



I spent all winter building my second kayak and as it got near to being finished I got more and more anxious to paddle it. I paddled the same model a couple of times last summer and fall and really felt comfortable in it. When ConnYak had its pool sessions the boat was not ready and I really didn't want to practice in a boat set up for someone else. As the boat neared completion I pondered signing up for a session with

Mike Falconeri but as the time actually came up I decided to just go out. I was unable to find a paddling companion, something I would have liked, but I had to work Saturday until 2 and most were paddling in the morning.

So, after work I went to the ramp in Milford on the Housatonic under the Rt. 95 bridge and launched. There was a very strong outgoing current and a moderately strong incoming wind, so I decided to paddle against the current to start with. This worked out well and I ended up not staying out that long since I had to tweak the seat placement to get better back support, so I was out less than an hour.

Sunday I had to be in Mamaroneck for a couple of different reasons, so I went to the launch ramp there and took off. I got to the outer harbor and was just leaving the channel to follow the shoreline into the wind when I seem to have lost it! Suddenly I was 'way over and could not brace fast enough. In I went. My first thought was to try a roll, but for a couple of reasons I ditched that

MY FIRST REAL OPEN WATER CAPSIZE



by Lenny Lipton

idea. First, my roll isn't that good, and without the backup of other boats it isn't a good time to run out of breath. Second, typical of beginner types, I was slightly discombobulated with regard to getting the paddle set up right. I had actually been thinking about this a lot lately- when we practice rolling we always "set up" with the paddle parallel to the boat and right at the deck level. I knew that this is never how people actually capsize, and had resolved to go into this with an expert or instructor at the next lesson time. So, I began my trusty wet exit. Only thing, this boat is a low volume boat and harder to get out of then my old high volume boat. Got stuck for a second until I slowed down and got out carefully and exactly the way I have to get out of this boat. Also

making the exit more difficult was the buoyancy of the dry suit. First thing I noticed when on the surface was that the dry suit had so much buoyancy in the lower as well as the upper part of my body that it was keeping me horizontal on the surface. I immediately popped my inflatable lifejacket and gained 22 pounds of buoyancy- and everything remained the same! The second thing I instantly noticed was that

the kayak wanted to blow away from me very, very fast and with my Michelin Man suit on, my swimming was very slow. I righted the kayak and found that it didn't want to stay upright, so I pulled my paddle

float from under the bungees and began to inflate it. Now, this was tricky. In order to open valves, inflate, and close valves, not to mention fitting it over the paddle, I needed two hands, one of which was holding on to the kayak so it wouldn't blow away. I was also expending a large amount of effort to stay vertical in the water since my lower body wanted to float up all the time. You might ask why I didn't "burp" the suit through the neck gasket. The truth is, I didn't think of it. I was very busy trying to stay upright as well as inflating the paddle float. I will acknowledge, that I was perfectly warm all through this, even to the point where, once ashore, I didn't bother taking off my dry clothes until I got to my parents' house. Only my feet, hands, and head were wet. I didn't put on my neoprene hood since I didn't even feel a

slight chill, and my hands and feet were in neoprene.

About the time I had the paddle float securely on the paddle and was ready to begin my well-practiced paddle float rescue I heard a voice behind me saying "take it easy- don't struggle - we'll get you". I turned around and there was my new friend Tim in his powerboat. I decided to take the easy way out and hitch a ride. Tim got my kayak on board, then helped me up the little swim ladder and gave me a ride into the ramp.

Of course, the big question is: would I have been all right if Tim had not appeared? I think yes. Before my first kayak was completed I took an ACA course through the Small Boat Shop, and thanks to Rich Black and the SBS staff who were involved in the course, I got a good grounding in basic kayak safety and rescue. I did learn to roll the little squirt boats that we used but could not roll my own wider, more stable boat. (more stable right side up is more stable upside down, too.) Later, I would take a course with Mike Falconeri of Urban Eskimo Kayaking and was able to roll my own boat in the pool. Still, I was not too successful out on real water so I regularly practiced paddle float rescues. I also have learned a lot from Connyak, from Sea Kayaker Magazine and books.

I am also heavily loaded with safety gear. I had a VHF radio, large flare kit on the boat and small flare kit on my life jacket as well as other stuff. I also carefully planned to have a lee shore at all times (ie: land downwind, so I would blow toward land and not further out to sea if in trouble).

One question; is there such a thing as a "boat leash" - some method to stay attached to the boat without having to use one hand. I would any welcome ideas. It would have made my life a lot easier out there.

So looking back on my little adventure, I try to picture myself reading this account and trying to imagine what I'd say about it. Well-prepared kayaker? ... or totally un-prepared? I'm still not 100% sure what I'd say.

- Lenny Lipton

Staying with the boat

Re: Lenny's question. A paddle leash is about 5 feet long made of thin shock cord and has a loop on one end to fasten the paddle. On the other end is a ball (the size of a ping pong ball) which you put under your stretch cords so it will hold you to the kayak but can be pulled free with a hard tug if you want. You can wrap the ball once around the shock cords for a firmer hold. Many paddlers don't like to paddle with it and keep one wound up for emergencies. You can easily make your own or just keep a length of cord handy.

You don't want to fasten yourself to the kayak. An entanglement could be very dangerous.

The other common method for staying with the boat while inflating the paddle float is to float on your back and put your feet in the cockpit to hold the boat. You can also slide one end of the paddle under the stretch cords and give it a half turn to lock it in while you fasten the paddle float. Another, and less comfortable method is to put one elbow in the cockpit (the side of the cockpit under one arm) as you hold the paddle and inflate the paddle float.

There's no substitute for practicing these things in a group and sharing knowledge and experiences.

Flare Test

I was recently having a discussion with a few paddlers about updating our flares. At home, I pulled out my small flares dated '92' (outdated by 6 years) read the instructions since I never really fired one, and gave them a try. Unscrewed the cap, held it over my head and pulled the chain... nothing. All 5 were duds. I doubt I'll replace them. I'll buy some fresh cartridges for my 12 ga. gun which I trust more for water resistance and ease of use. I like the gun because I can carry it in my PFD in a Zip Lock Bag during my lengthy expeditions to Outer Island.

By the way, "Orion" has a newly designed waterproof/floatable small flare and they're fairly inexpensive.

I also have some of the long flares with the striker that are outdated. Since they have been in dry bags and are usually more reliable, (when dry) I'll wait until 4th of July to test those.

- Jay Babina

Letters



I'd like to start by saying that I have always enjoyed my outings with Connyak as a beginner hopefully gradually turning into an intermediate paddler (how do you know when you have become an expert?)*. I love the challenge of waves and somewhat rough water and when the weather is warmer I will be among those going to the Dumplings. However, when the water is cold, I am aware of the dangers of the sport. I want to know that someone is watching out for me.

On an evening paddle two years ago I found myself alone between a group of fast paddlers way ahead of me and another group behind. I don't know how it happened but it was dark, there were islands and inlets and I was not sure of the way back. Well of course people caught up with me and nothing happened, but it was my second or third outing with the club and I should not have been left alone.

I belong to two hiking clubs and we do some kayaking/canoeing as well as hiking. There is always a designated leader at the front and a designated sweep at the back, with stops so slower people can catch up. There is also a sign-up sheet. There is no need for an official leader: The front and rear persons can volunteer on the spot, but I think safety would be increased with such an arrangement. On this I agree with Jim Matthews. I disagree on having the paddles rated like hikes for two reasons. First, the weather is such an important and unpredictable factor that rating the difficulty of a trip could be impossible. Second, beginners like to know that there are a number of strong paddlers around in case they get in trouble. Being no longer a beginner and not yet an expert, I also enjoy both talking to newer members and learning tricks from those who know more. I love the informality of Connyak, I find the eagerness of everyone to help and teach wonderful. I don't want the basic philosophy of the club to change but I want to feel safe. And I am happy that there will be more frequent trips. I am ready!

- Claudine

* "Anyone 50 miles from home with a slide projector is an expert" - John Heath

CONNYAK MESSAGE SYSTEM

(203) 603-4615

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



ADVANCED GREENLAND WORKSHOP

Date: August 8th. Contact Fern Usen to register. Call 860-529-4612, or email: 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)

STOLEN KAYAK

I recently had a Perception Sparc stolen from my basement in Groton. It was blue fading to green with a sun on the deck. It is completely a one off, factory produced specifically for a friend of mine and has her name on the deck as well, COURTNEY HALL.

If anybody happens to come across this boat I would greatly appreciate it if they would get in touch with me. Eamonn O'Brien, 860-447-8711 or email at jmedw@conncoll.edu

- Thank you very much, Eamonn.

AQUASEAL TIP

If you ever used Aquaseal to repair a dry suit or replace a seal, you know that once you puncture the opening, it dries in the tube in about eight weeks with the cap on no matter what you do.

You can put it in the freezer, and it will last indefinitely. Just drop it into hot water when you're ready to use it again and once it's thawed, your back in business.

- Phil Babina

SANDY POINT

ConnYak donated \$200 to Sandy Point (Eileen McNeil - COMO) as we did last year. The landing charge has been increased to \$10 this year starting Memorial Day. When landing on Sandy Point in Stonnington, mention ConnYak membership to avoid any charge for using the area if asked. Our paid fee (donation) allows our membership to use the island.

- Dick Gamble

NOVA SCOTIA

I'll be at Cape Breton Island the last week of July, first two weeks of August. Camping part of time, House rental part of time. Drop in to visit if you're going to Cape Breton. 203-481-1881 for info.

- Stan Kegeles

LONG ISLAND SOUNDKEEPER FUND DONATION

At our April meeting it was unanimously voted to donate \$250 from the ConnYak treasury, to the Long Island Soundkeeper Fund. Terry Backer, Long Island Soundkeeper is suing the city of New York to force them to reduce their nitrogen input into the sound to acceptable levels.

The sewage treatment plants serving New York are antiquated and unable to meet present day standards of nitrogen reduction. The excess of nitrogen causes accelerated growth of oxygen consuming plant life. The resulting severe reduction in entrained oxygen is called hypoxia; a condition which results in the ultimate destruction of all marine life. The cloudy, brownish waters of the western half of Long Island Sound are principally due to the overpowering New York City contribution to this problem.

New York attempted to get the Terry Backer's case thrown out of court, but the judge refused and it now will go forward - with ConnYak's help!

ConnYak now has 300 members, all of whom enjoy the privilege of paddling in Long Island Sound. We would enjoy it a lot more if it were clean. If you would like to contribute as an individual donor, you should send it to: Long Island Soundkeeper Fund PO Box 4058, East Norwalk, CT 06855, (203) 854-5330 or (800) 933-SOUND

- Dick Gamble

LAKE QUONNIPAUG

Every Wed or Thur (best weather day) we paddle for exercise, fun and practice on Lake Quonnapaug - N. Guilford. Launching at 4. Anyone's invited. - Jay

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. (always carry extra dry clothes, food and water)

JUNE PADDLE SCHEDULE

- 6th - Greenwich Harbor (coastal)
- 12th - Four Mile River (coastal)
- 19th - Great Island
- 26-27th- Plum Island, Mass.

GREENWICH HARBOR PADDLE

SUN, JUNE 6 (Note: Date changed from Lenny's original trip sheet handed out at the last meeting)

Explore Greenwich Harbor and Islands with lunch aboard Lenny Lipton's (22 ft.) Yacht. Lunch supplied by you.

DIRECTIONS -

I-95 southbound exit 3, Arch St. Greenwich. Right on to Arch St and left on Horseneck Lane. Go past RR station parking lot and left on to Shore Rd. Continue on shore until Grassy Island Rd. - turn left. Go past boat docks and parking. You will see a booth. Ramp is just after the booth.

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

FOUR MILE RIVER - LYME

SUN, JUNE 12 COASTAL PADDLE

Rocky area with islands.

DIRECTIONS -

I-95 to exit 71, go south on Four Mile River Road (about 0.7 mile) to Rt. 156, turn right, short distance to the sign for boat launch (Oakridge Drive) to the left, take next right to the launch area.

In the water by 10:0 a.m. (pack a lunch)

GREAT ISLAND - LYME

SATURDAY, JUNE 19 - 5:00 PM

Evening paddle around Great Island - area according to wind conditions.

DIRECTIONS - GREAT ISLAND

I-95 to exit 70. go south on rt. 156 (Shore Road) approx. 2 miles to Smith's Neck Road (boat launch sign on the Rt.) Follow it to the end - to the launch ramp.

PLUM ISLAND - MASS

Saturday, June 26 & 27 - Ipswich, MA

Plum Island and vicinity Sat, Sun June 26 & 27,

This area has extensive tidal marshes and rivers, the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, and interesting water and waves at the mouths of the Merrimack and Ipswich Rivers. Should be something for everyone. Camping is available. If you are interested in an exploratory trip, contact Clark Bowlen for information at (860)623-6587 or MA_Bowlen@commnet.edu.

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.

Wilderness Systems 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. Normal scratches but in 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 lynesc@uconnvm.uconn.edu. ecky

Nigel Dennis Greenlander kayak, white over white with skeg \$1350. 860-659-1223

P&H Capella, poly, blue, \$1000 860 659-1223

Orca, Royalex 16' with rudder, demo red over white, \$1400 860 659-1223

Toksook demo paddle, 2 piece, \$150. Ainsworth 1 piece paddle, \$50 860 659-1223

Necky Arluk III, fast performance boat, new condition, \$1,675. 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

Paddler logo for your car or kayak. White industrial vinyl. \$2.50 inc. shipping. Gene White, 59 Stanton La. Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

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

KAYAK SKILLS & ROLLING

Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri

Skills Workshops, Eskimo Rolling, Safety & Rescue throughout June.

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



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

