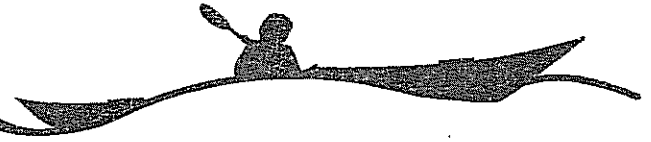


# CONN YAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

July 2004

## SAFETY IN A THUNDER STORM

by Dee Kinnee

We were camped on Eden Island, a tiny islet, just south of Reid Island, in the Central Gulf Islands of British Columbia. The evening before, we lugged our kayaks up a ten-foot rock shelf and set up our tent on a tiny patch of grass. Though primitive, our site offered panoramic views of lush green islands and sparkling seas. But, that was yesterday.

This morning, a dark mantle of cloud obscured the Southern sky. The wind bent the grass at my feet and rustled the leaves of an arbutus tree nearby. Steep waves smacked the shore. We dressed quickly in warm, rainproof gear then packed up the camp stove and dishes. The wet tent flaps whipped around our faces we stowed the kitchen equipment under the fly and placed large stones on the tent pegs.

As the storm moved closer, we watched. A double-pronged, lightning bolt struck Galiano Island, a mile and a half away, and was followed by a shattering blast. Minutes later, Galiano Island's fire hall alarm sounded. We looked at each other with wide eyes.

The time between the flashes and crashes shortened as the tempest closed in on us. My stomach fluttered as the sky darkened over our islet. We lay down behind the log, shut our eyes and ignored the boulders poking our ribs. Brilliant flashes penetrated our eyelids and thunderous booms echoed in our ears. Sheets of rain pelted down. We waited. As quickly as it arrived, the storm moved on, northward over Reid Island, then died down.

When the thunder waned into distant intermittent grumbles, we emerged and stumbled up the rocky trail to our

campsite. It was just as we left it.

"Good thing, we weren't on the water, in the middle of a crossing." I said, "Now, can we have breakfast?"

The grey wet weather persisted through the morning then cleared by late afternoon. The day's end brought violet skies laced with soft orange streaks. Our morning's adventure seemed distant and unreal as we enjoyed the peaceful evening and stunning sunset.

"We need to buy a weather radio and find out what we should do in a thunderstorm." "Absolutely." I said, nodding my head in agreement.

### Did we take the right actions?

Well, we didn't do too badly and we were lucky. We picked the best shelter on the islet; however, we took too long getting there. We were within lightning strike distance the whole time we watched the storm and tidied the campsite. We handled metal and graphite which conduct electricity. We lay down when we should have crouched to minimize contact with the ground.

### Lessons learned?

We no longer take the weather for granted and we always watch for

thunderstorms. Now we understand the importance of finding shelter first and worrying about equipment later. We've learned that lightning is the most deadly aspect of a thunderstorm. While most lightning victims recover, twenty

*Continued...*

## CONN YAK RESCUE CLINIC SAT, JULY 17 - 10:30

*Bluff Point State Park in Groton*

The 4th Annual ConnYak Rescue Clinic will take place on Saturday - July 17 - 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. New methods and findings come up all the time and it's educational for experienced paddlers as well. We need paddlers who would like to demonstrate things. We will start at 10:30 am. You are welcome to participate or just watch. There will be plenty of experienced paddlers and instructors to help paddlers with any of these skills.

### Flare firing demos

### Special Rec. Boat Reality Demos

*(A very humbling event for both parties)*

*Free to all - members & non-members  
Spread the word - Directions inside*



Dick Gamble -

*A great friend and loyal contributor to ConnYak for many years.*

*Photo - Tom Maziarz*

percent don't survive.

Adequate planning, the right equipment, weather knowledge, and vigilance will help keep you and your paddling partners safe when lightning strikes.

### Five things to do to before you leave shore: Plan and Prevent

- Check marine weather forecasts before you leave home, each day before you leave camp, and before major crossings. If thunderstorms are predicted, stay ashore or change course.
- Buy a weather radio
  - A VHF Marine radio allows you to listen to forecasts and alerts, and to call other boaters or the coast guard. A Marine Radio Operator's Certificate is required.
  - Small, inexpensive weather radios pick up forecasts but can't be used to send messages.
- Learn basic weather reading to supplement forecasts. Invaluable if you lose or break your radio. - Purchase a weather identification guide and pack it with you.
  - Identify and watch cumulous clouds. If they darken and grow upwards rapidly, a thunderstorm may be brewing.
  - Learn about cloud formations, fronts, barometric pressure, and humidity. Determine how these interact with tides, currents and swell to effect wind speed, and wave size.
- Pack warm clothes, raingear, and tarps - year round.
- Take a first aid course including CPR. Pack a first aid kit and survival gear.

### Five Things To Do in a Thunderstorm: even if you don't see lightning.

- Get off the water - A boat is the tallest object on the water making lightning strikes likely.
  - If you are fishing or swimming, get out and move away from shore.
- Seek shelter - If possible, get in a

vehicle, roll up the windows, and avoid touching metal parts; or, get in a building, staying away from electrical appliances and wiring.

- Don't shelter under tall isolated objects like trees or poles. Instead, look for a dense group of trees or shrubs of a similar height.

- Look for a natural shelter in a deep cave, against a cliff, in a valley, or a ditch.

- If no shelter is available, crouch down, feet close together with your head tucked down and your hands over your ears. Spread out, keeping people several yards apart. Minimize your contact with the ground - don't lay down.

• Avoid objects that conduct electricity such as graphite and metal, (paddles, tent poles, camp stoves, fences, power lines, umbrellas, etc).

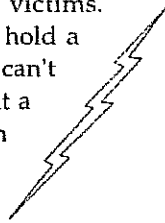
• Monitor the storm - Lightning has been known to strike 10 miles away, though; the usual strike distance is 3 - 5 miles. Thunderstorms move swiftly.

- After you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear thunder. Every five seconds equals a mile in distance. A count of five means lightning is overhead. If the time increases, the storm may be moving away.

- If you see lightning but don't hear thunder, the storm is probably 15 miles away. If you hear thunder, the storm is within 10 miles - lightning strike distance.

- If you see a blue glow around metal objects, smell ozone, hear buzzing, feel your scalp tingle or your hair stands on end - dive for cover or crouch down. The movement of electricity, just before lightning strikes, creates these sensations.

• Apply First Aid to victims - Call or send for help ASAP. Don't cause another casualty by exposing yourself to lightning. Wait until danger is past before helping victims. Remember: people don't hold a charge, so touching them can't hurt you; victims without a pulse can be revived with CPR; and, 80% of those struck by lightning survive.



## DICK GAMBLE PADDLER AND FRIEND

ConnYak Treasurer, Dick Gamble is unfortunately moving 2 1/2 hrs. away, to Warwick, NY, to be closer to his children and grandchildren. Some shoes are just tougher to fill than others and Dick has been a tremendous asset to the club for over 10 years.

I've paddled with Dick more than any other paddler and I never met a more energetic and enthusiastic person, especially considering that he has made 4 of his kayaks - 1 strip, 1 hybrid and two skin-on-frame. His craftsmanship is impeccable. He learned to roll in his second year of paddling, attended ACA and BCU kayak training and always participated in pool sessions and rescue clinics. He religiously attended meetings, newsletter stampings and has the club books right down to the penny.

I personally have paddled with him in some of the toughest paddles and roughest conditions I've been in. He's inspirational to anyone who thinks it's time to slow down as you get older.

He's been a good ambassador for the club and was right there at the registration hearings two years in a row. He consistently gave his services to the club and was always ready for a good time at paddles, picnics and club functions. I've learned a lot from him. He has truly mastered the spiritual virtue of giving.

I know the club will miss him, and I will truly miss him as a friend and paddling companion although I'm sure we'll see him at a gathering every now and then. Best wishes Dick.

-JB

### CONNYPAK'S NEW TREASURER

ConnYak welcomes Dan Maloney, who has volunteered to be ConnYak's new treasurer. He will be assuming his new office once Dick shows him the ropes and the combination to the secret vault.

*Cheri's now in Greenland...*



# A FOOLISH HABIT CURED

by Kurt Maurer

...by permission of Kurt Maurer -  
posted on the Guillemot Kayak Building BB.

**T**oday Leslie and I are a GO for a little paddle on Dickinson Bayou. The weather is super nice, the water excellent: perfectly smooth, except for a couple of refreshingly considerate water-skiing parties upon who's wakes we amuse ourselves immensely. After my demonstrating a few rolls for the camera, we take off down the bayou in earnest.

After an hour or so in the hot sun, I remove my PFD and stow it in the rear deck rigging immediately behind me. In fact, this is where I \*normally\* keep my PFD, although lately I have actually been \*wearing\* the stupid thing since I am so busy trying to learn rescue stuff. Anyway, I keep my spray skirt on in case I want to roll again, which I do from time to time to cool off. Heck, this is half the reason I wanted to learn to roll in the first place! Ahhhh!!

Afterward, I roll again to cool off, but for some reason, my roll fails; I try again, and in the struggle of a second failed roll my knee slips off the thigh pad causing an immediate and involuntary wet exit. No biggie; I simply enter into my new routine of securing the paddle and preparing for a wet reentry... when I begin to wonder why everything is so much more difficult than in all my so-recent practice sessions. Oh yah - my PFD! So let's see how hard it is to don a PFD while in the water. Ooops, it's gone! Leslie looks around, but finds no sign of it anywhere, and in the meantime I'm getting kinda tired treading water so I perform a cowboy reentry after draining the cockpit. Puff, puff... Wow, this is a LOT harder to do after several hours paddling... Puff, puff, puff! Geez.

When we get back to the landing, I go through my roll again to see what the deal was. One roll just like advertised, good. Second roll, I'm out of the boat again! Crap!! And I'm having difficulty treading water again without my PFD!!! And DAMN, I am just about BEAT now!!!! I attempt a wet reentry, but my roll fails and I'm out of the boat AGAIN. I am far too worn out, and out of breath

by now, to attempt any more self-rescues; so to hell with it, I paddle myself and the upside-down boat to shallow water, and then wade ashore as ignominiously as it gets.

Did I learn a lesson today OR WHAT??? As far as I'm concerned, I literally got myself in over my head today, even though, \*by the Grace of God\*, it was safe enough. I mean, at any time I could have easily abandoned the yak and swam to shore if it became a life or death matter since I happen to be physically fit and can swim like a fish. But the whole situation was vividly apparent enough in its implications that the message came through loud and clear all the same: that new PFD I ordered this morning is going to get WORN AT ALL TIMES, baby!

## Lesson Learned

If you are in water over your head, you can get tired really fast keeping your head above by the constant kicking action required. And.. you can't put the PFD on in the a water... and you can't hold on to your boat at the same time.

Cheers, (today a little wiser) Kurt

## GREENLAND PADDLE RAFFLE WINNER

Rich Centola does his first hand roll at the Meet at the Beach, plus wins both the Greenland paddle and the surf kayak. It's what you might call a nice day.

Daniel Finn won the paddle float.

Caroline Contrata won the dry suit

Thank you Joy, Dave and Dean



For those of you who don't know, Derek Hutchinson's wife died late May. I sent him the following message on behalf of the club:

Derek: On behalf of our officers and 400 members, I'd like to offer our condolences on the passing of your wife.

We hope you find peace, and celebrate her life. Our thoughts are with you.

Be well, and take care.

Kindest Regards,

Wayne Smith  
President, Connyak  
Coventry, CT, USA

## EVENTS



## BARN ISLAND - SAT JULY 10 (N-1)

10 am - ITW - pack lunch.  
Out to Napatree Point via Watch Hill or Direct Route. Group will decide.

Barn Island Launch is now open with a face lift but a disappointing paddle launch (if you can find it).

## CONNYAK RESCUE CLINIC SAT, JULY 17 - 10:30

Bluff Point State Park in Groton

Directions -I-95 to exit 88 in Groton. Head towards water (south on Rt. 117) to 2nd. light at the junction of Rt. 1. Right on Rt. 1. Left at first light (Depot Road). Continue on to Bluff Point State Park.

## BLUFF POINT - SAT JULY 24 DUMPLINGS (I)

10 am - ITW - pack lunch.  
Out of Bluff Point to the Dumplings.

## MYSTIC - SUN JULY 25 ANTIQUA BOAT PARADE (N-1)

10 am - ITW - pack lunch. Launch: either Isham St or Under the 95 bridge. Gather at the old ships - 10:17 we leave. We visit the Old Boats and catch the parade of boats after lunch coming out of the river.

Mark your calendar...

## ANNUAL CONNYAK PICNIC SUN SEPT 12, 10 AM ON LOWER BOLTON LAKE, BOLTON, CT

Lower Bolton Lake is 2 minutes from the end of Rt 384, about 10 minutes east of Hartford.

Further information and directions will be posted in next months newsletter and on the BB.

Per numerous requests, it is on a Sunday.

Watch the bulletin board for impromptu paddles posted by members. Have a free weekend? - post a paddle.  
[www.connyak.org](http://www.connyak.org)

# CLASSIFIED

Drysuit for Sale: The Barefoot Company drysuit, men's large, blue, used 3 times, cost \$400, asking \$250. Call Chris 860-989-1918.

Current Designs Solstice GT 17'7", Neo skirt medium, Ex cond. \$2400 860-875-7052

Greenland Tuliek - Med - Black - new, wrong size for me. \$250. Tom 413-593-6167

Wilderness Systems Shenai kevlar kayak red/white good condition with spray skirt weight 45# and 17' 4" long \$1475 phone 860-267-8194

Betsie Bay Aral for sale. 18 ft. long x 20", 35 lbs., rare mahogany deck, 1 yr. old, mint condition. Paid \$3800. Sale Price \$3000. Tom 413-593-6167

Betsie Bay Recluse, 19' long x 20" white Greenland style wood kayak in good condition, \$2250. (203) 269-0569 bertoldi@sbcglobal.net

Janautica Anadyr - 17'6", Fiberglass, blue/white, day hatch, excellent condition, \$1100.00. (203) 949-8647.

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

## MORE ON VHS USAGE

By Allen Ames

In U.S. Coast Guard District I (Maine through New Jersey) VHF Channel 16 is for EMERGENCIES ONLY. VHF Channel 9 is the HAILING frequency. In this District, you are not required to monitor Ch16. If there is a weather or other emergency, it will usually be announced on Ch09 and you will be asked to switch to another channel (usually Ch22A) for further information. Legitimate MAYDAY and PAHN-PAHN calls are appropriate on channel 16.

2. Security calls should be made on Ch9 and Ch13. The latter is monitored by all commercial vessels, particularly in adverse weather. I doubt that anyone would object if you ALSO transmit a Security call on Ch16.

3. When communicating with other vessels who are nearby, switch to low power on your VHF so that people who are many miles away do not hear you. (On most VHF's, Ch13 will come up automatically in low power, since it is illegal to transmit on Ch13 on high power except in an emergency.)

## 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  
85 School St

Coventry, CT 06238

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

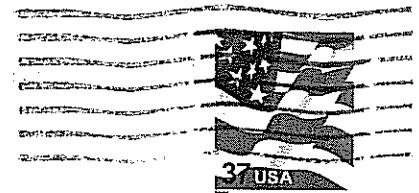
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136



# ConnYak

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1/1/2005