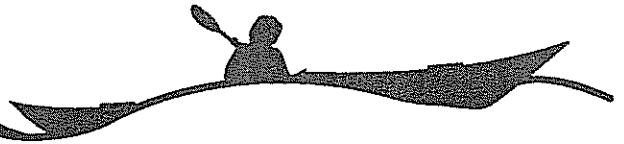


CONNAYAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

February 1997

Surrounded by mountains with cliffs rising 2000 feet, 225 islands (150 publicly owned), and Paradise Bay, called "the loveliest niche of water, rock and greenery in the world" all three hours from Hartford, Lake George is a tough destination for cruising paddlers to ignore. Power boat traffic in the summer is heavy, but October brings brilliant colors to the mountains and peace and quiet to the water. Clark Bowlen, Glen McGrady and Doug Murray met at a New York State campground on Columbus Day weekend and set-off to explore the Narrows Island Group.

Lake George is over thirty miles long and can build a significant chop with either north or south winds. Sea kayaks are ideal for these conditions,

lands on the mainland at the Narrows and maintains tent platforms, docks and outhouses on about 50 of the islands. Many hardy campers were sunning and enjoying the unseasonably warm weekend. We stopped for lunch at an open campsite and explored one of the islands on foot before paddling on to Paradise Bay. The view of the lake and mountains makes it easy to understand why the American Canoe Association selected Lake George for its first meeting in 1880.

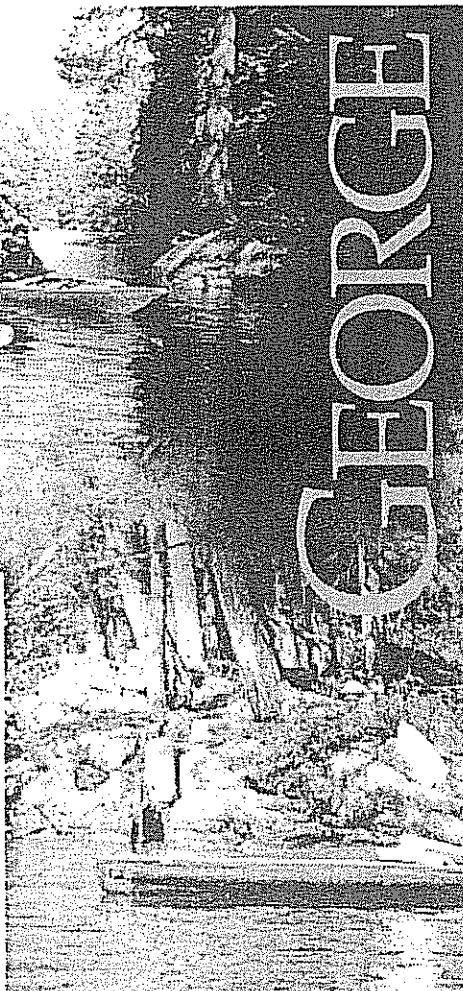
Paradise Bay is protected by shallows and a large rock in the center of the entrance channel. It is a popular stopping place for all boats on the lake and there were about twenty craft, ranging from our kayaks to the 3-deck Mohican tourist boat visiting the bay. Due to strict water quality regulations on the lake, the water is clear with the bottom visible at over 10 feet. The fall leaves on Mt. Erebus contrasted with the clear, blue-green water and made the bay live up to its name, "Paradise".

Too soon the short fall day was ending and we had to paddle back across the lake and make our way up Northwest Bay under Tongue Mt. to a small, boggy stream at the head of the bay. We had a relaxed paddle up an Adirondack stream with the changing leaves (only Clark seemed to have navigational problems going up a stream) to a New York boat launch and our cars.

Our total paddling distance for the day was about 12 miles. That night we sampled the restaurants and wild night life of Lake George Village and camped at a mainland state campground. Next year, we'll join the campers on the islands and toast our marshmallows under the stars.

-Doug Murray

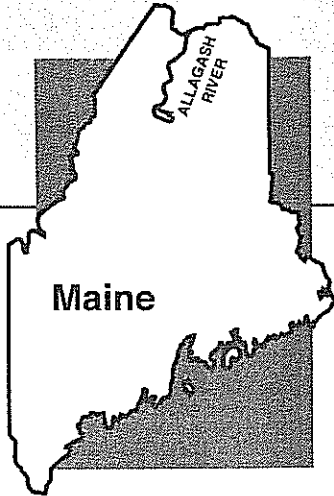
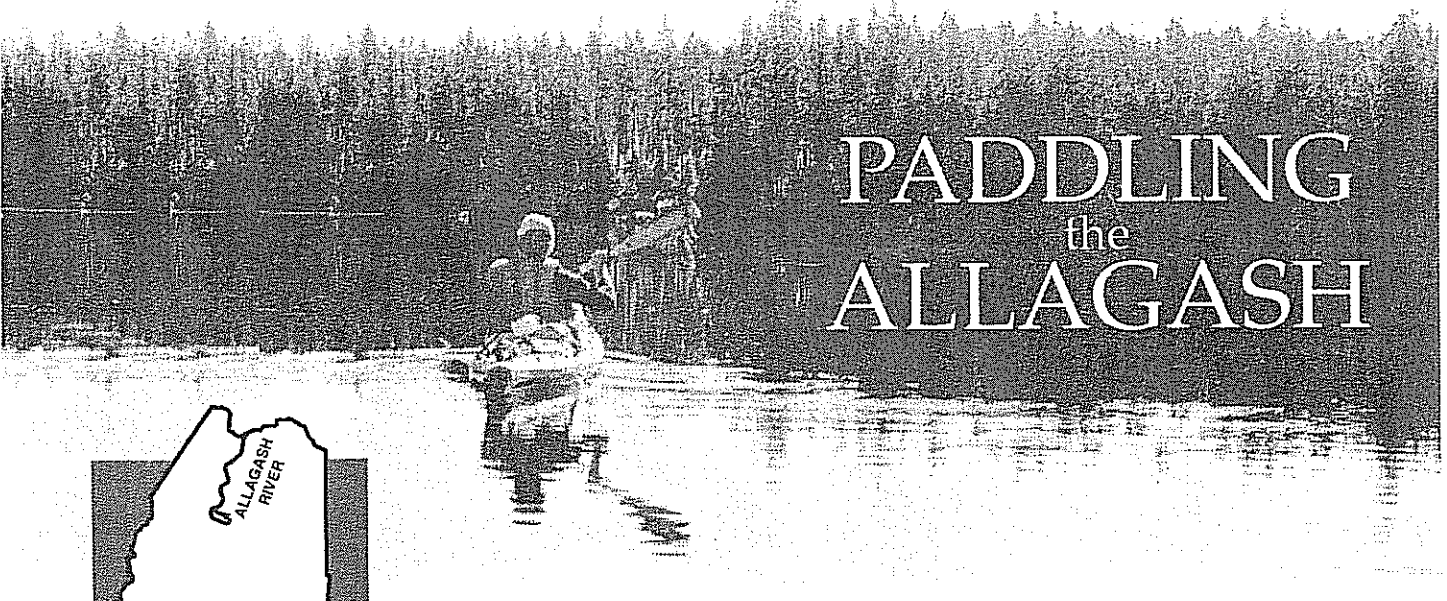
LABOR DAY ON LAKE



but open canoes would find the two-mile open water crossings on the lake a real challenge. Launching from Bolton Landing on the west shore we crossed under Tongue Mt. with its grey granite cliffs, passed through the rocky shores of the Narrow Island Group and paddled on towards Mt. Erebus with its striking display of autumn colors and protected pocket bays. New York State owns over 20,000 acres of wilderness protected



PADDLING the ALLAGASH



Last summer I did the Allagash in a Necky Tornak to test a theory that sea kayaks would be at home on wilderness rivers. Rivers aren't glass slipper country. A river tripper needs to spin well, be stable in turbulence, and ward off rocks. My plastic Tornak, at 15' long and 23" wide, is lively and playful, tough, and enormously stable. Boats of similar size and shape should work equally well. I ordered mine without a rudder. Boats that need rudders will be unhappy on wilderness rivers.

I ran the Allagash right after Hurricane Bertha so it was uncharacteristically high, with lots of waves, occasionally up to two feet, and little need for maneuvering. The kayak handled whitewater maneuvers—eddy turns and ferries—nicely. It loved bouncing down waves sideways and excelled at surfing their upstream faces. In the low water of late summer, the Allagash can be frustrating. Route-finding is difficult and one is in and out of the boat lining it over gravel bars. A kayak that

requires paddle support and Vaseline for egress is not at home in these waters. A big cockpit and beam enough for the straddle and squat style entry, plus short lines bow and stern, and space behind the seat to stow the spray skirt are the ticket.

My trip companions were a father/son team in a canoe. Their canoe and my kayak were a match in carrying capacity. They had personal gear for two plus breakfast and lunch. I had personal gear for one, plus cooking gear and dinner. On the portage, the canoe definitely had advantages. It was relatively easy to mount on shoulders for either a solo or tandem carry, and gear was stowed in big, backpackable containers. I solved the kayak-carrying problem with the Thermarest back pad I use for lumbar support. Inflated fully, it cushioned my shoulder and allowed a comfortable cockpit-rim-on-shoulder carry, even with a 50 pound boat. The gear was a little trickier. My five, small waterproof roll-top bags, I snap-closed around my paddle shaft and carried coolie style. The other gear, all in small pieces, went in a large, net bag which I carried like a sailor on my shoulder. While this works fine between the low and high tide lines, it was not terrific over a half mile. On the way home, I found a large net bag with backpack straps at Bean's. It worked fine from car to

condo, so I suspect it will solve the loose gear problem.

I used my regular, ocean cruising paddles, fiberglass in Chase Rapids and a wooden paddle everywhere else, including during some pretty aggressive river-wave surfing. I use both unfeathered. Whitewater blades are definitely not necessary for wilderness river travel. Narrow, thin blades have plenty of power and brace support and are significantly easier on my middle-age arms, over the long haul.

At the end of our trip, I spent a day scouting Chesuncook Lake. It is the traditional, southern gateway to the Allagash—up the West Branch of the Pennobscott River to Chesuncook, up Chesuncook to Umbazooksus Stream and Lake, across the two-mile Mud Pond Carry to Mud Pond and into Chamberlain Lake in the Allagash headwaters. Perhaps next summer I will give the kayak a real test. Any one interested in coming along?

-Clark Bowlen

CONNYAK OFFICERS ELECTED

1997 Officers for the Club are:

President: Stan Kegeles

Vice President: Richard Gamble

Recording Secretary: Jay Babina

Treasurer: Jim Gass

It's a good feeling to get out on the ocean with a group of kayakers for a nice day of paddling and socializing. To some, it's a day of adventure, and for others, a day of relaxation. When a group gets together for a planned kayak trip, the people involved usually have been paddling together for a while or at least have been out with each other a few times. Everybody knows each other's limits and they try to stay within them.

But what happens when you are new to a group? How do you know if your abilities are compatible with the rest of the group?

The answer is simple - you don't. But there is one thing you do know, and that's your own ability. With a Sport

is true at times, but a beautiful calm day can also turn into the paddle of a lifetime with little or no advance warning.

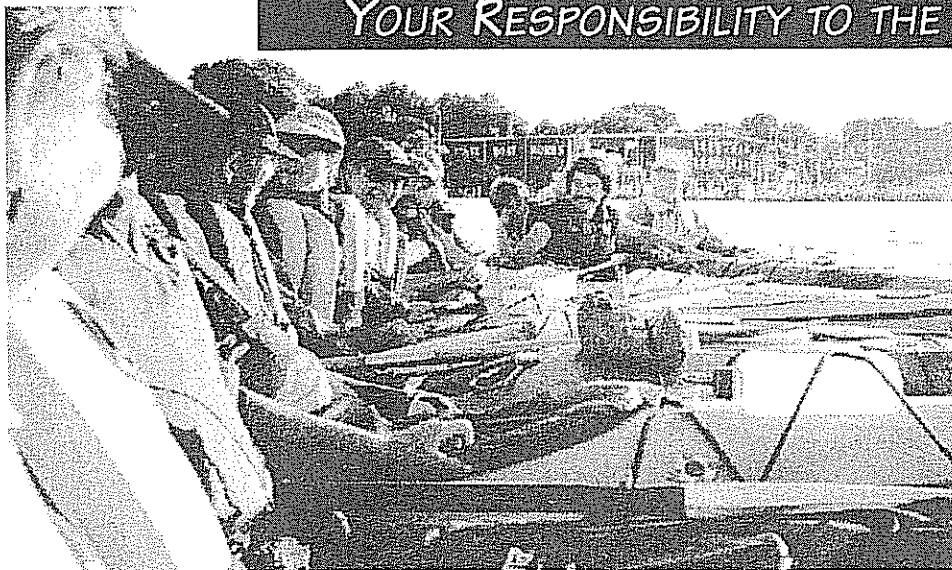
So with this in mind, those of you who are new to the Sport (and even some of you veterans) might benefit from a quick review of some of the basic precautions and preventive measures you need to take before venturing off on a long group paddle. First of all, you need to be sure that all your equipment fits and is in good working condition: Does your PFD fit properly even in the water, or does it

techniques you've learned in a controlled setting, where you don't have to worry about the potential dangers associated with an emergency situation. Many sea kayaking groups schedule open time at local pools, where you can practice paddle strokes, rolls, and rescues in a nice warm heated pool during the dead of winter. New paddlers especially should take advantage of these opportunities whenever they can.

The point I'm trying to make is that you shouldn't rely on other people to guarantee your safety - this has to be your own responsibility. The situation would be somewhat different if you were paying an outfitter or tour company to take you out on a trip, where you have the judgment and

The Independent Kayaker?

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE GROUP



like sea kayaking becoming as popular as it is, you'll find that there will be more people buying kayaks and setting out on their own, in many cases only to find trouble and maybe a harsh initiation into the kayaking world.

As a sea kayaker, it is your own responsibility to find out what you are getting into. Sea kayaking is a great sport to be involved in for all its reasons such as beauty, nature and peace of mind, but it also has the potential for being dangerous and even life threatening. I can remember someone once saying that kayaking was a "soft adventure sport", and this

ride up off your shoulders and over your head when you're floating (when you really need it)? Will your kayak stay afloat if you capsize? Do you have dry, spare clothing? Then, you have to honestly and realistically assess your own ability in your boat - ask yourself questions like, can I get out of my boat if I capsize? Can I get back in to my boat, either by myself or with assistance, if I capsize? Can I help someone else get back into their boat if I had to? What are my limits in terms of sea conditions? A good way to build confidence in your own skills is to take a course with a qualified instructor, and then to practice the

experience of seasoned guides to rely on. But with the increasing popularity of the sport, membership and participation in local sea kayaking clubs is growing fast, and with that come more and more trips with the objective of just getting people together to go paddling and have fun. The group leaders for these trips do this on their own free time - they don't get paid and are not necessarily experienced guides. They do it because they love the sport and want to get more people involved in it. They aren't, and shouldn't be, held responsible for your safety. You need to rely on your own skills and judgment to ensure your safety. This is particularly true in today's society, where trivial and unjustified lawsuits have become commonplace. It's up to you to make sure you have the equipment and skills to join in on these paddles and be a welcome paddler instead of a possible lawsuit.

*Mike Falconeri, CEE
Urban Eskimo Kayaking*

Winter Pool Sessions

Sundays: February 2 & 9. 9 am - 1 pm
Sheehan High School Pool
Hope Hill Road, Wallingford - Fee \$20, both
Call Mike Falconeri for details.
203-269-0359

DUES ARE DUE

ConnYak annual \$30 membership fees are due in January. Members are automatically joined into the membership of the ACA which entitles you to full insurance coverage on trips as well a full subscription to PADDLER Magazine. (a \$15 subscription)

Dues will be divided into two segments: Joining January 1 to June 30th is \$30 and entitles you to full ACA benefits. Joining after June 30th, membership is \$15 with ACA benefits starting January the following year.

All PADDLER subscriptions will be addressed and resolved by January.

Members receive a club newsletter each month plus various events.

Send checks to:
Jim Gass, 64 St. Francis Woods
Madison, CT 06443

Send newsletter articles and photos to:
Jay Babina
c/o Jason Design Associates
230 East Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

NEXT CONNYAK MEETING

WED. FEBRUARY 19 - 7:30 PM
NEW PARK OFFICE CENTER
151 NEW PARK AVE. HARTFORD

Directions: I-84, Exit 44 - Prospect Ave.
From North - Right at exit signal light on to Kane St. continue 2 blocks to end. Turn left on to New Park Ave.

From South - Left at exit signal light on to Kane St. continue 2 blocks to end. Turn left on to New Park Ave.

MEETING SITES NEEDED

Alternate meeting sites more central to members are needed for the club.

TO JOIN CONNYAK...

ConnYak is a non profit club that is open to all paddlers interested in sea kayaking from any location.

Meetings are usually on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Yearly dues are \$30. Direct membership inquiries to: Stan Kegeles
P.O. Box 2006 Branford, CT 06405

CLASSIFIED

Necky Tornak, lightly used for 3 mos. Kevlar, Red & White \$1600.
203-426-8286

P & H Sirius, low volume
Yellow/White - \$1460. 860-659-1223.

Powermaster paddle - 216 cm. \$50.
860-767-0610 Fax 860-767-0617

Betsey Bay Recluse - white/white \$1200. P & H Sirius, low volume
Yellow/White w/skeg 5 mo old.-
\$1800. 860-721-1593

VCP greenland-style Anas Acuta.
Yellow/white, Silva compass, day hatch, retractable skeg, Werner 2-pc camino paddle. \$1750. 860-529-4612

Necky Arluk III- Kevlar, Teal/white,
Werner 2-pc camino paddle. \$1200.
203-457-1731

ConnYak classified ads are free.



ConnYak

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

c/o Stan Kegeles
P.O. Box 2006
Branford, CT 06405