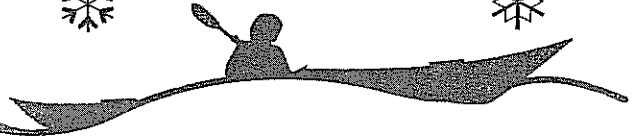


# CONN YAK



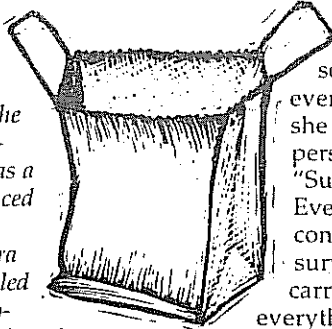
C O N N E C T I C U T S E A K A Y A K E R S

December 1998

## BAGS OF 'TRICKS

- by Dean Bertoldi

November 7th, 1998 we were paddling in the ocean as a small group in 50 degree type weather. One of the newer paddlers needed neoprene mitts, and although as a group we could have produced three or four extra pairs, I yelled first "I have two extra pairs." My friend Jay paddled to me, we rafted and he proceeded to open the rear hatch and rummage around for the correct dry bag. After about 3 minutes we had managed to pull out all the bags, partially flooded the rear compartment and produce zero pairs of gloves.



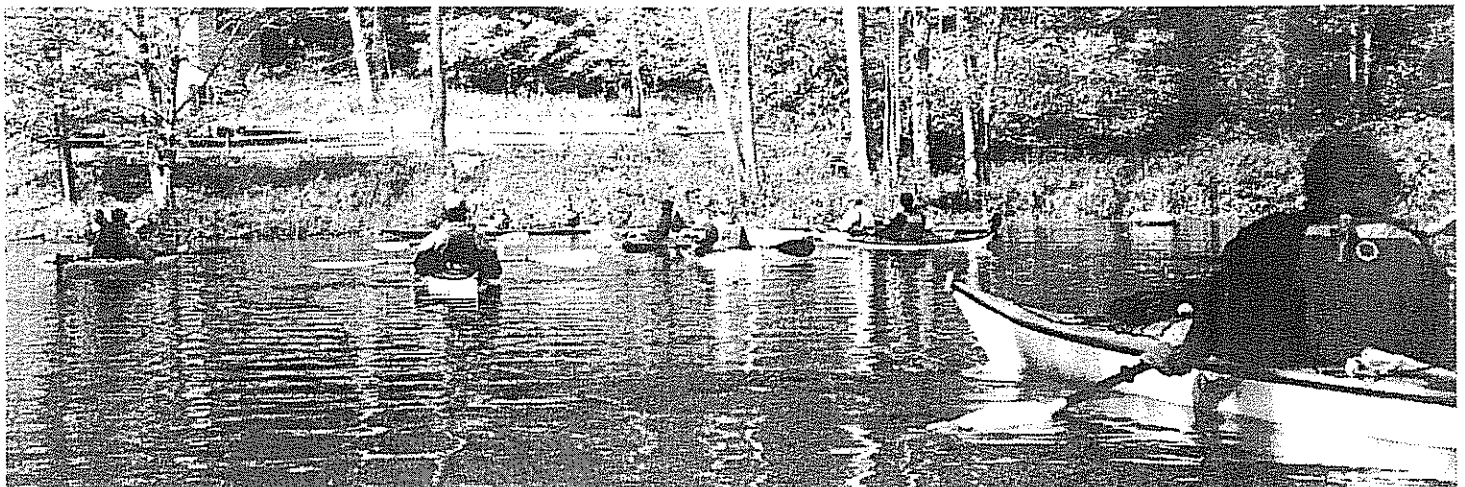
some of the potential fates every paddler faces when he or she launches -even as day trippers. "Survival"... this is the key word. Every other type of rescue or inconvenience trickles down from survival. How many of you are carrying enough gear to cover everything from a minor cut to extended immersion?

This minor incident prompted the writing of this article. We always see people out in both warm and cold weather dressed improperly with no thought given to the potential problems they can encounter. Most of the people I paddle with are as prepared as I, and some much more. We have duplicate and triplicate items among us, more than one VHF radio and collectively produce a seaworthy armada. If you solo paddle, however, which I do regularly, you forfeit the luxuries of an assisted rescue, borrowing items or food that you failed to pack as well as hearing the illustrious stories of your paddling companions. Every paddler should be prepared each time they launch as though embarking on a solo paddling venture.

The good news is that I was prepared and did have two extra pairs of gloves somewhere in my dry bags. The bad news is they were not to be found. Unless you enjoy shell games, label your dry bags with both an overall category (i.e. rescue, clothes, etc.) and the general contents. The ability to locate items quickly is critical to a successful rescue as well as avoiding the nuisance of hunting through bags. For those of you who want to learn the basics of correctly packing your kayak for a trip, catch Mike Falconeri's demonstration at one of the symposiums or demo days in the spring.

The second lesson here is to avoid opening hatches at sea ...any sea. I was on flat water in a low volume boat, and only needed to rock the boat slightly to take on a couple gallons of water. If we had even a small wave break over the gunwale, I could have swamped the rear hatch area. Lastly, every-day-type items like gloves should have been carried in a more accessible area (cockpit or in a bag on deck).

I am sure that my equipment list would not meet certain "professional" criteria set forth in some publications. I carry a light weight array of gear that I feel will suffice in a time of need. You can certainly add many clothing, rescue, first aid and personal items beyond what I use, but I feel confident that if you carry at least the items I do, you will be able to confront any day paddling situation you encounter.



32 paddlers arrived for Hamburg Cove which might have been the one of the nicest paddles of the year.

All of the gear mentioned was pulled directly from my kayak after the last day trip. With the exception of rotating summer and winter apparel, I have managed with this basic arrangement for 5 years.

### IN THE REAR HATCH

To minimize weathercocking, all of my dry bags are carried in the rear compartment stuffed towards the stern of the boat.

**Dry bag #1 (Sealine #5)** — 12 ga. flare gun, three 12 ga shells (6 sec. burn time each), three skyblazer flares, die marker, extra hatch hardware, matches, duct tape, Mini-Mag flashlight with headband holster, spare AA batteries and small pack of tissue.

**Dry bag #2 (Sealine #5)** — socks, thermal top and bottom, underwear and sweatpants.

**Dry bag #3 (Sealine #5)** — Adventure medical kit (optimist model), small pouch containing \$5 bill, four quarters and a spare auto key, Silva hand held compass, 2 heatpacks, fleece pullover.

**Dry bag #4 (Sealine #5)** — fleece gloves, Seda neoprene mitts, Otter Paws neoprene gloves and a Ritchie deck mount compass stuffed into a wool watch cap for protection.

**Spare spray skirt** (nylon type that will fit neo 1 to neo 3 rims) — I always carry an extra since tearing a 3" gash in a neoprene skirt while getting in the boat one morning.

### COCKPIT

The cockpit of my kayak is extremely tight and space is at a premium. You may find that some items I carry elsewhere may be more handy in your cockpit, space permitting.

**Stored in a knee tube** — Hand held pump, paddle float and a VHF radio.

### ON DECK

**Throwing stick (fore deck) and spare paddle (rear deck)** — I try to keep the decks clear of gear for two reasons. First, larger waves, rolling practice and rescues all tend to detach objects from the exterior of the boat, and secondly, with a low greenland paddle style, my hands are always hitting anything secured directly in front of me.

### PFD

**Two large front pockets** — Towing rig, 2 small skyblazer flares in double zip-lock bags, sunglasses, knife, whistle,

digital watch, nose plugs and a power-bar or similar food.

### AND...

I also carry one water bottle, hot herbal tea when the temperature really starts to drop, a small dry bag that rolls around loose on the floor of the cockpit for immediate access items (winter hat, extra gloves etc.), a sponge and a neoprene diving hood both loose in the cockpit. Lastly, to record stupid kayak tricks, I often stuff a waterproof camera into a pocket on my PFD.

Other than the kayak clothing that I wear for the day (drysuit now through the end of May, neoprene gloves and boots), this is a complete list of what I carry every time I launch at sea. Some may feel this amount of "stuff" is a burden to carry for a day trip, but once packed into dry bags, requires very little effort and space and really only adds about 10 pounds to the overall weight of the kayak. Even with a good roll and other self rescue techniques, this is the minimum list of provisions I need for survival and comfort!

*In February of 1998 I had to rescue my brother 8 times (actually capsized 8 times!) in freezing water, 1.5 miles from shore, using the same items listed in this article. In a 90 minute period I used the fleece gloves, seda mitts, neoprene diving hood, wool hat, hand held pump, water bottle, hot tea, spare paddle, fleece jacket, thermal top, thermal bottom and the towing rig. My brain was engaged in auto-think, but I was easily able to locate items we needed. If the situation had escalated, I knew I still had extra equipment and clothing to cope.*

To explain the proper use of the equipment listed is beyond the scope of this article. If, however, you would like additional information on the products

listed (pricing, where to purchase etc.), E-mail me at bertoldi@ix.netcom.com.

The bottom line is simple — analyze the worst possible situation you may encounter, even on a two hour paddle, and prepare for something worse. If you pack the essential rescue and back-up items needed, you can launch with the peace of mind that you are prepared to help both yourself and your ill-prepared friends.

**If I had to dispense with all of my gear except one item, I would keep my VHF radio or a cellular phone. The ability to communicate with another human and ask for assistance is truly the king of rescue technology. For the type of paddling we mostly engage in, that of coastal jaunts, calling the Coast Guard, 911 or a passing vessel is a sure bet for receiving help. If you already own one, the cellular phone can be an inexpensive alternative to the VHF, but cannot communicate with another ship, and distress calls are usually funneled through 911. I have placed calls miles off the Connecticut shore with no problem. If you choose a cellular phone, store it in a dry bag. Operating on line of sight technology, the VHF is the best choice for coastal paddlers. You can monitor various channels (weather included), communicate with multiple parties simultaneously (including members of your own paddling group), and have direct access to the Coast Guard.**

**All this in a waterproof package that can give 6 to 8 hours of continuous service for under \$300. For the serious kayaker, this is a "must have" rescue item.**

- Dean Bertoldi



Lunch on Nott Island, Essex

## The Prepared Paddler

In cold water paddling, hypothermia is a life & death possibility. Are you prepared?

The two biggest mistakes a cold-weather kayaker can make right in the beginning is (1) going out in cold water alone, and (2) believing that because you will be close to shore or travelling a short distance, you don't need to wear cold water gear or take the same amount of safety equipment as if you were going on a longer journey.

There are items which are imperative that you keep on your person, and those that can be contained in the boat. For the sake of brevity, I have included a total list on my website at <http://www.mind-spring.com/~inukshuk/equipment>. On your person should always be at least your knife, tow belt, pfd, sprayskirt, VHF or cellphone in a waterproof bag, flashlight with strobe, possibly your paddle-float (back pocket), energy bar, flares and mirror. I always keep an extra set of flares attached behind my seat in a waterproof pouch as backups. This way they are accessible without opening the hatch. Of course you should be dressed for immersion (drysuit or wetsuit and drytop, boots, gloves, hood or warm hat).

In the boat are the following critical items: sleeping bag, space blanket, rescue rope stirrup (for re-entry), bivy or survival bag, shelter, thermos of hot water (no alcohol!!!) or stove, pots & water, emergency food, extra set of dry clothing, including hat and gloves, and first aid kit. Future articles may cover the use of some of this equipment.

Boat w/ bulkheads	Water bottle (cold)
PFD	Extra dry clothes in drybag
Sprayskirt	Tow system (with quick release belt)
Spare paddle	Knife
Pump	Throw rope or throw bag
Paddle float	Rope stirrup
Sponge	Flares
Whistle	Windproof anorak
Nose clips	Compass
Warm hat	Chart of area
Neoprene hood	VHF or Cellphone
Drysuit and/or Wetsuit with drytop	Marine weather radio
Paddling jacket	
Lunch and extra food	

### For hypothermia

Space blanket and/or bivy bag, survival bag, emergency shelter, sleeping bag in drybag, thermos with hot water, emergency food, heat packs

### First Aid Kit

Cuts - sterile bandages, pressure bandage  
broken bones - sam splint, ace bandage,  
triangular bandage, wrist straps, vinegar  
(for jellyfish sting)

### For kayak repair

Duct tape, denzo tape, extra toggle line  
matches or lighter, fiberglass repair kit



- BCU Coach, Fern S. Usen

## Packing for Safety

Spare Paddle, Pump, Paddle Float and ...?  
... sometimes a sandwich. - Dick Gamble

## BOOK RECOMMENDATION

A good read is Ann Linea's "Deep Water Passage": A Spiritual Journey at Midlife. She recounts her 65 day journey kayaking around Lake Superior. Kayakers especially will appreciate the challenges and dangers she faced in this ambitious journey, while she reassessed her life. When she wrote the book in 1997, she was the first woman to paddle around the lake. It's now available in paperback. Happy reading!

Joan Anthony - email wanthony@wtco.net

## ACTIVITIES SUGGESTIONS

Contact committee member Ed Milnes with any suggestions for future events.  
203-488-0894 email: emilnes@snet.net

**THANKS...** to all those who have contributed their services to the club with articles and photos for the newsletter, organizing a paddle, contacting speakers, securing our meeting room & pool, stamping the newsletter, tending our table at the demo days, the summer party, activities committee or helping out in any way.

## NO CONNYAK MEETING - DEC NEXT MEETING - JAN

WED. JAN. 20, 7:30 PM  
WALLINGFORD PARK & REC.

**DIRECTIONS - WALLINGFORD PARK & REC**  
Exit 15 (Rt 68) off I-91 in Wallingford.  
West on Rt. 68. (toward Wallingford)  
Approx. 3/4 mile take a right at the Fire  
Station (Barnes Road). Take your first  
Rt. off Barnes on to Fairfield Blvd.  
Wallingford Park & Rec. is the 2nd  
building on the left.

## NY MAN, 32 RESCUED AFTER KAYAK CAPSIZES

By ANDREW BROPHY  
Staff Writer - The Connecticut Post  
October 30, 1998

FAIRFIELD — A 32-year-old Manhattan man whose kayak capsized Thursday in chilly waters about 2 miles off Penfield Beach was rushed to Bridgeport Hospital suffering from life-threatening hypothermia. David Crafa was in the hospital for about three hours and released Thursday afternoon. Bridgeport Harbormaster Joe Savino said Crafa, because of his exposure to the elements, might have been 30 minutes from death if a passing sailboat had not spotted him. Crafa was kayaking from Penfield Beach to Penfield Light-house with his girlfriend, Nayer Salahshourian, 27, of Fairfield, shortly before noon, when his kayak capsized and tossed him into the 55-degree waters of Long Island Sound.

Crafa, wearing a life jacket and clutching Rascal, his kayak, told Salahshourian, who was still aboard her kayak, to leave and try to flag down a sailboat. About 30 minutes later, Carl Volckmann and Robert Kane aboard the 30-foot sailboat Triple Play noticed Salahshourian waving frantically and steered over to help. They brought Triple Play alongside Salahshourian, who climbed aboard and told them that Crafa was somewhere in the wind swollen waters.

"He was nowhere in sight when we picked her up," said Volckmann.

Given the size of the waves, it was difficult to spot a human head in the water and that they mistook lobster pots for Crafa several times. A short time later, however, they spotted Crafa several hundred yards from where they first picked up Salahshourian. He was totally soaked and shivering badly when they arrived.

Volckmann called Riverside Marine and asked for an ambulance to be dispatched to Bridgeport Harbor to meet them when they returned.

Harbormaster Savino kept in contact with Triple Play during the search-and-rescue and sent Senior Deputy Harbormaster C.J. Stites and Deputy Harbor Master Paul Cipolla out on a 17-foot Boston Whaler to escort Triple Play into the harbor.

Volckmann said the 30 mph wind was so strong, and the waves were so high, that he and Kane were operating the 30-foot Triple Play by motor when they spotted Salahshourian.

"At one point, we were going to go back given the severe conditions today, and it's a good thing we didn't," he said.

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