

# CONN YAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

October 2003

## Rescue Clinic 2003

By Jay Babina

This year, we sent out Rescue Clinic announcement posters to all of the kayak stores that we could think of and I personally have been littering telephone poles next to launch sites stapling them up. Although we had our best and largest Rescue Clinic to date, I was disappointed with the turnout, especially considering how much PR was sent out. I would estimate that we had about 60 paddlers. Considering that we have 450 club members and that I was telling everyone I ran into about the date, it was a disappointing showing. I was figuring at least a hundred. What happened to the other 400 ConnYak members? I'm not trying to make any one feel guilty about not coming. It just makes you wonder why you're doing these things when such a small percentage are interested enough to actually arrive. After going to Hartford to battle registration for two years, it seems like a rescue clinic would be the one hands-on thing we could do to help that from becoming a reality.

The greatest number of attendees were the group of paddlers who care about safety, are fairly involved with kayaking and actually know many of these skills. These are the ones who go to pool sessions and are fairly involved in the sport. I do know that there were a handful of newbies and a few curious paddlers there as well, which was really encouraging to see.

It tells me much about the paddling sport in general. I believe most paddlers assume that a capsizes is never going to happen to them - "I'm a safe paddler and that's more for advanced sea kayakers". However, we all know that kayak fatalities usually happen to the beginner safe kayakers who happen to venture

*Great Rescue Clinic tip from the DEP - Chrome faced CD discs make great signal mirrors.*

## Dead Husbands Club

By Andy Baiman

During our spectacularly successful Rescue Clinic, Joy, and then Dennis McNeil inquired as to whether I too had joined the ranks of the Dead Husbands Club. I was obliged to admit that Faye also had been unsuccessful in performing the "hand of God" rescue on my simulated unconscious body - something about "not being able to reach your shoulder strap."

After several failed attempts, one that ended with my strangled vociferation: "Not by the chest hairs!" (to the general hilarity of anyone within earshot), followed by the amusing laughter of viewers, which finally ended with my best and quickest roll to date. Faye had finally given it up for the day claiming exhaustion and physical abuse. Floating corpses being incapable of such suffering, I had no right to such claims myself.

A few minutes later, Phil Babina heard tales of our 6 mile and 12 mile walks home from work after Thursday's power outage in New York. Then I admitted to

my unrestricted state with regard to Faye's recent attempts at the "Hand of God" rescue. (Pulling the unconscious paddler up out of the water to the seated position) Phil's characteristic response of "Well, have you tried doing that rescue today?" I had to reply not yet, all of my time having been devoted to feigning unconsciousness. Faye, assumed that it wasn't that difficult for me, and declined to play the unconscious victim. Phil, always the good sport, consented to play dead for me, and away we went.

Approaching Phil's capsized bow-to-bow, I had no difficulty pulling his limp body upright (if you don't count Phil's obviously claim of roughing,) and so we decided to try the rescue bow-to-stern (the way Faye and I tried it ad nauseam) just to make sure that there was no difference. Guess what. I couldn't reach his shoulder strap.

I managed, at the cost of great exertion, to pull him upright, but the difference made by the boat orientation was sobering (bow to bow is just so much



ConnYak Rescue Clinic at Bluff Point - our largest so far - photo by Jim Michlewski (Sarge)

easier). Moments later, Faye was able to easily pull me up bow-to-bow, and Phil and Jay confirmed the analysis with their own experiments. We also discovered that pushing the up side of the victims boat down while you pull him up works well.

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. You can learn important stuff from Dead Husbands if only you talk them up a bit.
2. Just because bow-to-stern works better for some rescues ("T" rescue, for example,) doesn't mean it's best for all rescues. Although if someone's in the water upside down, you have to act as fast as you can in any position.
3. If you don't try stuff, you might find things out at a very inopportune time, like when you need an actual effective rescue. PRACTICE YOUR RESCUES!

**Fall Paddling - Winds pick up and the water gradually gets colder. A calm morning paddle can be very windy and choppy after lunch. For those of you who have been looking for rough water... it's now here and you won't have to travel for it. You can no longer take the wind prediction in the weather forecast for granted.**



Not one, not two, but three sponges were won by Paul Donoski at the ConnYak picnic. A year ago, Paul complained on the BB that his sponges don't last a season.

out on that one windy and cold day. I also think that many paddlers have done a basic rescue at some time and feel "they are all set".

I recently ran into a friend who I don't see too often who has taken up kayaking with his girl friend. I mentioned our rescue clinic and encouraged him to join the club. I told him that he could learn a lot from paddling with more advanced paddlers. His response was "ConnYak has too many rules and regulations". I asked "Rules, like what?" "You have to wear a PFD all the time and a spray skirt" I mentioned that it's extremely difficult if not impossible to put a PFD on in the water - plus you want to be able to hang on to your boat and paddle. A stark realization suddenly came over him. However, he was going to do it his way with the PFD strapped on the back deck and no ConnYak.

The raising of awareness in paddlers seems to be a monumental task. ConnYak can't save the world but wouldn't you assume that every paddler would like to know how to get back into his or her boat if they capsize? Or even if they can? Or just take advantage of free instruction? Apparently not.

For anyone who attended the clinic or has tried these skills, you know that the only way you can learn them is to be in the water. You learn what works for you, your particular kayak and your body.

Where in the world, can you see every type of flare fired off, watch and participate in every rescue imaginable in kayaks, canoes, skin boats and recreational craft - all for free.

The Rescue Clinic not only teaches skills, but it also presents a yearly refresher and opportunity to practice a few skills in warm water and exchange ideas with other paddlers! If it wasn't for the Rescue Clinic many paddlers, myself included, might never even blow up a paddle float.

So, what's the answer? Do you force new paddlers to watch a safety slide show as proponents of registration advocate? Or do you let things travel their own course and fall into place as they need to - accepting that there will be a few fatalities in the process. (whether there's forced education or not)

I personally learned a lot by this attendance. I realize that some paddlers will be happy not knowing anything

and most likely won't get into trouble. And some people know their basic skills and just don't want to be there that day or don't feel it's necessary to practice these things. One paddler who I approached at a launch ramp told me that they have already seen somebody do a paddle float rescue.

Even so, our rescue clinic is getting bigger and better every year and is something we as a club can be proud of. It will always prove to be a very worthwhile and enjoyable event for all paddlers of any skill level. Hopefully we will attract more and more new paddlers each year and the general awareness will be spreading. We just can't expect anything more than that!



## CONNYPAK AROUND THE WORLD

By Judy Hampel

Recently my husband, Bob, and I took a trip to Alaska. Because kayaking is such an important part of our lives, we made sure we were able to kayak in as many beautiful, pristine areas as possible. We did go on a commercial cruise and the kayaking experiences that were available were not of the difficulty-level we were used to. However, there is truly no better way to appreciate nature than from the seat of a kayak. We spent an afternoon in Glacier Bay surrounded by snow-capped mountains and the Mendenhall Glacier. But my most memorable experience was in a glacial lake above the timberline,

We had taken an old "gold rush" train to the top of a mountain above Skagway, Alaska. Just the train alone was a thrill of a lifetime as we rushed over the last wooden trestles in the world. We passed Dead Horse Gulch and headed for the Klondike Pass, looking down sheer cliffs. Once on top of the mountain we found a pristine glacial lake, surrounded by snow-capped mountains. The vegetation was a brilliant green; trees were stunted. Our guide told us some of the 2-3 foot trees were over 100 years old. The kayaking was gentle and inspirational. Our sport is truly the way to appreciate nature.

I am enclosing a photo of Bob and I in this glacial lake. Please note: we are wearing our Connyak hats. Is there anyone else out there in kayak gear in special places around the world. It would be fun to see where our sport has taken our members. (Can we top Stew Leonard's in the number of places we show our logo?) Send photos to the newsletter.

### ConnYak Picnic 03

A special thanks to Collinsville Canoe & Kayak for the \$50 gift certificate and a paddle float that were given away at our ConnYak Picnic. We also gave away T-shirts, hats, pumps and other kayaking accessories. Also thanks to everyone who brought food to share, coolers, tables and to Doug Downey and Joy and Dennis for the gas grills. The weather cooperated with us and as usual it was a great time for all who attended. The food was even up to the Tues. Night Paddler's

EVENTS



### Multi-Club Paddle (I/A)

Sunday, Oct 5 (see article)

### BRANFORD - STONY CREEK (I)

Oct. 10, 6:30 PM- Full Moon Paddle

### GREAT ISLAND - LYME (N)

Sunday, Oct 12, 10:00 am

Route determined by paddlers.

Pack lunch

### ESSEX - HAMBURG COVE (N)

Saturday, Oct 18, 10:00 am

Pack lunch

### BARN ISLAND - STONNINGTON (A)

Saturday, Oct 25, 10:00 am

Tri-State Triangle

(Barn Island - Fishers - Watch Hill)

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

## Paddling with ConnYak

Many times on our Bulletin Board, paddlers who are relatively new to the sport ask about paddling with ConnYak.

Our normal paddles are a few hours - a stop for lunch and then a trip back. The paddles are at a leisurely pace although some beginners who never paddle with others might find it more strenuous than they are used to. It seems that almost all paddlers in a group just seem to paddle about the same speed. We stop to chat quite a bit and always wait for stragglers to catch up. ConnYak is a nice group of friendly people who just like to paddle and share some paddling companionship.

Every paddler, even the most advanced in the world started at some time and had no paddling skills. Some people are stronger and more fit than others but our paddles (although it doesn't always seem so) are not a race.

The best way is to join in on one of our river paddles and see how it feels. You'll know in short order how you do. 450

# CLASSIFIED

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

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

02 Current Designs Solstice GT- High Volume, Kevlar, 17'8" Blue/white, Ex. Cond. little use. Rudder, \$2800. Excellent for camping. 860-875-7052.

Impex Montauk, fiberglass, ex cond. incl. spray skirt and compass, \$1700. 860-535-4473

Perception Pirouette with float bags, \$325 B/O, Call Bob 860-716-5993

P&H Sirius HF w/ skeg- Yellow over white, \$1,000 B/O, Call Bob 860-716-5993

Kokatat Gortex Dura drysuit. Size XL w/32" inseam and booties. Never used. Paid list \$809.00. Asking \$650.00. Will pay shipping. Contact Stuart Grant, West Cornwall, CT at 860 672-0039, email treecats@att.net

Please contact the Newsletter when classified items are sold. Also check the classified section on our web site.

Daggar Satitude - Kevlar, white on white w/black trim. 17'4" x 21.5", Intergal rudder w/toe central pedals, no los of bracing while steering. \$2200. 860-450-1026

Walden Experience 10', 35 lbs, 3 yrs old, paddles and cockpit cover incl. Good for fishing, children etc. \$365. 860-875-7052.

## CONNAYAK 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 few 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@CONNAYAK.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

680 Browns Road, Storrs, CT 06268-2717