and these guys like to practice.

This last summer we were back in

Continued -



Bill Anthony in Stonington

Stonington but only had one day to paddle. It was a cloudy day, which often provides the best light and visibility. This time the water was in the high fifties and Joan wore a farmer john wet suit for the first time. We paddled out to and around our favorite places and explored some new ones. Our lunch was on Russ Island (which has elusive sheep). A schooner from the windjammer fleet was disgorging its clients for their lunch, so we headed around the corner for more solitude. We also met some MITA island caretakers who were surveying island usage. Our lunch was high up on a bluff overlooking the Deer Isle Thorofare, the frequently traveled water passage between Deer Isle and the outlying islands.

We headed for Green Island where a secluded shell beach in a small cleft between the rocks offered a rest and a chance to swim with the wetsuit in cold-water. It's good to get a feel of the cold water and your protective gear's effectiveness in a safe location. Joan floated out on her back resting comfortably and was mistaken for a mermaid by a returning overnight kayak group, perhaps somewhat overtired and depressed from not having any other wildlife sightings.

Next time, I would like to paddle to Isle au Haut, which takes about six miles of island hopping to reach. This island is very large and also contains part of Acadia National Park. If anyone is interested in such a summertime trip or wishes to get information about kayaking in Stonington, contact us at 203-263-2548.

December Meeting notes

We had discussions on the oversized groups with the general consensus that multiple paddles on weekends would be the possible solution. The idea of group leaders was also discussed. There were mixed feelings on whether they were a necessary or whether they just presented a liability concern. The issue of whether the term "group leader" causes people to feel responsible rather than "organizer" which might make people more willing to list a paddle.

We will have paddles on Sat. and Sun. and not every weekend which would create more incentive for paddlers to list or post their paddling intentions which would ultimately be part of the cure for our oversized group.



Trials and Tribulations *of a beginner Paddler.*

Last March I purchased my first Kayak A 15 foot Perception Corona. I had only paddled twice before. Both times were on my honeymoon, almost a year ago. Both occasions were in long double Necky kayaks, which were a lot of fun at the time, but easy to understand why our guides called them divorce boats. Mainly on the advice of friends experienced in paddling did I make my decision, to purchase a single over a double and that it would be less expensive to buy another kayak at a later time then get a divorce boat, and the consequences that come with it.

My first excursion in my Corona was right off of Cove Island Beach in Stamford. It was early May and the water was just starting to warm up for my trial run. After padding for an hour around Cove Harbor, I knew one thing, that I've got a lot to learn. It was like going from a station wagon to a sports car. A lot more speed and responsiveness, which I was not prepared for. My entry was less than spectacular almost tipping over once, and just becoming used to the Kayak and its capabilities were a lesson in itself. I made sure to stay close to shore in case I did tip over, but I gradually got the feel for the boat, and enjoyed my first solo kayaking experience.

A couple of weeks later, I decided to venture out to the Norwalk Islands, I woke up early and was at Calf Pasture Beach before 9:00am. This time things went a lot smoother, except for one thing I forgot my bilge pump. I had never used it before, but I knew this something that I needed!!! Luckily, boat traffic was light, and I used the islands as protection. Paddling from island one to the other, always staying close the safety of an island. I was mad at my self for forgetting an essential piece of equipment, I would relearn this lesson another time this summer when I figured it was too hot to wear my spray skirt, while paddling with a friend off Greenwich. The wind was blowing pretty hard and the sound was choppy about 1-2 foot swells. Needless to say, A spray skirt would have been a big help as the bow of my kayak was submerged with wave after wave, we had a ball paddling through the swells and riding the waves on the way back. I learned a couple of more things, in my infancy into the world of kayaking. Each time out, I learn more of my own abilities, and how the boat re-

sponds, in a variety of conditions. I have added a checklist to review before leaving my house, and again before getting in the water.

When I joined the ConnYak club this summer I not been able to paddle with the group until the rescue day, held a couple of weeks ago, where I learned how do a wet exit, paddle float entry, and a wet entry, I also learned that the bilge pump, really doesn't work great on a boat half filled with water. A friend of mine suggested taking a cut up Clorox bottle for bailing out, your cockpit. I had great time meeting some new people, learning new skills, and a whole lot more about kayaking.

Throughout my first season of kayaking, I learned more each time I went out. My main concern is how to handle myself if I get into a trouble out on the water. I always have what if's running through my mind, and what I would do in this or that situation, I also am going to upgrade my equipment list to include a spare paddle and first aid kit. I look forward to plenty of more paddle days ahead.

- Daniel Maloney

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

Sorry! Katie's World Closes

Two days after my article "The Real Orlando Magic Kingdom" appeared in the newsletter, I received a newspaper clipping from my parents concerning Katie's World. The facility has recently been sold to the state of Florida and is to be converted into a limited-service state park.

All of the boats, trailers, etc., will be auctioned off in January 2002 and the site will be returned to a near-natural condition, to be used by canoeists and fishermen. The owners decided to retire after 27 years of operating the facility.

- Brooks Martyn

CONNYPOL POOL SESSIONS

SUNDAYS, JAN. 6, 13, 20, 27 FEB 3, 10

ConnYak pool sessions start every Sunday in January and the first two in Feb. The 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. We will not be limiting attendance or taking reservations. Everyone will have to be democratic and take turns. A half hour of submerged practice usually forces most paddlers to get out and warm up for a while. Although it's a heated pool, wear wetsuits, drytops etc. since it's easy to get chilled, and... don't forget a mask, nose clips etc. unless you enjoy chlorine in your eyes and sinuses.

These sessions are not ConnYak supplied lessons, however there are always experienced paddlers willing to help one another.

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.

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.

CONNYPOL MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

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

EVENTS/



connYak Meeting Wed. January 16

The most exciting meeting of the year - re-election of officers and President. 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.

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

CLASSIFIED

Cricket Greenland paddle. Has a well done splint \$50. Will never ever break. 203-481-3221

Derek Hutchinson Toksook paddle. 230 w/90 degree feather. \$300 or best offer. 860-561-4415

Prijon Sea Gull 16' 6" x 24" Fiber glass touring kayak. Compass and deck-mounted bilge pump, Rudder. \$1,350.00 / OBO. 860.767.1728. Email: Kayaker@KayakForFun.com

Werner carbon fiber Camano paddle, 230 CM, drilled for left or right handed feather, excellent condition. Call (860) 873-1884

"P&H Sirius (low volume) white hull, red deck, nice condition, great boat, \$1,200. Call (860) 767-0610.

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

COLD SHOCK – OUR REAL THREAT IN WINTER - Jay Babina

Everyone knows the word "Hypothermia". It's when the body gets cold beyond the ability of our natural defenses to adapt. The heart beat slows down, body functions slow down and eventually it can lead to death.

However it's Cold Shock which is the real danger to paddlers - especially in the winter. Skiers and hikers don't have to worry about Cold Shock. This is why the term is less universally known than the popular "Hypothermia".

If you ever made the mistake of jumping under a cold shower, you immediately gasp for air, your heart races and your immediate reaction is escape. If you're under water in the ice cold environment the same reactions occur however there is no escape unless you can get your body out of the water immediately. Even if you can get your head to the surface in ice cold water, it's difficult if not impossible to breathe. This is why people sometimes drown in cold water wearing PFD's. If you can get past the first few minutes, the heart beat will

gradually slow down and you have to work fast to signal for help or self-rescue yourself. Immediately Hypothermia starts to set in which means a gradual loss of your limbs and even the ability to speak.

People swim in ice cold Maine water in the summer, so what's the difference? It's the ability to warm up! A short swim in cold water with a warm blanket and a sunny 80 degree day on the beach is entirely different than floating around on a 30 degree day unable to get back into your boat.

Prevention is simple. Protective clothing - ideally drysuit or a wetsuit. The wetsuit will prevent cold shock but not provide long term protection.

Paddling with others is necessary and/or knowing your re-entry skills, paddling skills and lots of dry clothing backup. Artificial heat sources are also important - heat packs and hot food or drinks (soup).

Winter paddling can be totally safe. It's common sense, good judgement, awareness and knowledge that allows us to paddle safely all year long.



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

INSTRUCTION

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

GRENLAND STYLE INSTRUCTION

Instructors: Fern Usen, *BCU Coach and ACA Certified* and Donald White.
Call 860-643-8303 email: 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

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