



BLOCK ISLAND AND BACK

How NOT to do a Block Island trip.

August 31, 1997

Taking the all nighter from California and arriving in the early dawn of August 30 was Desmond Herrington. Des, Mike Falconeri and AARP member Bob Huttemann have been E-mailing and talking about getting together. We knew we'd get together for dinner, but paddling was questionable because of schedules.

We worked out a paddling date, Sunday Aug. 31. Mike had a golfing commitment for Saturday, and Bob had a barbecue party to attend with his family for Saturday evening, so Sunday it was.

Bob got a midnight call from Mike to be at Desmonds at 10 o'clock. Being a late morning start we didn't think we'd do anything particularly aggressive. Mike and Bob arrived about the same time, had coffee, and chatted a bit.

After a very brief discussion we decided to go to Block Island. By the time we left Matunuk Beach it was 1 o'clock. The NOAA forecast was for 3 foot seas, the wind picking up to 21 knots in the afternoon, and possible T-shower as a small front passes through.

Due to our long planning of about 20 seconds, we had no equipment, ie; flashlights, water, food, flares, VHF, charts; the things INTELLIGENT paddlers might take. I must add, we did have life vest, picked up water, and things to nibble on along the way.

When we left Matunuk Beach, Block Island was covered in fog. After a small discussion, a heading of 200-210 degrees was agreed upon. We paddled through light chop, and 2-3 foot swells for about an hour and 15 Min. before spotting the Island. We were off the north shore by 3:30 and arrived in the harbor at 4:30. The wind had picked up considerably when we were half way across which made the water interesting.

Three miles from the island, Mike sees a dorsal fin. Desmond spots it also. Bob is blind, or pretending to be. Is this what we think it is? Maybe its a Sunfish? OH PLEASE, LET IT BE!!! Maybe its the REAL THING, the kind with long teeth and a ferocious appetite. We know there are some Big Daddies out

here. No time for those cooling rolls!

Beaching our boats near the fishermen bait area was a major incentive to quickly get out of there to avoid the smell and refuel our bodies. The day was beautiful. We sat outside, ordered some REAL food and enjoyed all the scenery on the beach. We were very relaxed. By the time we finished and got ready to push off, it was 6 o'clock. Mike said it was hard leaving, we weren't sure what that meant, and didn't dare ask.

We were out of the harbor by 6:10 P.M. and had to pick up the north shore lights before darkness for some dead reckoning.

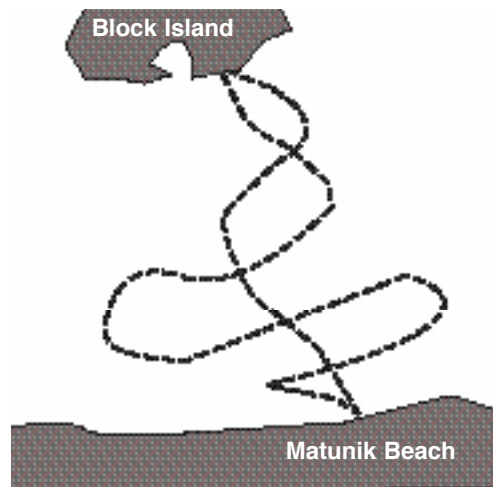
Our initial heading back was 020-030 degrees. The wind was behind creating a following sea. We estimated we were half way across, enjoying a magnificent sunset when the Point Judith light house was spotted. Our heading was putting us where we wanted to be, west of Judith. The light house was now used for navigation instead of our compass which was getting more difficult to read in the dark.

At sunset Desmond picked out a cigarette boat heading directly toward us. What to do? We had no lights; screaming wouldn't work; how about a prayer? It must have worked. The boat passed about 50 feet from us.

We're not sure if they ever saw us. Shortly after a Coast Guard boat was going slowly up the coast. We knew with no lights, or other necessary safety gear we'd be in big trouble. We got as low as we could until they passed.

"Oh what a beautiful night!"

Mike took out 2 light sticks -the kind you bend and they light up. Mike and Bob each put them in their hats. About an hour from shore we saw the ferry north-west of us heading toward the Island. Desmond said the ferry knows where he his, we're off course. Shortly after, a ferry was coming up the south west side of us. We knew were he was, we weren't certain of his heading, or if he saw our light sticks. Suddenly a big spot came on. He saw our light sticks. We now knew we were off Gallilee and had to change coarse to a more westerly direc-



tion.

On our approach to Matunik beach, the tide was high, and we weren't exactly certain of our location. Desmond and Bob headed a little further west, toward some very bright lights which lit up the shore. As we paddled westward, Mike had found the truck a hundred yards or so back. Meanwhile Bob going parallel to shore and closer than he'd like, is concerned about breakers catching him off guard and putting the boat on some rocks. Sure enough, a wave crashes over the coaming. The high brace saved the day. Bob vectors southerly, crashes through more surf, to get out a little more in order to turn and make a 90 degree shore approach.

Desmond by now is coming through

the surf, Mike is ready for his first beer on shore, and Bob is right behind Desmond. We got safely back to Matunik at 9:00 P.M.

CONCLUSION:

For now on when the three of us paddle we're bringing; Sleeping Bags, Tent, Stove, Extra Food, Charts For The Atlantic Coast, Flares, Flashlights, Extra Batteries And Light Bulbs, GPS, VHF, Whistle, Fog Horn and lots of water. We never know where or when we're going to end up.

P.S. Sorry no photos, we hadn't planned this trip.

*Mike Falconeri
Desmond Herrington
Bob Huttemann*



Paddlers having lunch at Bluff Point. (T-shirt weather doesn't seem like that long ago.)



Landing on Fishers Island - Jon Sweeton, Dave Hiscocks and friends. Photos - Phil Warner

DUES ARE DUE (NEW POLICY)

You'll notice that your mailing label now has the month that you need to send in your dues. You'll receive a notice inserted in your newsletter as well. Members will get a grace period of two more issues and reminders, and then... no more newsletters!

So... please try to send in your dues in a timely fashion, it will immensely help out those who have to keep tracking all of this!

Keep the waiver page.



Fill it out and send it in with your dues.

ABOUT CANCELLATIONS

When in doubt about meetings due to weather, call Stan Kegeles at 203-481-1881. A message addressing the meeting situation will be on his machine.

ROLLING SESSIONS-WILTON

8 sessions starting Jan. 11 - Wilton, CT

9:30 - 11:30 Sundays at the Wilton YMCA. Pool practice with instruction. Fee - \$8. per session. Sponsored by CT Whitewater Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Call Jeff Barnard 203-356-0445 or Mark Schappert 203-775-1569 for info.

ROLLING SESSIONS-SUFFIELD

8 sessions starting Jan. 9th - Suffield, CT

The Appalachian Mountain Club is holding Pool Rolling Sessions in Suffield starting Fri. Jan 9th for 8 consecutive weeks. Time - 8:15 - 10:15 pm. - instruction will be offered. Fees are only \$8. per session or \$50 for all 8 payable at the first session. Contact Ed Chase at 860-668-2962.

CLASSIFIED

Wanted: Betsey Bay Recluse, glass or wood. 860-269-0569

Werner Camino paddle. 1 pc. - \$ 50
203-481-3221

ConnYak classifieds are free.

CPR CLASSES

Wednesday, January 7, 6:30 PM

Course Fee \$25.

Location to be decided and announced.

Course covers Adult CPR as well as care for choking. Limit 12 people. Fee includes manual. CPR card issued upon completion. Certified instructor Kim Gass. 203-421-4476

Send newsletter articles and photos to:
Jay Babina E-mail Jbabina@snet.net
7 Jeffrey Lane, N. Branford, CT 06471
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136

NEXT CONNYAK MEETING

WED. JAN 21- 7:30 PM
WALLINGFORD PARK & REC.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
GENERAL MEETING

*** NOTE - NEW LOCATION!
WALLINGFORD PARK & REC. HAS MOVED**

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.

FREE "TEVA" SANDALS

One pair of "TEVAS" sandals will be given away at our next ConnYak meeting on Jan. 21. Coupons for free sandals (your size) were donated to ConnYak by TEVA.

LESSONS & ROLLING SESSIONS

**Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri
Skills Workshop Jan. 17, Sat. Wallingford**

Also Rescue training and Rolling Sessions on Sundays throughout the winter. Open pool time available. Call Wallingford Park & Rec 203-294-2120 or Mike at 203-284-9292.

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 fees are \$30. 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)
Send inquiries to: Stan Kegeles
P.O. Box 2006, Branford, CT 06405



ConnYak
CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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