



Autumn Overnight

Why did I believe the weather report?

It was the middle of October. The air was cool and the leaves were at their peak of color. I needed a couple of days away from the world. If I rushed a few things and put the rest off, I could have two days available to go paddling and camping. The Connecticut River beckoned and I had never paddled upstream of the Chester-Hadlyme ferry.

It didn't take long to throw together the gear for a quick overnight. The tent, sleeping bag and therma-rest, stove, pot, couscous, tomatoes, oatmeal, and a change of clothing and I was off. The put-in behind the Goodspeed Opera house in East haddam was a wonderful spot to begin the adventure. The plan was to paddle downstream about four miles to Selden Neck State Park, exploring the side streams and inlets along the way. I would stay in a favorite campsite on Selden Island directly across from the town of Deep River. I would return the next afternoon, after paddling around the island in the morning and exploring more side streams.

The weather report was for sun, with strong winds out of the North on the first day and gentle south-westerlies on the second. This meant that I would have a tail wind both days to give me a boost and

make paddling easier. I should have known better than to believe the weather report.

The wind was howling out of the north as I launched, and the river was all whitecaps. As the wind whisked the kayak downstream, all I had to do was steer on this free ride. Two hardy souls were paddling upstream in a beautiful wood canoe and having a hard time of it against the wind. I was sure glad that I wouldn't have to buck the wind the next day.

The hills on either side of the Connecticut River were painted with what seemed like a hundred shades of gold and bronze. Every bend in the river revealed a stunning new vista. Even the migrating birds overhead seemed to slow down to enjoy the sight.

When I reached Lord and Rich Islands on river, I turned east into a creek to see Chapman Pond. The leaves on the hills around the pond were bursting with yellows and oranges. The pond was shallow and I ran aground as I tried to find a different stream to the main river. The tide was too low and it was all mud to this other stream. I retraced my route to the river. Hadlyme ferry, Gillette Castle,



Derek Hutchinson

*B.C.U. Senior Coach, Author
Kayak Designer*

*"West Coast Kayaking
Alaska to the Baja of Mexico"*

**Lecture: 7:30 Friday, May 2
Essex Town Hall**

**Workshops: May 3 & 4
Stony Creek**

Contact Terry Harlow at 860 659-1223
for information on workshops.

DIRECTIONS - ESSEX TOWN HALL

Approaching from the North on Route 9, take Exit 3. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left and go under the Route 9 bridge to the light. Turn left at this light on to West Avenue. The Town Hall is about a third of a mile up the hill on the left, at the corner of West Avenue and Grove Street. Turn left onto Grove Street for parking at the rear of the building.

Approaching from the South on Route 9, take Exit 3. At the end of the exit ramp turn left and go to the light. Turn right at this light on to West Avenue. The Town Hall is about a third of a mile up the hill on the left at the corner of West Avenue and Grove Street. Turn left onto Grove Street for parking at the rear of the building.

Whalebone creek, and Chester all passed in a flash and I was at Selden Island in time for an early dinner. In the evening, I heard the bells chiming across the river at Mount St. Johns School, and shortly after that, there was a beautiful sunset that rivaled the coloring of the leaves. The temperature dropped with the sun, and I snuggled down for the night, listening to the wind and hoping that it would ease up before dawn.

The next day broke with bright sunshine and NO WIND. I broke camp after breakfast and took off to circumnavigate Selden Island. Selden used to be a neck of land with the Connecticut River on one side and Selden Creek on the other. In recent history the creek broke through to the Connecticut River at the north end of the neck and turned it into an island. I turned south to paddle to the far end. I would then paddle up Selden Creek, back out the river, and north back to my car. It was easy paddling on the now glass-smooth water that reflected the colors of the hills.

I turned up the Creek and was amazed that during the War of 1812, locals managed to hide ships in this tiny stream when the British attacked the Town of Essex. It was a smoother ride up the length of the stream, but I had a surprise waiting

for me when I got back to the River. Yesterday's howling winds of the north had returned! My car was waiting four miles upstream, beyond the wind and waves. What happened to the forecast southwest-erlies.

Well, sitting there wasn't going to get me back to the car. Out into the river I chugged. A lot of hard paddling and several face fulls of spray managed to ferry me across the river to where I thought the wind would be a little softer. WRONG! The beautiful hills were funneling the wind straight down river. A lot more hard paddling amounted to very slow progress. The landmarks that flew by the day before seemed to stand still and mock me today. Every mile seemed longer. I was getting very tired. My hat blew off, but in no way was I going to retrieve it and lose hard won ground.

I gave serious thought to turning down river and downwind to Essex. There, I might be able to leave the boat and take a cab up to East Haddam and my car. Pride (and the fact that I only had three dollars with me) kept me going upriver.

For a short stretch, I was able to get out on shore and tow the boat behind as I walked along the river

bank, It was welcome relief to my arms and abs.

Early afternoon finally found me back at the car. Every muscle ached and I gave up on the idea of exploring more that day. Did I have a good time? You bet I did!

- Gaeton Andretta
SMALL BOAT SHOP

As the warmer weather arrives, it's imperative that we stay ever vigilant to the perils that face us as sea kayakers. There are three major things to keep in mind:

Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature in the springtime!!! (the warm air can create a false sense of security).

In cold water areas, don't paddle alone unless absolutely necessary. Your survival may depend on it!!!

Carry at least the minimum survival gear & food in the event of a capsized/accident/injury/unscheduled overnight stay. (This can all easily fit in a medium size dry bag in one of your hatches).

If you follow this advice and teach it to others, we will all spend our time on the water happily & without incident. Practice safe paddling!!!!

- Stan Kegeles



RESCHEDULED

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 - GROTON
RAIN DATE APRIL 27

There are large pond and protected bays as well as two islands right off shore in the Groton Harbor. This is protected water paddling with open water at the mouth of Groton Harbor. Pack a lunch.

Jay Babina (203) 481-3421 Home.
For any further information.

*I-95 to exit 88 in Groton. Head towards water (south) thru two lights to the junction of Rt. 1. Right on Rt. 1. Left at first light (Depot Road). Continue on to Bluff Point State Park..
In the water by 10:30 a.m.*

about cancellations...

Trips will list a contact person for cancellations as well as any other pertinent information. Some trips will have an automatic cancellation in case of rain. All trips will have directions to the launch.

Those who take it upon themselves to organize a paddle just can't please everyone all the time. What's paddling weather for one may not be for another. Use your best judgment and arrive to have a good time.

PADDLEFEST 1997 KAYAK DEMO DAY

Sunday May 4 - Kingston, RI
sponsored by The Kayak Center of Wickford, RI

Dozens of Sea Kayaks and White Water boats on display for sale and try-outs.
10 AM to 5 PM.

For information.(888) SEA-KAYAK



C O N N Y A K

HAS GONE CYBERSPACE

Our Homepage is located at:
www.mindspring.com/~connyak/index.htm

This is an evolutionary process, and there are some links which are still under construction. I am doing my best to represent all facets of our club to the world. Please visit the site. Your suggestions and comments (praise included) are welcome! (See the "Paddle Webmaster" link).

The website was designed using Frames, which requires Netscape Navigator 2.0 or Microsoft Explorer 2.0 or higher. This was done to enable the browser to have the menu selections available at all times without the need to navigate through layers of screens.

I will gladly accept photos for the photo gallery (they will be returned after digitizing) if you would like to contribute photos and/or articles.

There are NOAA links for instant tide and weather information.

I intend to update the site each month with articles, links, photos, paddle trip schedules, and meeting information in coordination with the information in the Newsletter.

Again, thank you for your encouragement to make this happen, and your support to make this the best it can be.

- Fern Usen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nigel Foster

Lecture - Friday June 27 - Essex
Workshops - June 28, 29 in CT

Contact Terry Harlow for
workshops - (860) 659-1223

Send newsletter articles and photos to:
Jay Babina c/o Jason Design Associates
230 East Main Street, Branford, CT 06405
203-481-6815 Fax 203-481-0786

CT RIVER - SERIES OF FOUR ENFIELD TO WETHERSFIELD SATURDAY, MAY 3 - ENFIELD

First of four trips planned to paddle the entire Connecticut River.

DIRECTIONS -

King St (Exit 46) off I-91 and go .2 miles N. on RT. 5. Following Boat Launch sign, take 1st. left turn onto Old King Rd. .2 miles take 2nd left on Parson Rd. .4 miles across railroad track to launch. We unload and shuttle a few cars to Wethersfield Cove (take out). Bring lunch and cold water paddling gear (wet/dry suit) Trip ends mid-afternoon. Rain cancels the trip.
Info. Doug Murray (860) 521-8897
Meet at launch site at 9 AM

LAKE GEORGE KAYAK/CAMP SATURDAY & SUNDAY MAY 17 & 18

Paddle the spectacular Lake George narrows, before motor boat season! Explore the islands and Paradise Bay (which Paul Jamieson's guide calls the most beautiful on earth). Island camp Saturday night and paddle The Mother Bunch Islands on Sunday. Trip will be geared to novice/intermediate paddling skills. novice campers especially welcome. Registrations limited.

Call Clark Bowlen (860) 623-6587 for further details.

PLAN AHEAD FOR...

COBSCOOK BAY - MAINE THURS. JUN 19 - TUES. JUNE 24

Call Clark Bowlen (860) 623-6587 for further details.

Note: All paddlers on ConnYak trips must wear the appropriate CG approved Personal Flotation Device and wear a spray skirt. The boat and equipment must meet CG requirements, including an appropriate signaling device. All paddlers are responsible for their own safety, including dressing for immersion. (always carry extra dry clothes)

PADDLESPORTS RALLY CEDAR LAKE - CHESTER CT

*Saturday and Sunday May 3rd & 4th
sponsored by North Cove Outfitters*

Hundreds of boats on display for on-water trial. Demonstrations as well as all outdoor items on sale. \$5. donation for the benefit of Camp Hazen YMCA.

Call for further info. (860) 388-6585

"BIRDS OF GREAT ISLAND"

*Lecture - Thursday May 29 7:00 pm
North Cove Outfitters - Saybrook, CT*

Clay Taylor will present a slide lecture on the diverse local bird population of Great Island. Various waterfowl will be covered along with tips on bird watching and wildlife photography etc.

Call for further info. (860) 388-6585

NO CONNYAK MEETING IN MAY

Due to Derek Hutchinson's lecture on Friday May 2nd in Essex.

CPR COURSE

*Wed. May 14 - (Evening)
New Park Office Center
151 New Park Ave. Hartford*

Kim Gass (Certified Instructor) has offered to teach a CPR class. \$20. per person. Call Stan Kegeles for info. 203-481-1881

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

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

Betsey Bay Recluse - white/white \$1200. 860-721-1593

Wilderness System Solution XL w/Werner paddle \$900. 1996 Necky Looksha, 1 mo. old \$1000. Accessories: nylon & neo spray skirts, Kayak sailing kit, kayak counsel, portage cart. Best offer on accessories. 860-346-6224

Necky Kyook, 3 yrs old, used little last 2 years- w/ rudder. \$750. 860-379-0454

Dagger Seeker - w/ spray skirt, new cond bulkheads, hatches, rudder \$700. 860-635-3422

ConnYak classified ads are free.



ConnYak
CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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