

## LESSONS LEARNED

by Wayne Smith

A group of us got together on July 5th to paddle out of Newport, RI from King's Beach Fishing Access to Second Beach & back. An intermediate/advanced paddle over 2 reefs and across 3 headlands, all totally exposed to the open ocean.

I arrived, and looked out at Brenton Reef. It was looking a bit rough, but not horrible. Everyone was preparing to launch, so I thought the marine forecast had not changed from when I last checked it the night before. Not so. My friend Mike arrived, and said that the forecast had changed, and that the launch site might be a touchy landing later on. We looked around, and saw a sheltered alternative with a short portage back to the cars. OK, decision time. Alternatives were voiced, and the final outcome was that Mike took several people, and paddled out of Kings Park in Newport, which would be totally sheltered, and the rest of us decided to try the original plan. I had suggested a little rock gardening and cliff paddling out of Ft Wetherill, and maybe surfing in Mackerel Cove if there was any, but there were no takers. OK, just a thought.

So, those of us who had helmets took

them, and we all launched. We paddled out, and the swell and waves were about 3 + feet. They quickly built to 4 feet, but didn't seem to get any worse for a bit. We got to a small headland, and the seas rose to about 5 feet. We grouped up in the lee of some rocks, and voted to carry on. About a mile down the shore, we came to another headland with a reef off it. Now the waves were about 6 feet, with the occasional 8 footer rolling by on the reef. We picked our way through the reef, and just as we thought we were in the clear, someone yelled "Man in the water!".

Another paddler and I rescued him, and got him on his way. The capsizing was not because of waves or fear, just a momentary lapse. He was fine & wanted to continue. Now, there were doubts raised about landing at second beach. We voted to abort. We turned around, picked our way back across the reef, and headed back toward the launch. There was some discussion about landing on First Beach for lunch, but that would not have been well received by the lifeguards, and it would have been a rough landing in any event. We decided to head back to the launch & figure out an alternative. We got back to the launch, and the seas

had built there considerably. The launch site was calm, but there were swells coming in, and rocks between us and the ramp. Everone who had a helmet put them on, and we found an easy route in using the rocks as shelter from the waves.

Some landed, and some of us played in the breaking waves around the rocks, and did some easy surfing. We all eventually landed, and had lunch. The majority of the group went back out after lunch towards Brenton Reef for a little rough water fun. Most of the group went out around Seal Rock, about a mile offshore, and another paddler and I went back to the launch to surf in the cove next to the ramp. We gathered up after we all landed & agreed that we had an exhilarating paddle even though we quite wisely decided to abort the original plan.

Lessons Learned:

- Be flexible and have alternatives (Including just going home if it's too rough out there)
- Don't be afraid to speak up in a group - if you have doubts, someone else does, too

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## 4th Annual Rescue Clinic Sat, Aug 16th

The Annual ConnYak Rescue Clinic will take place on Saturday - August 16 - at Bluff Point State Park. This is a forum type of affair with demonstrations of various rescue techniques by paddlers who would like to share experiences and knowledge. We need paddlers who would like to demonstrate things. We also encourage all paddlers to get wet and at least try a couple. We will start at 10:30 am.

**Special Rec. Boat Reality Demos for Recreational Users and Rescuers**  
*(A very humbling event for both parties)*

**... Canoe Rescue and Rescue Races!**  
*Rescue and Swimmer teams picked from a hat.*

*and*

**... A flare firing demo! (fire your test flare)**

*Please contact Jay Babina if you would like to demonstrate a rescue jbabina@snet.net*



*A group of the Tommy Fund Paddlers at lunch. Photo by Dave Fusulo - story inside.*

## LESSONS LEARNED - from the front page

- Don't be afraid to challenge yourself within reason (With experienced company)
- Always have ALL your paddle gear with you. I've carried a helmet in my boat maybe 3 times ever, and only used it twice. But, it's always in my car in case I need it.
- If nobody in the group had practiced rescues in REAL conditions, it may have been a different story. In fact, a 14 year old girl was killed that same day just down the shore when she was swept off a jetski by a wave. She wasn't wearing a PFD. We pulled off an easy "H" rescue in 5 - 6 foot seas and a 15 knot wind and were able to continue. Big difference in outcomes.

### GPS LESSON LEARNED

from WayneSmith

I took Adam Bolonsky's GPS navigation class last year as a refresher, as I hadn't used my navigation skills much in the years since I last took a chart navigation class. For practice over the winter, I picked a launch site I use every so often up in Southport, ME, and calculated the coordinates off a chart with dividers and input them into my GPS.

I was up in Southport paddling, and brought my GPS, because there was a chance we'd get fogged in. As we ended the paddle, I remembered the waypoint. So, I stood at the ramp, turned on the GPS, selected the waypoint, and hit "Go To". The GPS told me my waypoint I calculated was 190 feet northwest of where I was standing. Not too shabby for a paddler, huh?

Had we been fogged in, we would have made it back to the launch safely.

Adam's class was worth every penny.

## Lessons Learned

by Paul Donoski

I learned a costly lesson practicing at Cedar Lake. I wet exited with hat and prescription sunglasses. The hat floated but no sign of the glasses even though they were attached to North Cove Croakies. We looked for over a 1/2 hour. At home I took a spare of the exact same Croakies and a similar pair of glasses. Guess what - they sunk to the bottom of my test tank. Besides new sunglasses, I'm also in the market for a real pair of floating eyeglass retainers. Don't assume that Croakies will float your glasses - especially ones with real glass.

## Lessons Learned

by Doug Murray

Amen to having good navigational skills.

I'm usually pretty good at knowing where I am, but twice have been caught out while kayaking:

1) My wife and I camped overnight in Casco Bay on a summer weekend in 1986 and woke to 1/4 mi visibility in fog. This was very pretty but not the weather I was hoping for. We waited in camp until noon, but the fog wasn't going anywhere, so I decided to use the "Columbus Strategy"...paddle west and you're bound to hit North America.

Paddling in heavy fog was spooky: We could hear lobstermen working their pots within a few hundred yards, but could see nothing. Fortunately, all the power boats were moving dead slow because of the fog. We rounded Chebeague Is. and took a compass heading for Littlejohn Is., about 3/4 miles distant, but not visible due to fog. I decided to err to the left (south), thus ensuring I'd hit the island south of point that we needed to go around. I ended up missing my mark (and darn near the entire island) by ~1/4 mile to the north! Pretty embarrassing on a 3/4 mile run. The fog lifted for a few seconds, and I saw the point and thus got back on course. I have never figured out the source of my error here. There are no significant currents that I know of running in this channel. An error in declination would have ended me up too far south instead of north.

I was making do with a hiking compass instead of a good deck compass, and this was difficult to use in the boat, but I don't think it would account for the error. Ultimately, the "Columbus Strategy" would have saved me, but would have ended me up with an additional hour or so of paddling in the fog before we found our take out. LESSONS LEARNED: New respect for fog and less confidence in my non-visual kayak navigation skills. I purchased a good deck compass immediately after this trip.

2) In March 1993 I lead a group through the northern Everglades. We camped at Lostman's Bay (a little foreshadowing?) on 5th night out and when I turned on the weather radio the next morning, the forecast called for 6' surf and small craft advisories by that night. This was pretty impressive since most of this area is only about 3 feet deep for some distance offshore. We made a decision to run for

shelter at the northern entrance to the Everglades National Park at Chokoloskee and thus cut the trip short by one day. We made good time surfing north on strong south wind as the storm formed to our west in the Gulf of Mexico. Sea conditions started getting choppy by late afternoon and decided to sneak into Rabbit Pass to get into the shelter of Chokoloskee Bay. Rabbit Pass is unmarked and really only suitable for small boats or those with local knowledge of the shoals.

One mile further north is Chokoloskee Pass which is marked with buoys and is the main boat entrance to the bay. I got messed up in the Ten Thousand Islands area...way too many islands and channels to rely on piloting by using landmarks. Shifting channels make the charts of the area unreliable. My back-up strategy was to go back west to the Gulf of Mexico, find the buoy at Chok. Pass and take the main route in which would take about an additional 1-2hrs. paddling in deteriorating weather conditions. While puzzling over the chart, I caught a glimpse of the stern of the "tour boat" that takes Everglades tourists out of Chokoloskee disappearing between two islands. It turned out, I was only a couple of hundred yards south of Rabbit Pass and made the run into port with no further trouble, however, it was only luck that the tour boat happened by when it did.

That evening, winds gusted over 50 miles per hour and there were impressive lightning displays in the squalls coming on-shore.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

Featureless islands can be miserably confusing and do not serve as useful landmarks. Charts and compass are only marginally helpful in these areas. It was here I swore I'd get a LORAN (remember, 1993) before exploring this area further. Both of these adventures ultimately were fun and now, thanks to my wife and paddling partner, I have GPS that would have saved some tense moments. I think GPS is a great investment if you go offshore or overnighting. Probably GPS is not needed for day tripping in well known waters where you can pick your weather. The "Columbus Strategy" (with a good compass) will work, but may be more time/energy consuming. Always have a backup navigation strategy to bail out if you become confused. Have fun and paddle safe...

# TOMMY FUND PADDLE

by David Fasulo

Despite a light drizzle and impending rain, thirty-eight sea kayakers attended the Tommy Fund Paddle on June 7 in East Lyme and raised \$425.

The Tommy Fund is a non-profit organization based out of Yale New Haven Children's Hospital to benefit children with cancer. The walkathon and related events that day raised \$21,000. The money raised will help the financial burden that families face when sending their children for cancer treatments, and helps provide rooms at the hospital for parents to stay overnight with them.

The event was held at Hole in the Wall Beach in East Lyme, CT. The town granted permission for kayakers to use the beach. The groups were split into advanced, intermediate, and beginner levels. After their paddles, the groups returned to the beach at noon for lunch and entertainment. The beginner and intermediate kayakers were chased away by the drizzle and incoming rainstorm.

The veterans, clad in colorful Gore-tex paddle apparel, remained for lunch.

The original plan included a rescue demonstration, but it did not seem necessary since this crew of regulars had obviously seen a rescue many times before. With the exception of Connyak President and veteran kayak roller Wayne Smith (who was itching to compete), the interest in a rolling contest was limited. Therefore, we combined a rescue demonstration with a competitive challenge to create a rescue race. Three teams competed in this unique event.

When the air horn was sounded, the victims rolled and fell completely out of their kayaks. The rescuers then jumped into their kayaks, paddled to the victim, emptied the boat, got the victim back in the boat, and paddled back to shore. The first team to hit the beach won. The event went faster than expected; so the next time it will be the best of two out of three, or some other manner. The two winners each received a twenty-five dollar gift certificate donated by North Cove Outfitters in Old Saybrook.

Special thanks to Greg Paquin, Kate Powers, Doug Downey, East Lyme Parks and Recreation, East Lyme Police, and Connyak. Their support of the event allowed for a safe, and enjoyable, outing. For further information on the Tommy Fund, log onto:

[www.ynhh.org/pediatrics/cancer/tommyfund.html](http://www.ynhh.org/pediatrics/cancer/tommyfund.html)

## Library gets a Generous Offer

After reading "Missing Library Items" in the July ConnYak newsletter, Mark Bodan from Wilton Outdoor Sports contacted us and offered to replace the missing library books and videos.

Many thanks to Mark and the people at Outdoor Sports who have not only shown unbelievable generosity but have been supportive of our club many times in the past.

## Greenland or Euro?

July issue of Atlantic Coastal Kayaker had an excellent paddle article by Sanjay Gulati who compared and tested paddles with a GPS and heart monitor. The heart rate monitor answers a lot of questions. He test paddled to achieve a consistent heart rate for several minutes and recorded the speed results. The chart is from the article and speed is recorded in knots.

Paddle	Heart	Speed	Subjective
Wing	115	5.0	moderate
Standard	115	4.7	easy
Greenland	115	4.7	very easy
Wing	140	5.7	hard
Standard	140	5.4	hard
Greenland	140	5.4	hard

*The wing paddle is a deep spoon, asymmetrical and set back from the shaft a bit and normally used for racing by conditioned athletes. It grabs and holds on to a lot more water than the regular blade.*

## Lessons Learned

by Phil Babina

Sometimes the simplest mistakes can ruin a paddle - like forgetting to put your plastic tub of gear into the trunk. My old junk PFD and spray skirt that always stay in the car saved the day.

- Keep spare paddling gear in the trunk for yourself or another paddling partner.

## "Lessons Learned"

"Lessons Learned" will be a regular addition to our newsletter and we will develop a "LL" page on our website. Please contribute - we all have learned something at some time that we can pass along to others.



## EVENTS



### NORWALK ISLANDS

Saturday, August 9th, 10PM

Launch from Saugatuck River in Westport. Paddle to Grassy Island for lunch. After lunch we will temporarily separate into two groups. The Intermediate / Expert group will circumnavigate Shea and Sheffield. The Beginner/Intermediate group will circle Chimon and explore the southeast coast of Shea. Complete group will then meet back up, paddle to the Cockenoe sandbar for a stretch and then paddle back to the Saugatuck. Total trip time should be around 5 hours.

### FOUR MILE RIVER

Sunday, August 10th, 10PM  
Open water paddling - pack lunch

### RESCUE CLINIC

Saturday, August 16th, 10:30 PM  
Bluff Point State Park

### HADDAM MEADOWS

Saturday, August 23, 10PM  
Ct River Paddle - Pack lunch

### MYSTIC

Saturday, August 30, 10PM  
Meet at the old boats at 10:30

### NARRAGANSETT BAY, RI

Saturday Aug 30th

Launch from Wilson Park, Wickford, RI  
In the water at 10:30 AM  
Intermediate : Paddle out of Wickford Harbor to Hope Island, on to Prudence Island and back to Wickford. Directions are in launch directory.

### ConnYak Picnic Sat, Sept 20 - Chester

### Arctic Boat Weekend Sat, Sept 6 & 7 -

Mystic Seaport - with GREG StAMER and more

Full details next newsletter.



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

# CLASSIFIED

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

Nordkapp HMC Good Condition, Golden Yellow Deck White Hull \$1000.00 860-643-1609 or email: nordkappdg@aol.com

FOR SALE - Janautica "ANADYR" Sea Kayak 17.5'X 21.25" See Mfg. webpage for complete specs. www.splashdance.com \$1845- free delivery in CT. E-mail ritey@lycos.com or call 917 567 9430

Necky Tormae 15' Kevlar w/rudder, carbon paddle, spray skirt, Yakama rack and saddles \$1300. all. Must sell - Moving 203-458-2362

Skin on Frame - Baidarka- brand new- (back problems) Willow Kayaks, only 29 pounds, 18'x 21", 8" depth to shear, skeg, very fast, Rye NY, \$1950 or best offer. 914 698 8354 or sd.a@att.net

North Shore Freewater Trek. Fiberglass, Fast, light. 16 ft 22 in, 45 lbs. Great for small to medium sized paddler. \$990 - 203 853 2909

PALM CANYON PF equipped with two front pockets, tow leash and carabiner, and back pocket, tow belt, shoulder, waist and chest cinches.. Used 3 times for BCU instructor Coach testing. New \$195.00 Will sell for \$95 + shipping. New condition, Unisex size Small. fernusen@aol.com or 860-643-8303

Please contact the Newsletter when classified items are sold.

Also check the classified section on our web site.

## "Lessons Learned"

"Skin-So-Soft doesn't work! Not at Great Island at low tide in the evening with no wind. - JB

### Fall lecturers needed

We are currently looking for speakers and lecturers for our fall and winter meeting season. If you have any ideas or desires, please contact the club.

### CONNAYK PADDLERS RESPONSIBILITY

All open water paddles are (N/I) Novice/ Intermediate because the sea conditions can drastically change in an hour. Novice paddles are inter-coastal and river paddles. Advanced paddles will always be marked on the listing and encompass offshore crossings, and usually rougher conditions and longer distances.

Any paddle can change dramatically which is the nature of our sport and something we should always be aware of. Although paddlers will always help one another, ultimately, you are always responsible for your own safety when paddling on any trip.

Please try paddling for a for a several hours before attempting a ConnYak trip even on a novice paddle. The other paddlers as well as you will be happy you did that.

## 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 check to:

ConnYak c/o Wayne Smith  
680 Browns Road, Storrs, CT 06268-2717

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.

## ConnYak Over-Dues

On the newsletter you receive, your due-date is on your label. If you fall behind with your dues, you get two months of newsletters which are stamped "over due" and then get cut off the list of active members.

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



# ConnYak

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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