

# CONN YAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

July 1999

In response to: June 99 "First Capsize"

## Re-entering isn't always that easy!

In late May, I had my first capsized. I over-extended myself kayaking alone (a big no-no, as stupid as scuba diving alone) in fairly heavy seas. I put in at Weed Beach in Darien, and even in the protected cove, the day was awesome - heavy winds coming on-shore from the sound, lovely waves and whitecaps, a bit cold, but what the heck - I just wore an extra layer of clothing.

Going out: I went out directly into the teeth of the wind, way out from the beach, past the sheltering points, and boy, were the waves big, at least from the perspective of my little boat and my kayaking experience. I was fine and having a wonderful time as long as I was heading into the wind, but when I realized that I was actually "out" in the Sound and no longer in my bay, I decided to turn around.

That's when it got tricky. I'd neglected to unship the rudder retention cable when I got into the boat, so I couldn't drop the rudder. This didn't bother me at first, because I've been practicing

handling the boat without it. However, running downwind, the boat kept wanting to broach. For those new to this phenomenon, broaching is the boat swinging around parallel to the waves (perpendicular to the wind), and it's caused by the nose of the boat being lower, digging in the water and moving more slowly than the higher stern.

I kept fighting it, but without the rudder to help, the boat was really very vulnerable to broaching, and every few waves, I was brought around broadside to the wind and waves. I'd struggle to get back in line, but it was about this time that I began to wonder if I looked like I was in trouble.

Then, once again I found myself broadside and got flipped - I'm not really sure how it happened - looking back, it's not really clear to me. I know I wasn't bracing, but was still trying to bring the boat around with a sweep on the upwind side. I can remember the spume washing across the decks and around my waist, and over I went. Once in the water, I was in a real situation.

When I bought my kayak, the shop I got it from didn't have any classes for months. And although I kayaked on the Pacific, the Sound, and some class-1 whitewater, and was starting to feel confident, I really didn't have much in



## 4th Annual ConnYak Party

Saturday July 31  
12 noon - on

**West Hill Pond - New Hartford, CT**  
Paddling and eating at Linda Ivany's cottage on the lake. Thanks to Linda and her parents for inviting us back this year.

**Directions:** Take RT 8 to the end. (Winsted) East on Rt. 44 toward New Hartford. About 2 miles a shopping center is on the right. Just past the Shp. Ctr. take a right on W. Hill Rd. Follow signs to launch ramp. Ramp is on the end of the lake. The cottage is half way down the lake on the left side from the launch.

(If you're coming from the Hartford side, it's best to look up West Hill Pond on a map and get to the launch ramp)

**Food:** Bring your beverages and anything special you want and wish to share. ConnYak will supply salads, ziti, dogs, hamburgers, turkey burgers, corn on the cob, chips etc. There will be a gas grill, ice and a nice lake to paddle and play on ...so pencil it in and come! Stay as little or long as you want.

**Bring some rope:** We may have to tie kayaks on the water to conserve space.



Camping on Seldon Island in May

the way of training. I did the paddle-float reentry a few times in calm water, which was misleadingly easy, and all I knew about the roll was from books. When I was upside down, I tried to invent the Eskimo roll for myself based on what I read. That didn't work so I had to bail out - my first "real" wet exit.

When I surfaced, I realized that I was pretty far out for a swim (it's over a mile on the charts), the waves were big, the water was cold, and of course I was wearing street clothes, and... I didn't want to abandon the boat.

So, I tried my paddle-float self-rescue. That, I also learned from books - it goes like this: attach your float to the paddle first then blow it up, (this way it can't blow away in the wind) attach the other end of the paddle in the rear deck rigging (making an outrigger) and use that to brace yourself to re-enter. Or at least that's the theory. The reality from my new perspective is, that if the water is rough enough to knock you over in the first place, making the paddle-float self-rescue work is amazingly difficult. I got the boat righted and got back on top of it several times but got flipped as soon as the next wave hit me.

And... with each attempt I was getting weaker. That water was freaking cold. Later, I learned it was 49 degrees. At first, it was just a shock, but as time went by, it was getting harder and harder to turn the boat back over, swim back into the right spot, and to pull myself back onto the boat. It was draining me of my strength.

Also, another problem is that I was still doing the cold-shock panting, so I was probably hyperventilating quite a bit.

The rescue: At this point, I spotted a small motor launch - about 25 feet or so. The sole occupant hailed me, offered me help, and, after some misadventures (including my foot becoming fouled in a loop in the line he tossed), got me aboard with my kayak in tow. His name was Sal, and he was a lobster man. He brought me to a marina not far from the beach where I put in, and after a rest, I paddled back along the shore.

Two things I noticed during this process: my thoughts weren't working properly; and the air was deceptively warmer than the water.

In retrospect: It's funny - at the time, I wasn't aware of any fear at all, but now when I think about it, it's kind of frightening. I still think I'd probably have made it to shore, but by the time Sal the lobster man showed up, I'd been in the water ten minutes or so, and was weakening rapidly and it was getting harder and harder to keep turning the boat back upright to retry my paddle-float re-entry.

Lessons learned:

1. Don't kayak alone.
2. Unlock the rudder cable.
3. Be more aware of the weather conditions and it's ability to change.
4. Dress for the water temperature - 49 degrees will suck the heat, strength, and life out of you in less time than you'd think. Me, I'm planning to get a wet-suit as soon as I lose some weight.
5. Practice your self-rescue - don't assume you can do it if you did it once.
6. Develop a bomb-proof roll.

*Happy paddling, - Neil Perkins*

### **Collinsville Canoe and Kayak Demo Symposium**

Lots of demonstrations. Everything on sale. Factory Reps will only be there on Sat. Sat. & Sun. July 31 & Aug 1  
Collinsville, CT Call for info. 860-693-6977

### **CT COASTAL ACCESS GUIDE**

Good news from the DEP: There's a new publication from the DEP that's now available - The Connecticut Coastal Access Guide. The map lists 262 state or publicly owned sites where folks can get to the Sound and the lower parts of tidal rivers. I don't know how many of them would be suitable for kayak launching, tho they include the obvious like Hammonasset State Park. Apparently they discovered 700 sites, but not all are in a condition amenable to a lot of use (no parking, et al.). There are plans to upgrade some of the others. Here's how to get the map: Phone Office of Long Island Programs (860) 424-3034 DEP bookstore (860) 424-3555  
Email [coastal.access@po.state.ct.us](mailto:coastal.access@po.state.ct.us)

*- Nora Galvin*

## **Letters**

*Regarding "Staying with the boat".*



I have a short tow system consisting of 5 feet of 3 ml. nylon cord and 2 carabiners that would probably work in all but heavy surf conditions and white water. If your are attached on the upwind or up current side of your boat and no waves are going to push the boat over you, entanglement should not be a problem with a short length of rope. A 20 foot tow system could potentially cause some frustration or even death to an inexperienced user.

### **CONNYAK MESSAGE SYSTEM**

**(203) 603-4615**

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

### **WHEN ARE MY DUES DUE?**

On your mailing label is the date that your dues are due. We normally also include a reminder in the newsletter to outdated members.

### **NATIVE LEGACY**

Mystic Seaport has a new exhibit "Native Legacy" which explores the boating traditions of Native Americans and the development of their craft into today's canoes, kayaks and surfboards. The exhibit opens in early July and runs through Columbus Day 1999.

### **OUR BASIC PREREQUISITES**

The last two issues featured real stories by paddlers who got in trouble and found out that getting back into your kayak isn't always like in the pool. You'll notice we added floatation, pump and re-entry to our list of requirements for our trips. We had the basic lesson requirement for about two years which really included a basic knowledge of all these things although they were not spelled out. Our assumption is that once you learn to do a paddle float re-entry, you would carry one. Once back in the boat you would have to remove the water (the pump).

We're not trying to discourage new kayak owners from paddling with us but raising awareness and the safety standard of the kayaking community at large.

The paddlers who are willing to share their mishaps with their articles are doing us a great favor. If one paddler addresses a few safety issues, we've achieved a lot.

## SEA AMERICA EXPEDITION

*Circumnavigating the United States*

Welcome to America! Are we welcome in America? The United States of America is one of the most popular, strongest and controversial countries in the world today. We have developed a lifestyle and attitude of our own, within the freedoms that we allowed ourselves to live. This in turn has allowed us the leadership and privilege to be involved in the many important issues concerning the world today.

But sometimes, we find ourselves wrapped up into changing other parts of the world. We seem to forget our own country and the matters that are changing it from within itself. These are the things that must be conformed and adapted into our ever changing society. At this point forward, we have to bury the past, no matter how difficult, for the past is not going to help any more, it just keeps the fires burning.

With such topics as our youth, our racial confrontations, our Government, and most importantly, our environment which is in need of attention and refinement, how could we solve anyone else's problems?

So being that this is how I feel, I am proposing a Sea America Expedition. It's mission is to take a look at how we live in America today, and see if we can come together, set an example and let others emulate the true leaders we can really be.

This expedition will be performed in the simplest form of watercraft - a Sea Kayak.

I propose that circumnavigating the United States in a Sea Kayak should raise many questions on why someone would do such a thing. The reasons will come forth in this manner.

The trip will start in Seattle, Washington and make it's way down the west coast into Southern California. The next leg will be the Gulf Coast, after a portage through Texas, around Florida, up the Carolinas and then up the Atlantic Coast to Connecticut.

The time should be between 6 to 8 months depending on promotional activity and weather.

Reports on the trip will be through various publications, via monthly reports, stories and film. All this will be

announced and listed as it develops.

The kayaks to be used will be 2 prototypes with very slight differences between them. They will be built and tested by myself for now, to then be manufactured in some form later pending their success.

*"Sometimes when your heart follows your dreams, your body will follow, and that's what matters most".*

Sea America Expedition Kayaker

*Mike Falconeri, UEK*

*In support of Mike's expedition we decided to help with a sponsorship donation. We felt that a sponsorship gift would be appropriate to a club member undertaking an expedition of this magnitude and presented him with a VHF Radio.*

*- ConnYak*

*"I would like to thank the members of our fine kayak club. The VHF will be nice to have along on my expedition. I hope to also take along the support and spirit that will help me through my journey, ... a journey that will be one of the biggest challenges of my life. One that will also bring about many changes in the way I will perceive my life in the future. I will hope to share these experiences when my journey is completed."*

*- Mike Falconeri*

### ADVANCED GREENLAND WORKSHOP

Date: August 8th. Contact Fern Usen to register. Call 860-529-4612, or email: [inukshuk@mindspring.com](mailto:inukshuk@mindspring.com)

### ALL-LEVEL GREENLAND WORKSHOP

Date: June 27th. A full day workshop - Sakonnet Boathouse in Tiverton, R.I. Contact Sakonnet Boathouse for details and registration. (Both taught by Fern Usen and Donald White)

#### 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. 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 flotation installed. (always carry extra dry clothes, food and water)**

## JULY SCHEDULE



3rd - Essex- CT River

11th - Norwalk Islands

25th - Antique Boat Parade - Mystic

31 - ConnYak Picnic - see pg. 1

### CT. RIVER - ESSEX

LUNCH AT SELDON ISLAND

SATURDAY, JULY 3

Leave Essex - Paddle up CT River to Seldon Island for lunch.

#### DIRECTIONS -

From Exit 3 off route 9, go to stop light and go east on West Avenue in to Essex Center - to the rotary at the head of Main Street and then go north (left) on North Main Street for 1 short block and turn right onto Bushnell Street. Just before entering the Dauntless Boat Yard there is a dirt road to the left, leading a short distance to the boat launch and parking area.

### NORWALK ISLANDS

SUN, JULY 11

#### DIRECTIONS -

Boat ramp in under the I-95 bridge on the Saugatuck River in Westport

**From the North:** I-95 South to Exit 18. Stay right on ramp. Turn left at second light, Greens Farms Road. Go through two stop signs. Turn left at first light, Rte 136. Go under thruway and take first right. Boat ramp is past the sewage treatment plant.

**From the South:** I-95 North to Exit 17. Straight at end of ramp. Through stop light. Turn left at stop sign. Turn right at first light, Bridge St.

Turn right at next light, Rte 136. Go under thruway and take first right. Boat ramp is past the sewage treatment plant.

**In the water by 10:30 a.m. (pack a lunch)**

### ANTIQUÉ BOAT PARADE

SUNDAY JULY 25 - MYSTIC

In the water by 10:00. We visit the old boats and paddle the loop out the Mystic river and have lunch at the mouth of the river. We watch the parade from along the river on the return trip.

#### DIRECTIONS -

Go past Mystic Seaport on the right. Take your first right on Isham Street. Launch is at the end of the street. Street parking is available. Worst case: Drop the boat and park in the Mystic Lot.

### CONNAYK PICNIC

SATURDAY JULY 31 - W. HILL POND

12 noon on. See front page.

*All itineraries can change due to conditions.*

# CLASSIFIED

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

Sealution—Kevlar w/rudder, blue/white. Includes Werner paddle, Spray Skirt, Bilge pump, Paddle float, Yakima saddles. \$1500. 860-485-9173

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

Necky Looksha IV - Kevlar, 43lbs, 16'6" x 22". Blue/white-yellow hatch covers. Exc. cond. \$1700. Day (860) 243-7711 or Evenings (860) 496-8784.

Yakima rack system. Includes 3- 58" bars with 6 raingutter towers including locks. \$130. (860) 439-0882

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

Perception Corsica, Red, with floatation bags. Excellent condition. \$200 firm. (Cheap!) 860-702-5833 workdays, 860-742-2225 eve/wkends.

Necky Looksha IV, 4 Yrs old. Plastic. Rudder, Bulkheads, hatches. \$875. 203-481-1881.

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

P&H Sirius low volume, retractable skeg, white over white, black decklines \$1400 W (860) 441-8416 H (860) 535-8416

P&H Capella, new Sept. 98, yellow, new condition, \$1,150. quality poly kayak. 401-596-4482

Necky Looksha Sport, 14' 4" x 22.5", rudder, bulkheads, hatches, granite color. \$800. 860-537-1157

Two Necky swallow kayaks, glass, 16' 10" x 24", Tan & blue - no rudder, White & red w/rudder. good start-up boats. \$700 ea. 860-663-1411

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

Malone Greenlander paddle & storm paddle. New. \$150. ea. 413-593-6167

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

Dagger Transition, whitewater boat, red, airbags, bulkhead footrest, nose cone, a bit fuzzy but rock solid \$400W (860) 441-8416 H (860) 535-8416

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

Necky Arluk III, new last fall, \$1,475. Werner Camano 2 piece paddle \$150. 1 Cricket Greenland paddle \$150. will ship. Canoe, 16'6 Bell Northstar carbon kevlar, 44 lbs, center seat, \$1,450. 401-596-4482.

Serratus sm/med Pro PFD yellow/orange, 1 rear/3 front pockets - \$75.00, ExtraSport PFD - \$25.00, BetsieBay Kayak Greenland Paddle - \$95.00. Call 860-529-4612 6pm-9pm.

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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

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## KAYAK SKILLS & ROLLING

Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri

*Skills Workshops, Eskimo Rolling, Safety & Rescue throughout July.*

*Call for specifics - Mike at 203-284-9212*

## 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: mindspring.com/~connyak

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Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.



**ConnYak**  
CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

c/o Ed Milnes  
35 Hampton Park  
Branford, CT 06405

