

# CONNERYAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

December 1999

A solo crossing of Long Island Sound was not something Ted Barnard planned for a long time but something that he occasionally thought about and decided to "just do it" a week before his departure. On the second week of October, Ted decided he was ready, packed his kayak and headed off. Since he lived in Branford, the departure point was easy - Stony Creek.

Although there are shorter crossing points and Middle Ground Light and Island lies between Bridgeport and Port Jefferson, the convenience of leaving from close to home dictated the decision. His destination was the Wading River in Shorum, 18 miles directly across the Sound. He discovered that there was a state park right along the water and that's where he decided he would spend the night. Although this is not an official camp ground, he figured it would make the ideal landing spot and would camp in any secluded area of the park he could find. Being the off season also made it a little less populated and monitored. The weather was predicted basically calm and warm for the weekend.

I departed at 12 noon since I didn't want to hang around over there for half a day. I arrived approximately 6 hours later and a mile from the State Park. Fisherman in the area pointed me in the right direction and in 20 minutes I was at the Park. I worked with a compass only and tried to compensate for the little drift I encountered and turned out about a mile off course. My bearing was 210 degrees. When I arrived, I made a phone call to my mother who was worried about the trip. My evening was pretty uneventful and I was glad to have landed and set up camp. I felt no apprehension or anxiety during the crossing and my only major con-

## BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER



cern was: will I have a place to camp. The vague thought of sea sickness was the only other passing thought and since I have never been sea sick, it wasn't a major issue although I know it can happen to anyone.

I could see the cliffs on Long Island throughout my entire trip over. Since the cliffs were always visible, you always felt like you're closer than you really were, however it still seemed to take forever to get there. A Camel Back for water made it easy to drink while paddling and I stopped for about 10 minutes to have a sandwich while in the middle of the Sound.

7:00 am the following morning, I was in my boat and on my way back. It was a sunny, hazy morning and I paddled for about 3 hours with no land in sight. There were a few

freighters and tugs in the distance, but throughout my entire trip I had no close contact with any boats. Most of the fishermen were within a mile of each coastline. I carried no VHF, because I don't own one although I realize I should have had some kind of communication. The noon time temperature reached almost 68 degrees, so I was very comfortable and the sound was basically calm.

On the way back, I just wanted to get it over with. I was feeling fatigued and bored. There's really nothing to see out there and obviously, I had no conversations to pass the time. You're basically paddling looking at your compass and occasionally looking up hoping to see some-

thing. As I approached CT, I didn't trust my compass bearing and thought Faulkners Island was a bit too far to the right, so I compensated and corrected my course by heading towards Guilford a bit. This was a mistake. As land became more visible, I spotted Outer Island on the Thimbles and realized that I was about a mile too far north. I also weather cocked all the way back which can really get tiring.

I paddled a Nordcapp HM which, pulled to the south the entire way back in spite of it's built on skeg. Once again, it took about 6 hours on the return trip.

Would I do it again? Probably not - at least not alone. It's just boring. I'm glad I did it for my own sense of self achievement because it was something that was tucked away in my mind for a while. I also took some advanced classes with Maine Island Kayak and wanted to use my navigational skills. However, it felt really good to be back on land and stretch my legs when I finally arrived back in Branford."   
- Ted Barnard

# THANK YOU SAINT PETER

October 23. A beautiful sunny day if a bit on the windy side. After floating our cars through the water under the bridge, 19 of us met in the flooded parking lot of Bluff Point. With only a 15-minute delay we paddle off into the wind towards the open water and around the island where we are met by, according to Dick: 8-foot swells (!); according to the American non-metric system: more like 4 feet; according to me: you could just see the tops of people's heads. Fun, exciting stuff. All these little kayakers bobbing up and down around me in a tight little pack, the experts keeping a watchful eye on the newer paddlers. I loved it. Then off to the beach for lunch (bread and cheese and a delicious if expensive Met-RX Source One chocolate raspberry bar with hot tea).

After lunch 11 people go back and the rest of us paddle east into even bigger waves. Dick would probably say 12 feet (how do you measure a wave?). In any case they are way above my head. Sometimes my kayak balances on the crest of a wave, sometimes it plunges down into a trough and digs into the water or is slammed so that I get soaked. Going into the waves, I feel confronted by big walls of water that seem too steep for the kayak to climb. It is exhilarating. And the wind is at our back, a great ride. FUN. The problem is going back into the wind. It is tough work and we get spread out according to our strength to fight the wind. And guess who is the last one? How can you paddle as hard as you can and try to keep your kayak on a course without losing some momentum? I make decent progress, escorted by one paddler or another, until I realize, when I am al-

most at the point, that I am hardly advancing any more. At that pace I might make it by Halloween or Christmas for sure. And that is when Saint Peter (Peter Smith) enters the scene. Do I want to turn around and find a beach to land? I say yes but I think "What! all that ground gained for nothing?". So we turn towards shore and land on a beach which is really a pile of rocks. Like lost souls on this desert peninsula, we walk around a bit to get the lay of the land. That's when I have an encounter with a thin tough vine laid down between two rocks like a trip wire. I fall of course but nobody is there to laugh, and I dislocate my finger. I did not tell you, Peter, I was already embarrassed enough and my finger pops back into its rightful position anyway. As we start portaging, Phil and Clark appear, as well as two kayakers who had decided to remain civilians for the day and had been watching my (lack of) progress from afar. With this numerous team to carry my kayak I have no more difficulties to make it past the point where the others are waiting. Everyone is real cool, assuring me that the problem is not me but my kayak: it is short so it is slow. Yeah, right! I did feel safe through the entire time since we were paddling along shore.

The moral to this story? There is not one. The waves were too much fun and I don't learn from my mistakes. I would just ask Saint Peter to keep the wind down a bit and to stay by me just in case. And I have a question for the experts: how in the world can you roll or rescue anyone in this kind of water? \*

You know what else happened? On my way home on 95, the hood of my car pops all the way open. I am in the right lane so I brake and veer to the right until I feel that my right wheels are on the grass. And, just to show that there must be a god somewhere, as I close the hood, I notice that one of the straps holding the kayak is loose.

- Claudine Burns

\* The majority of paddlers at Bluff Point were experienced kayakers who practice rescues, don't consider themselves experts and know how difficult things like that really are in those conditions. Rescuing someone in 4 ft waves breaking on to a shore with large boulders, (when we went around Pine Island) with some of the group only 50 feet from the breaking surf area can be almost impossible because of timing.

In scuba diving, you learn to turn on your back and land feet first to cushion yourself if you get caught in breaking waves on a rock / cliff shore. If that ever happens, forget saving the boat. Come in behind it and get yourself safely out of the water between waves. Throw your paddle up on the rocks when you're close enough. You can drag the boat up once you're on shore and re-launch where it's calm. - JB

## THANKS FOR 1999

As our year comes to a close, we always look back on what we did and where we're heading. We have grown considerably in the last year and had a lot of trips and lectures due to the work of various members and have many of people to thank.

Thanks to all those who wrote stories and shared their experiences with the membership through the newsletters. Thanks to those who furnished pictures and especially Tom Mazairz who always has his camera on every trip and provides loads of great shots. (as well as a good paddling companionship) Dean Bertoldi for putting the effort in to getting us our meeting room and securing the pool for our winter practice sessions. All the people who organized and shared trips and those who put the time in to lead them. Nora Galvin for her work in putting together our expanding video and book library as well as keeping it going. Don Milnes who runs our website and always helps in stamping and labeling the newsletter. Sheldon Penn who produced our hats. (If you don't have one, there's



Claudine Burns (left). Lunch stop at Bluff Point State Park

plenty left) Patti Klindierst who gets us permission to launch in Guilford for the East River. Our friends at the stores who allow us to set up our table and occasionally donate raffle items. The efforts of those who choose to volunteer their services are what makes any club run and grow. A little effort by a lot of people produces a lot of energy.

Next year the Tall Ships are coming to New London (Opsail 2000) and we hope not only to paddle to it, but to have a presence in many other ways which we are now looking in to. We're always investigating lecturers, authors, adventurers and high-ranking instructors to speak to the club and possibly do classes for those who want it.

We're going to try to persuade Nick Deslin (Kokatat Rep.) to due another dry suit seal replacement demonstration for new members and those who did not see it two years ago. There have been many requests for that. Before everyone comes running with their suits, we have a few designated. (one of the perks of working for the club) - Nick, are you reading this?

As we have always mentioned in the newsletter or at the meetings, any suggestions for events or different paddling locations are more than welcome. Next year we will do a downtown Hartford paddle, the Thames River and the Pawcatuck River. We paddled every open water launch on the Sound last year and will continue that. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the amount of trips will be dictated by the interest in organizing or leading them.

The club has always promoted paddling education. We make learning to roll and rescue one another very available. Pool sessions, lessons and lake practice sessions were available all year long. Next year we will have a club rescue day and paddle where people can practice, learn and share knowledge on rescues (a suggestion by Dean Bertoldi). We will do this in the heat of the summer when the water is at it's warmest. The key to proficiency with all these skills is to practice them. Make it a goal for 2000 to become self-sufficient on the water.

Happy Holidays and hope to see you at the meetings. Spring is just around the corner? - ConnYak



## NEW CONNYAK WEB SITE ADDRESS

At last month's meeting we voted to change the site address to something that people can easily remember and incorporates our name. The new address is:

**CONNYAK.ORG**

Thanks to Don Milnes for his work on the site and the address change.

## Y2K(AYAK)

As I prepare to "paddle" into the new millennium I feel compelled to look back on the past year. In retrospect it has treated me very well. A change of job caused quite a bit of confusion and made for an unsettled summer but it has all been for the best as it allows me more time to spend doing the things I really care about, spending time with my family, paddling and doing Connyak "things".

I would also like to hand out some thanks to the other officers for their many contributions this year. Special thanks go to Jay Babina for the newsletter; it is due to his efforts that we have such a quality newsletter each month. Special thanks also to Dick Gamble for keeping a close eye on our financial well being and for being present at nearly every paddle this year! Without the efforts of these two individuals ConnYak very well might not exist today. I would also like to thank the members of ConnYak; we are a dynamic and vital organization because of the diversity of our members. I would also like to thank the membership for making my year as President a pleasure; your comments and criticisms alike have been most helpful.

I have gotten so much, personally and as a paddler from ConnYak that the time and effort it takes to president seems to be a small price to pay. I have enjoyed the challenges of the previous year and should the membership desire I would welcome the chance to continue.

As always, paddle safe, paddle often,  
- Ed Milnes



Clark Bowlen at Bluff Point



## WINTER PADDLING / E-MAIL

Any one wishing to be notified by e-mail of club activities and or changes please send me an e-mail with CONNYAK as the subject. I will capture and add your e-mail address to a club address book. Remember to check the message center periodically this winter for unscheduled paddles, if the weather looks good for a weekend we might just be paddling somewhere!

There are people paddling throughout the winter - inland waterways and open water, based on the severity of conditions. If you're interested in paddling, keep in touch with those who you know paddle regularly.

- Ed Milnes

## NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

*Happy Holidays !*

*THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE  
WED. JANUARY 19*

*Election of Officers - the current officers are content and happy to continue with their services, however, any position is open to anyone who wants to serve the club.*

## CONNYAK MESSAGE SYSTEM (203) 603-4615

Information regarding events, trip schedule updates, cancellations, changes etc. will be heard at this number.

### 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 a signaling device (whistle or horn). All paddlers are responsible for their own safety, including dressing for immersion. Beginners must have taken a basic course and be proficient in performing a wet exit, paddle float re-entry and carry a pump. Kayaks without bulkheads should have floatation installed. (always carry extra dry clothes, food and water)

## CLASSIFIED

Feathercraft K1 Expedition Single (foldable kayak) 15' 11" x 25", costs \$ 3850.00 sacrifice \$3000.00. Never in the water. 203-772-3174.

Primex kayak cart. Paid \$119, asking \$80. Used twice. 203 426-8286

Kayook plus with rudder. 8 months old, like new, \$900.00. 860-526-1410, 860-663-2069

Wilderness Systems Pamlico: 14'9", red. Double or single seat kayak, skirt. \$700. 860-684-6168 or lynes@uconnvm.uconn.edu. ecky

Aquaterra Sea Lion, granite, 2 hatches, rudder. 2 yr old. Mint condition. Paid \$1,500 will sell for \$850.00 Call 203 847 2090.

Ocean Kayak Frenzy with backrest-1 year old-new \$450-sell \$325 and Ocean Kayak Yak-Board with backrest-new \$350-sell \$250. 203-235-6721 after 6

Current Designs Slipstream, Derek Hutchinson design, 16' X 22", Glass, one year old. Day hatch, skeg. Green over white. Includes neoprene spray skirt. \$2,000. Men's XL Gore-Tex drytop, one year old, \$250. Call 203-256-1913

16 1/2' Kevlar Menphremagoc OC 1-34#. Excellent condition \$500. will consider trade for Dagger Animas or Outburst kayak. Call 860-666-2671

Recreational Rowing Skull - 17' x 22" hand-crafted okume marine mahogany only 43 lbs, mahogany sliding seal, basswood skulls, excellent condition, fast, efficient and fun! - \$1,300 (860) 873-3854.

Nautraid One Expedition (foldable) 15'3" red & black \$1800. or best offer. 860-521-6070

Necky Santa Cruz, bulkheads, spray skirt, very stable, paid \$700. sell for \$495. 860-827-1111

Wold Ski Custom Terminator, Surf Kayak, Kevlar, 29 lbs, green over yellow, will do fantastic things in the waves. \$500 W (860) 441-8416 H (860) 535-8416

Arctic Hawk - Wildernes Systems, Kevlar- 38 lbs., tan w/green trim, mahogany inlay. \$1950. 860-450-1026

Boreal Ellsmere - Kevlar/skeg, new June 1999, 17' x 22", 45 lbs. w/ neoprene sprayskirt, high performance kayak, \$1950. - 203-929-4444

Sealution, Wilderness System-fiberglass, orange on top with fixed compass - \$1200 Please call 860-693-0211.

P&H Sirius(s) Red / white, skeg - \$1695. Also available, neoprene sprayskirt, neoprene cockpit cover, Cricket storm & reg. paddle. Also...one Men's (med) Kokatat Gore-tex Drysuit with relief zipper worn once \$450. - 860-974-1875, or DPW2@aol.com

Wilderness Systems Alto with rudder. Yellow. 2 years old, excellent condition. Includes spray skirt and floatation bags. \$650/obo. Call (203) 457-9983.

Perception Sea Lion, 2 hatches, 1 yr old. Ex condition. Paid \$1,300 Sell - \$950.00 Call 860-674-3637.

Stohlquist paddle jacket, latex wrists, velcro neck closure, blue men's large, ex-cond. \$35. (2) Aquaterra "Whisper" laminated wood kayak paddles, 220 cm. Very good condition. \$30 each. (860) 653-5899.

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

## LESSONS KAYAK SKILLS & ROLLING

*Mike is back and teaching*

Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri  
Call for specifics - Mike at 203-284-9212  
or Nancy at 860-228-0105

Send newsletter articles or classifieds to:  
Jay Babina e-mail: jbabina@snet.net  
7 Jeffrey Lane, N. Branford, CT 06471  
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136

## 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. Members can join the ACA with a club discount for \$15 which entitles you to full insurance coverage on trips as well as a full subscription to PADDLER Magazine. (a \$15 subscription)

Send inquiries to: Ed Milnes  
35 Hampton Park, Branford, CT 06405  
e-mail: Connyak@mindspring.com

Website: connyak.org



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