

# CONNAYAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

June 2004

## VHF RADIO CLASS FOR SEA-KAYAKERS

by Doug Downey

On the morning of February 21st, myself and 14 other paddlers met at Haddam's Brainard Memorial Library for a class on how to use a VHF radio. Adam Bolonsky of Boston, MA was our instructor.

The class began with identifying the common basic controls of the various brands of radios. Off/On, volume, squelch, channel selection, weather stations, transmit, etc..., where they are located on the radios and what they do. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of the brands present at the class were discussed such as accessing these controls in cold water with heavy neoprene gloves on (buttons vs. knobs), battery types and battery life, as well as maintenance tips.

Next we learned how to use our radios. Since it is illegal to use a VHF radio on land, and a felony to make false emergency calls, we practiced with our radios off while in the classroom.

The 4 hailing calls, the general "Hello", SECURITE, PAHN-PAHN, and MAYDAY were discussed and practiced with different situations presented along with the appropriate power level to use for each. Next, we practiced communication within the group (group leader and sweeps) and among multiple groups (novice, intermediate, advanced). One situation was to co-ordinate assistance for a seasick paddler. An undisclosed participant provided the appropriate audio background to add reality to the situation and levity to the class. We all got a good laugh out of that one!

Discussion followed with the best ways to carry your radio on your person and moved on to the various channels, who owns them, how they use them, and which ones we can use. We then moved onto the WX weather channels that are available on most radios. Only a couple may apply to us at any given time, depending on our location. It is important to know where the receivable stations are broadcasting from and what area they cover.

In the afternoon, the class moved outside. Several people brought along handheld FRS radios and we broke up into four pods. FRS stands for "Family Radio Service" These are handheld, multi-channel, hi-tech walkie-talkies of today. Within group and among multiple group situations were practiced. This was good practice since you could identify your strengths and weaknesses using a radio almost right away.

In all, I believe everyone enjoyed the class and learned quite a bit. I learned just how much I don't know about using a VHF radio.

Hopefully, the only time we will use these radios will be for a weather update, communication among other paddlers and boaters, and a Securite call to announce our presence in busy areas.

A VHF radio is only one of the many tools a kayaker should have in their toolbox. A sense of seamanship, an understanding of tides, currents, and winds, and weather, well-practiced rescue skills, and a knowledge of one's own limitations should hopefully prevent us from putting ourselves in a situation of having to use the radio for a Mayday call because of our own misdoing.

Some useful information to share:

- "If you buy a VHF radio, bring it with you. If you bring it with you, wear it on your person. If you wear it on your person, turn it on. Don't just keep it in your hatch" – Adam Bolonsky
- While on the water, all vessels (kayaks) with radios are required to monitor CH #16 for emergency situations and sudden bad weather updates.
- Different hailing calls on Channel #16.

MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

(Full Power)

Life, Limb, Vessel in imminent danger.

Example: Life/Death situations, unconscious paddler, sinking vessel, collision, etc....

PAHN-PAHN! PAHN-PAHN! PAHN-PAHN!

(Full Power)

Life, Limb, Vessel in jeopardy.

Example: Injured paddler, presently not life/death, damaged vessel, etc... Can use assistance from other boaters in the area.

SECURITE, SECURITE, SECURITE.

(Low Power)

*Continued...*



Yoga practice prior to the VT Greenland Gathering - story inside. Photo: Dave Kinney

## VHF ...continued

Probably most useful for sea-kayakers. A general announcement in a busy area (crossing busy channels, limited visibility due to darkness, rain, fog, etc...) "We are 7 sea kayakers and we are crossing Thames River Channel at Nun Buoy # 4 near Ledge Light to Ocean Beach, bearing Two-Eight-Zero...". Also, as a 'Please be aware of our intentions'.

To announce open water rescue drills that may cause other boaters to assume and report an emergency to CG or HarborMaster if overturned kayaks and paddlers in the water are observed.

### General Hailing:

Channel 16 is for emergency and general hailing only. Keep usage for hailing another vessel to a minimum and switch to another channel as soon as contact is made, or agree to monitor another non-commercial (recreational) channel (#68, #69, #71) ahead of time.

- Check frequently with the local Coast Guard on radio usage regulations and radio usage protocol, as they change from time to time.

### Some good maintenance items:

- Remove the radio from the plastic case when finished paddling for the day. This will allow any moisture build-up to evaporate.
- Submersible radios do not need to be kept in a drybag. Submersibles should be rinsed off with fresh water and allowed to dry.
- Remove the battery tray/module and antenna to allow the radio to dry out from any moisture build-up inside and prevent battery leakage from damaging the radio, especially if in storage for some time. This will also relax the compression on the seals of submersibles.
- An important tip is DO NOT attempt to transmit with the radio without the antenna installed. The lack of an antenna presents an unbalanced load to the transmitter section and can permanently damage it.
- Another interesting tip with the Standard Horizon HX460 series is to seal the MIC/SP jack next to the antenna. The plastic cap is very flimsy, and can pop off very easily allowing salt water to seep inside and thus destroying the radio. Also, the use of a microphone or speaker would not be practical while kayaking. A dab of silicon sealant (I used aqua-seal) into the jack, then press the

MIC/SP cover back into place and allow it to cure for 24 hours. I went the extra step and stood the radio upside down overnight to allow the sealant to pool at the cap and prevent it from flowing down into the radio.

A wealth of information is available on the U.S. Coast Guards Navigation Center website: <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov>

Information on VHF radio usage can be found by following links to "Maritime Telecommunications": <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/default.htm>

And then the "U.S. VHF Channels & Frequencies" link: <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/vhf.htm>

Also, the Federal Communications Commission's link to "Marine VHF Radio Channels": <http://wireless.fcc.gov/marine/vhfchan1.html>

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## GREENLAND STYLE PADDLING IN VT

by Jennifer Lucia

The second annual Vermont/Montreal Madness was held in Burlington, VT on April 17th. This event, started in 2003 by Nicolas Bertrand, and originally called The Montreal Madness, was intended to foster interest in the Greenland style, share skills and be fun. Last year, the informal rolling competition was cancelled due to ice that was being broken apart upriver and creating hazardous conditions.

According to Dave Miskell, one of this year's organizers, it was decided that Burlington would be a better location. "We thought more of the stateros would come to Burlington than to Montreal. We were hoping to meet more Greenland paddling addicts and learn from them, which we did."

On Saturday morning, participants line their boats up on the dock at the Burlington Boat House before getting ready to participate in morning session of yoga. Jonathon Long and Cheri Perry led the willing through a series of poses, which were attempted by about ten participants, all at various levels of flexibility. It's interesting to note that the first and second place finishers in the rolling competition both actively participate in yoga. Jay Babina is not the only one who notices the benefits of yoga. The yoga session was a big hit and

organizers hope to continue it. According to Dennis McNeil, he and Joy have been "...doing yoga since December, 2003. The increased flexibility helps in rolling."

After yoga, came the morning sharing session. Boats were eyed with interest and tried on for size. While Bill Whitcomb's Stealth boat was of interest to everyone, one boat in particular captured everyone's attention---even Bill's. Brian Lewis' zipper boat with its collapsible coaming drew the interest of all.

After the initial boat check, paddlers jumped into boats to try out different ones, share skills, and hopefully, to learn new ones. Dennis commented that he and Joy "...received help in the morning session, refining existing rolls and working towards new ones. Joy learned the correct technique for storm rolls." This sharing session was considered the best part of the whole day by many, including Cheri Perry, "This segment of the day was really the best, lots of time to meet folks and work on skills, try boats and get some good critique from a variety of people at various skill levels."

After lunch, with the wind kicking up on the water, the rolling competition began. Judges Dan Segal, Turner Wilson and Wayne Gilchrest sat on the dock and started by concurrently judging the novice and intermediate categories. They doled out advice while rating rolls. Several tried new rolls for the first time while listening to instructions from the judges. Joy McNeil finished in eighth place and Dennis finished in sixth place.

The last five participants to compete were rated by each judge, who conferred on all points given. Cheri Perry rolled her way to a first place finish with an amazing 287 points, earning the coveted blue plastic shark as her trophy. Jonathan Long came in second at 223 points and Brian Lewis placed third with 175 points.

Pictures and some videos of the event can be seen at: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze34d8g/2ndannualvtmontrealmadness/>

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*Cheri Perry also won the Women's Rolling, Women's Portage & Paddle Race and 1st place overall at the Hudson River Greenland Festival - May 15 & 16.*



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## CONNYAK RESCUE DAY SAT, JULY 17

Our annual rescue clinic at Bluff Point State Park in Groton is now scheduled. This is a free event with various rescue demonstrations by various paddlers. Anyone (members and non-members) are invited to participate and share knowledge and experiences or just watch. More details to come as it is solidified.

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## Lake Lillinonah Cleanup

Friends of the Lake present

Save The Lake Day - June 5th, 9am-1pm

How To Help

1. Spend a few hours on Lake Lillinonah collecting trash and debris.
2. Deliver what you collect to the Route 133 State Boat Ramp in Bridgewater by 1 pm.
3. Enjoy Food, Fun and prizes

For More Info:

Visit: [www.savingthelake.org](http://www.savingthelake.org)

Call: (860) 210-8064

Email: [info@savingthelake.org](mailto:info@savingthelake.org)

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## HOUSATONIC VALLEY PADDLE CLUB PICNIC - ALL INVITED

Sunday, June 13 starting at 11:00 am.

The Housatonic Valley Paddle Club in the NW region of CT is once again inviting Connyak members to join us for our annual picnic at Lake Waramaug in New Preston. This is a chance for paddlers from other regions to explore the beautiful Litchfield Hills. Stay as long as you like. Bring something to grill, and something to share. The club provides all barbeque essentials, and asks people to contribute \$1.00 for the "Kitty." Camping is available for those wishing to stay overnight. You will need to contact Lake Waramaug State Park for reservations. Bring family or friends as kayaks and canoes are available for rental. If you like, there are some wonderful gourmet restaurants in the area to experience for dinner. Last year we had over 30 people, many from Connyak. It was a great time. The lake takes around 2 hours to circumnavigate, and is a great place to play and practice. Any interest, RSVP to

[sdhak@aol.com](mailto:sdhak@aol.com).

Heavy rain cancels.

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## SURF KAYAK RAFFLE DONATED BY DAVE GRANGER

Proceeds are going to Cheri Perry's Greenland Nationals trip.

Wilderness Systems Alamax Surf Kayak, 11 feet overall length, keyhole cockpit, adjustable foot pegs, yellow - orange fade, electric bilge pump installed, 3 fin boxes. Used in good shape.

Tickets are \$5. The raffle and drawing will be at the "Meet at the Beach" event. The kayak will be there for the winner to take home.

If you can't make the event you can have someone else buy you a ticket(s) or, you can mail me the \$\$\$ (cash) and I will fill out a ticket for you.

Jay Babina

7 Jeffrey Lane , Branford, CT 06405

No receipts/checks - Trying to keep this as simple as possible.

No delivery of kayak. Pick it up at the event or a later pick-up arrangement can be made.



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## MEET AT THE BEACH SAT JUNE 19, 10 AM ON BLUFF POINT STATE PARK, GROTON

The annual Meet at the Beach is a gathering of boat builders - all styles - Skin, Strip, Stitch & Glue and more. New or old creations as well as non-builders welcome. The Greenland paddle raffle and surf boat raffle winners will be announced. Cheri Perry will also do a Greenland rolling demonstration around 1 pm. This is an east coast event and people arrive from many states.

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**Sponsorship** Greenland Paddle raffle tickets are ongoing to help Cheri Perry's trip to the Greenland National Kayaking Championships. Available at trips, events or by mail to me at PO Box 350, Moodus, CT 06469 (receipts will not be sent, to save on postage). Tickets are \$3.00 or 2 for \$5.00. - Joy McNeil

The paddle will be awarded at the "Meet at the Beach" event. Cheri will do a Greenland rolling demonstraton on that day.

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## EVENTS



(2 PADDLES)

## JAMESTOWN CIRCUMNAVIGATION SAT JUNE 26 (A)

Launch at Fort Wetherill State Park, Jamestown, RI

In the water at 11:00 AM prompt. Stragglers will be left behind.

18 nautical mile (Possibly 20 if seas are big at Beavertail) paddle around the island. 2 scheduled stops. Pack plenty of water and food, dry clothes, and a spare paddle. If you have a towline, or a VHF radio, bring them. Rain, small craft advisories, or predicted lightning cancel. Seas larger than 6 feet at the entrance to Narragansett Bay will prevent us from circumnavigating, but we will paddle in the bay if all other conditions allow.

## E. NARRAGANSETT BAY (I)

Launch at Fort Wetherill State Park, Jamestown, RI In the water at 10:00 AM

Route and distance to be determined by conditions and group desires. Possible destinations are Rose Island, Gould Island, Newport, and Mackerel Cove.

Rain, small craft advisories, or predicted lightning cancel the paddle.

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**CHECK THE CONNYAK BULLETIN BOARD FOR CANCELLATION or PLAN CHANGES FRIDAY NIGHT.**

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## NORWALK ISLAND CAMPING & PADDLE SAT & SUN JUNE 5-6

Launch: Saugatuck River (Westport) Sat.

Itinerary: Explore Norwalk Islands, camp on Shea Island (primitive camping except for solar-powered portajohns). Campers contact Oliver Bloch at 203-750-0362 ([obloch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:obloch@sbcglobal.net)) for details etc

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## MYSTIC - SAT JUNE 12 (N-I)

10 am - ITW - pack lunch. Launch: either Isham St or Under the 95 bridge. Gather at the old ships - 10:17 we leave.

Watch the bulletin board for impromptu paddles posted by members.  
[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

Perception Carolina - 14'7", Ex. cond. 2 years old. \$575. 860-889-6612 Cell 860-334-5290

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.

## THE ENEMY BELOW

By Paul Donoski

On my 5th or 6th roll, as I extended the paddle towards the surface, I felt something holding me back from extending fully. I had never experienced anything like this before since I had conquered the Eskimo Roll over 4 years ago. A second stronger pull broke me free and allowed me to roll up. As I searched the water beneath I suddenly focused on some tree limbs about a foot or more below the surface which I had never seen before.

Could my PFD straps or one of the lines attaching my knife or safety whistle to the PFD keep me underwater? I doubt it but I don't plan to test the theory. Could I wet exit tangled up in the branches or extract myself from PFD before running out of air? Something else I have no intention of practicing. I have been back to the lake rolling since but now I make sure I am a good distance away from the Harry Potter tree. I also do a slow scout of the immediate area were I will practice to make sure he doesn't have any friends. As if strong wind and white caps aren't bad enough now I have to look out for enemy arborescent forms below the surface.

## 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](http://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](mailto:jbabina@snet.net)  
7 Jeffrey Lane, Branford, CT 06405  
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136



# ConnYak

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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