

# CONN YAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

September 2002

## "Surf Kayak Challenge at Cahoon Hollow"

by John Dykman

It seems I always open the ConnYak newsletter before any of the other mail, though I've never had a story to contribute, since my own paddling experiences didn't seem exciting enough.... until I had the opportunity to try some surf kayaking in Wellfleet (Cape Cod), MA.

On Saturday, July 27, the Goose Hummock shop (Orleans, MA) held its first annual Surf Kayak demo day. A dozen white water river "playboats" were provided by Wave Sport Kayaks. These small "toyboats" look like the offspring of touring kayaks, somewhat resembling a Dutch wooden Clog shoe, with their upswept bow. With such low volume, they look like they won't float.

Thanks to Dick Hilmer of Goose Hummock and the guys at WaveSport; for providing their time, talents and equipment. Also instructing was Karen (Kaz) Armstrong, Women's champion Surf kayaker from New Zealand. A \$20 fee went for the \$10 parking charge and a \$10 coupon for food at the Beachcomber restaurant, which is on this spectacular beach bluff overlooking the Atlantic some 70 feet below.

Skies were dreary and gray, with a steady chill wind and a forecast high in the low 60's...a typical cloudy day for the Lower Cape when the sun also takes its' vacation! Thankfully no rain to dampen the mood as some of the par-

ticipants seemed cold before getting wet. The water temperature was about 60 as well, which is a few degrees warmer than usual. There had been steady 10-20 knot east winds over the past two days which resulted in some larger swells, but now all were relieved to see more moderate, but still surfable 2 to 4 footers ... perfect for a demo group.

Dick started with the prerequisite lessons on gear and safety. Instruction was presented on the "wet exit". Then all 15 participants were teamed up with instructors based on their stated experience level. All were required to perform their "wetexit" successfully in the boneyard (crashing surf) before heading out. I used a helmet, which later saved me from a good sand facial.

Paddling a kayak shorter than 7 feet, out through crashing surf was more difficult than it looked from shore. And getting back on the beach would prove to be even more difficult as I was soon to find out. Jay Babina's recent article on the technique of positioning yourself for entering surf proved very helpful; lean forward in the roll setup position with the paddle straight forward and down along the side of the boat. Otherwise a natural reaction is to lean back to try to avoid the wave, which raises the paddle blades out of the water, and exposes your entire body to the full impact of the wave - these boats have no long bow out

## Greg Stamer

Greenland Rolling and Paddling  
Champion - Sat and Sun. Sept 7 & 8  
⌘Demo, Lecture and Forum

Greg Stamer who has competed for the second year in the Greenland National Paddling Championships will be visiting ConnYak to run a clinic and demonstrate techniques and rolling at an open forum at Bluff Point State Park on Sat. Sept. 7th. at 10 am. The instructional clinic will be on Sun. Sept 8th at Bluff Point for a fee of \$30. Check the bulletin board - as of this mailing it may be full.

The Greenland Clinic and demo at Bluff Point is open to all whether you use a Greenland Paddle or not.

Saturday night, Greg will be giving a slide/video show on his participation in the 2001 and 2002 Greenland National Kayaking Championships at the Essex Town Hall.

The show will be preceded by a short (VERY short) club meeting. A donation of \$5 is asked at the door. Festivities begin at 7:00 PM at the Essex town hall.

This year, Greg Stamer placed first in individual rolling in his age class of 35 - 49, fourth in team rolling (team members Harvey Golden and Svend Ulstrup), third in the long distance race (approx 17 kilometers), eighth in the short-distance race and first overall in points for his age group.

For his age class, Greg placed first in



John Dykman resting on the beach.



Greg Stamer at the Greenland Rolling Championships

rolling, third in team rolling (team members Ray O'Brien -Scotland and Svend Ulstrup - Denmark), ninth in the short distance race and first overall in the International Class.

"Not sure how I placed overall in the Greenlandic class, or my results for the long distance race (I think I placed fifth), or my placement for the rope gymnastics. *(from an early August email)*

"The ice near Ilulissat was extremely thick and it took considerable time to pick our way through (including some very heavy thumps to the hull). For a few days it looked like the competition might be canceled as the ice was too thick to allow kayaking but it cleared the day before the events started and again become choked with ice two days after the competition ended. During the races it was necessary to weave around large and small blocks of ice, and one competitor in my age class required a rescue in the long distance race when he struck ice and cut the skin on his kayak. The water was barely above freezing, quite cold for rolling, and more than once powerboats had to clear the ice during the rolling event, both by dragging a line on the surface or simply powering the bow up onto a small berg and pushing it away... "-

#### *Surf Challenge continued -*

in front to carve through the wave.

I paddled two boats: the "Big EZ" and the "Z" (couldn't bend my knees backwards enough to manage the regular EZ). Later I learned from Wave Sport's product literature that both of these boats were too high in volume for my weight. River kayakers desire to have the waterline near the "parting line" (where the sidehull meets the deck) to properly balance river running and play ability, so they can perform vertical tricks like endos, loops, and spin moves.

I have done some limited surfing of 3 foot swells on Long Island Sound, but this was an entirely different experience. I headed straight out to the outside break and met up with Kaz who gave me instruction on catching my first waves. Timing is critical, and you really have to paddle hard to get these small boats moving fast enough to catch the wave, and not be flipped. A sea kayak seems to catch any wave over 2 foot, but these river boats need a good 3 - 4 footer with a steeper face to ride.

The lack of a long water line and keel presented a challenge for steering. In a longer boat you have lots of edge to hold

the force of your stroke along the water line and reduce twist. And there is no keel to hold the force of the stroke, as the hull is completely flat - they don't track unless put on an edge.

Kaz quickly corrected my habit of high bracing (with the paddle's power face down against the water), into a low brace using the back of the blade (power face up). As I caught my first wave, I immediately hoped my roll would work if I got flipped...It was not a question of if, but how often! You go over very FAST!. After the foam subsided, I rolled up and was thankful that my roll is bombproof!. (FYI - touring noseplugs, those soft flexible rubber ones, with the comfortable spring don't stand a chance of staying in place when one is slammed into surf)

After a few rides, which seemed really fast, I learned that ruddering with the paddle on edge behind me was not nearly as effective as a low brace on a flat paddle face, placed on the uphill side of the wave. I was able to do some angling, mostly to the right, but I tended to just try for a straight fast ride, while trying to keep in front of the wave until it died, and I could spin off the top and head back out to catch the next good set. Though it can also be fun to ride the breaking soup sideways like a cork.

It was on my first attempt to beach that I found out how hard it is to land without getting dumped. Lesson learned - wait for a larger swell that will put you high up the beach, time it right on the back side of the wave, you may need to back paddle for a moment, beach - then pull the spray skirt, and get out quick! I got dumped in a foot of water when the boat spun, the water poured in the (now open) cockpit and I was upside down in a foot of water, helmet jammed in the sand with a very loaded boat on top of me. I rolled after losing the paddle and pushing off the bottom. Then I looked up to see my thoroughly entertained family cheering on the sidelines!

After a short rest I headed out for more. We were all pretty much done after lunch as the shore break became too severe even though there were still many good waves. But I was too beached (totally stuffed) from lunch at the "Beachcomber" anyway, and had enough (punishment) for the day.

I'm no longer afraid of seawater up the nose (it only takes an hour or so for your sinuses to stop leaking seawater - eewww gross!) I was very thankful for a dependable roll, though many had to swim to shore with boat and paddle in hand after getting rolled and wetexting which definitely cut into their surfing time. At

the end of the day I was sore and exhilarated.. though if just for a day... I felt like a real surf dude.

## **CONNYPAC PICNIC** **SEPT. 22** **and swap meet / tag sale.**

PATACONK RESERVOIR - SUN. 22nd  
CHESTER CT. 10 am - ?

This year our annual picnic which always proves to be a great time for everyone is being held at Pataconk lake which will offer us a nice paddling and picnic location. The lake is large enough to paddle and enjoy your kayak and offers some nice beach areas.

We would like people to bring food to share. The giant buffet that it provides makes a great feast and social center for everyone. ConnYak will also supply Hot Dogs, Burgers, soda, chips etc. and clean-up items as well. There will be a gas grill for cooking and you are welcome to bring along family members if you choose.

We will have a area where you can sell paddling items that are no longer used or taking up space in the garage. Old paddles, PFD's, spray skirts, dry bags, ear plugs, broken skin boat coamings - anything that someone else might use. Bring items you want to sell with a price tag and name on it so people can check them out in the morning. Or... you can donate items to our raffle which we will have after lunch time. This way you don't have to lug it home unless you win it back at next year's picnic.

**DIRECTIONS - PATACONK RESERVOIR, CHESTER**



# Crossing the Sound for a Cause

by Judy Hampel

My husband, Bob, and I have been kayaking for the last ten years. We're very fortunate as we live in Stratford with some really nice kayaking destinations - down the Housatonic River, through the Stewart B. McKinney Wildlife Refuge and along the Sound at Long Beach and Pleasure Beach. We have planned vacations around kayaking including such places at Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

But I have always found kayaking more than a social or sporting event. I find being as close to nature as kayaking permits - the wind, sun, water, and bird calls - it is also a time for personal reflection and searching for inner peace. I have said goodbye to personal losses out on the water and experienced great joy and have found it very comforting.

Over the past year, my friend, Cathy, and I have experienced several losses of family and friends due to cancer, as did many of our friends. We also both experienced great joy in the birth of 4 grandchildren and wanted to do or give something that could help others in the future.

We work for St. Vincent Hospital and are well aware of the charitable work done for Cancer research by the "Swim Across the Sound". So, we decided to kayak across the Sound and ask friends and family to donate to the cancer research organization of their choice in support of our effort.

On the glorious Saturday morning of July 13, Cathy, myself and our two sons, Marc and Scott, left Compo Beach in Westport in two tandem kayaks at 7:45 in the morning for the 14 mile trek. The tide was low, the winds were southerly at 10 knots and the sky was overcast but promising. We arranged for a friend with a power boat to keep a lookout for us as we crossed the Sound in case of sudden wind or fog since the Sound can be such an unpredictable place.

As, we circled Cockenoe Island in Norwalk the water was choppy with 1-2 foot swells particularly around the breakwaters. But once out by the 4 mile marker the water calmed with only occasional waves over the bow of the kayak giving the two women in the front of the kayaks many mouthfuls of salt water. But the water was cool and refreshing and a fun part of the experience. We said more goodbyes to lost loved ones

and more thanks for the blessings of family and friends, especially our two sons who were paddling behind us. The time went really quickly and at 10:20 we stopped in an area of very calm water for drinks, power bars, and a quick swim for some of us. We saw many boats off the horizon but we were still about 4 miles out from our final destination - Eaton 's Neck Coast Guard Station.

Stopping was probably not the smartest thing to do as getting our momentum back was difficult. And this is when we hit some of the toughest water - very confused with 2-3 foot swells hitting the beams of the boats as the tide came in. We used our rudder and tried to zigzag through the surf as best we could and were able to get through this area of difficult water. But, then we hit the channel and needed to be very alert for boaters not expecting 2 kayaks out on this area of the Sound. We stayed together and made it safely across to shore in little more than 3 hours of total paddling.

We were greeted by 2 members of the Coast Guard -- it's good to know there is good security everywhere! They told us we could stay in the area we landed for a swim and some food on this beautiful beach but to stay with the boats since the location was a nesting area for birds and they could not be disturbed.

Our friend in his power boat arrived and took us and our kayaks back to Compo Beach in Westport shortly after that. The trip was a real accomplishment for me personally, and hopefully resulted in many donations to cancer charities.



ConnYak President Wayne Smith tries Pete Strand's flattering Tullieg at the "Meet at the Beach" in June.

## EVENTS



**Greg Stamer - Sat and Sun. Sept 7 & 8**  
**☼Demo, Lecture and Fourm**

**Club Picnic - Sun. Sept 22 - Chester**

**2 INTER-CLUB PADDLES**  
**BY NORTH SHORE PADDLERS - MA**

September 14

The North Shore Paddlers Network (NSPN) is proud to host an inter-club trip for the New England sea kayak clubs.

The plan is for NSPN to coordinate 3 trips of different distances and put-in locations to arrive at Misery Island @ noon time and have lunch. The trip levels will be Level 2, Level 3, and a level 4/5. Our website gives details on our rating system. Go to "Trip Ratings" on our main page <http://www.nspn.org/> The Level 2 trip will depart from the Manchester Harbor MA area. The Level 3 trip will depart from Devereaux beach in Marblehead MA. The Level 4/5 trip would depart from Gloucester MA. 2 trips lead by ConnYak. Details - <http://www.nspn.org/> or on the board.

## Paddles Strategy Working

It's been dissappointing for many ConnYak members who wanted a weekly club paddle, however our intentional efforts to list multi-paddles on less weekends has worked. Slowly but surely, individuals are becoming less shy about posting their paddling intentions on the bulletin board and are finding that all it takes is the desire to share a paddling event. The entire notion of having to be a brave and highly qualified leader is suddenly not as important as getting together with some paddling friends and using common sense in the decision making. Our club is larger and the paddles are less crowded. The free weekends have given many paddlers a chance to explore many areas that they didn't paddle before, since our club paddles restricted us to large parking lots.

We also owe a lot to the other paddling organizations like the Tues. Night Paddlers and RIKA who help us indirectly by offering alternative paddling opportunities. The overcrowding problem that seemed almost unsolvable only a year ago is now easily manageable. Now if we could only stop feeling guilty about not having paddles. Sorry! -JB

# CLASSIFIED

Derek Hutchinson Toksook paddle new 230 Kevlar . New \$330 now \$225 or best offer. 860-561-4415 work 860-635-1979 email: bobyak2@aol.com

Dry-tops. Stohlquist. One new, one used. \$100 & \$65. Both mens medium. Tom 413-593-6167.

Old Town Castine Kayak 14' beginners kayak. red, 2 hatches, paddle and skirt. \$600. 860-985-6893

Valley Skerray, Fiberglass, Blue over White, with skeg and Chimp Pump. Great condition! \$1700 203-854-9713 brianenichols@aol.com

Valley Skerray XL, Fiberglass, Turquoise over white, with skeg, two hatches, chimp pump, and compass. \$1795. Contact (203) 840-0156.

Aquaterra Double - Gemini, poly, tandem, wide beam, great for the kids or lake. Asking \$600.00 or best offer. Call 860-388-2464 Sharon.

Old Town Nantucket - 1 year old - \$500.00 yellow poly, rudder, thigh braces, adjustable hip pads Pete 860-749-0471

Impex Montauk, Fiberglass, \$1800 includes Skirt and compass. Call Bill - 860-535-4473

NORDKAPP HM good condition. Day hatch, rear oval hatch, canvas storage bag, compass. Orang / white \$1600 860-633 7254.

Two Werner paddles for sale; one left hand control San Juan and one right hand control Camano . Both in Fiberglass . \$175.00 each . Call 203 226 9674 days or 203 454 2278 eves .

Wilderness Systems Shenai, Red over white, Kevlar. Very light, fast boat. \$1400.00. Phone 203-270-9134

Perception Pirouette White Water kayak: Float bags, \$450 B/O. 860-613-0622 or Bkahuna@snet.net

Yakima Hully Rollers, set of 4: \$70.-860.460.4983

Thule, racks and cradle for auto w/ gutters. \$35. jbabina@snet 203-481-3221

Stearns Self Bailing inflatable kayak; life jacket, pump, paddle and storage bag. Used one season, great shape. Lists new for \$479. Asking \$300. Elizabeth 203-878-8336, elizmont36@aol.com.

CD Caribou S -Kevlar -yel/wht, deck compas, skeg 1 seson. new \$3195 - now \$2000 Phil 860-436-450

**The weekend of Aug 17-18,  
32 paddlers paddled with ConnYak.  
Three paddles of 12, 11 and 9 - Barn  
Island, Norwalk Islands and 4 Mile River.  
Two of the trips were posted on the  
bulletin board.**

**Check the bulletin board fo impromptu  
trips listed by members - www.connyak.  
org**

**Paddles listed by members help avoid  
overcrowding launch sites with large  
ConnYak paddles.**

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

## 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**

### T-shirts for Articles

Authors of articles for the newsletter get a free T-shirt. If you have written an article and haven't recieved you T-shirt, please speak up at one of the paddles. The club officers usually have them at the paddles.

### T-shirts will be at the picnic

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



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CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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