

# CONN YAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

November 1999

## Our Larger Groups

NOTES FROM THE  
RECENT MEETING

Our most valuable asset as a club is our members. Anybody who paddles with the club knows that the socializing and friendship that goes on during our paddles is one of the very enjoyable parts of belonging to ConnYak. We paddle together because we want to be together. If we didn't enjoy this friendship, we would paddle alone or with our particular set of paddling partners. We have all made a lot of friends through ConnYak and I don't think anyone will deny that this is the core reason we do it. The problem with larger groups is the disparity in ability and speed. Our groups get spread out quite far with the faster and slower paddlers both becoming frustrated with trying to keep up or wait up.

At our October meeting, we discussed this issue with a vast array of opinions and emotion - not only about the groups, but our role as provider of trips as well.

Some people would like to remain free and undisciplined about the whole affair while others believe in sign-up sheets, pre-paddle conferences and VHF communication throughout the paddle.

There were some who thought the answer is to have two groups. Obviously - the slow pokes and the elite. The two group suggestion really "divides" the

group - socially and physically. There's the problem of who goes with what group, who makes the decision, and how about those who really are not slow but not fast either. How about the person who is looking forward to paddling with their friend that they haven't seen in a while? Will they be in the wrong group?

Six paddlers arrive to paddle a scheduled trip. Two are beginners and are slow. Two groups or one group?

The entire two group concept seems to be more cumbersome and counter-productive than it's worth. The entire notion of friendship, and a club takes it's fundamental principal from the fact that we are a group! ConnYak. (not two groups!)

The suggestion was made to qualify the paddlers or rate the trip. It has always been our underlying philosophy to have club trips relatively safe, along shore and average of 4 1/2 hrs or so with lunch so most paddlers could participate and not feel threatened. As all paddlers know, any trip could turn into the challenge of a lifetime if conditions get nasty - so we don't rate our trips. Paddlers who want to organize more adventuresome or challenging paddles have always been free to announce them in the newsletter and have people contact them before showing up.

Every year Clark Bowlen runs Maine trips and announces them this way. So... the freedom to do this has always been there, it just need to be done. (if you really want to) Most paddlers who choose to paddle this way, choose to paddle with their set of friends, which is also fine. As far as qualifying paddlers, we do not want to enter this area and leave that to people who want to assume that authority. Our club is based on it's diversification. We will always have a full range of paddlers - from beginners to the very advanced.

The big issue of who's in charge, how responsible and what's the role of the trip leader reared it's ugly head once again. We have beat that topic to death over the years and have come up with a basic policy and understanding that's stated in our newsletter each month.

**"All paddlers are responsible for their own safety"**

People organize a paddle because they are interested in sharing an experience with fellow club members. They know where they want to go and volunteer to share it. They are not assumed experts or are assuming any responsibility to safe guard the group. ConnYak is not a guide or chaperone service. When you arrive for a ConnYak paddle, you are just as responsible as anyone else. If you can't help a capsized friend get back into their boat, learn how to do it!

This year, Clark Bowlen, Tom Detrich,

## PADDLING GEORGIAN BAY

SLIDE SHOW - 7:30 PM

Friday November 12th, Essex

Jonathon Reynolds and his wife Heather Smith authors of "Kayaking Georgian Bay" will present a slide show and talk on paddling Georgian Bay, located east of Canada's Lake Huron. This promises to be an interesting and informative presentation.

Jonathon Reynolds and Heather Smith own and operate an outdoor adventure company called Nomadic Adventures offering trips in the Canadian wilderness and abroad. Between them they have paddled in British Columbia, Central America and on the Great Lakes. Heather grew up on the shores of Georgian Bay

## KAYAKING *Georgian Bay*



Jonathon Reynolds and Heather Smith

and has spent a great amount of time exploring it. Together they have paddled Georgian Bay in every sort of weather and every season except winter.

### DIRECTIONS TO THE ESSEX TOWN HALL

Approaching from the North on Route 9, take Exit 3. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left and go under the Route 9 bridge to the light. Turn left at this light on to West Avenue.

Approaching from the South on Route 9, take Exit 3. At the end of the exit ramp turn left and go to the light. Turn right at this light on to West Avenue.

**The Town Hall is about a third of a mile up the hill on the left at the corner of West Avenue and Grove Street. Turn left on Grove Street - parking is in the back of the building.**

Dave Hiscocks and Lenny Lipton organized much appreciated paddles. Phil Warner and Ed Milnes came up with a preliminary trip list in the spring. The monthly trips were dreamed up the week before the newsletter was due to the printer using the first list as a guide. They were run by Dick Gamble, Ed Milnes or Jay Babina. Most seasoned paddlers who arrive usually put their heads together and make decisions about the trip based on conditions and the mood of the group. It's usually pretty easy and the good decisions are always obvious. This year, we ran three trips per month covering the entire state and beyond. Two of the leaders who tended trips do not want to do that amount next year. The suggestion was made to have less organized trips and allow more free weekends to paddle with other clubs, friends etc. When organizing a trip becomes a bookkeeping and policing chore, very few if any want to do it.

One person at the meeting stated, "I just don't like to paddle with those large groups, besides, crossing a large bay with boat traffic is crazy". Everyone can relate to the enjoyment of paddling with a few friends without the logistical hassles of the large group.

The sentiment that we're making mountains out of mole hills was also made. "It's not that big of a deal. I always have a good time and there's usually no big problem".

Capsizes are rare if at all. The issue is not mainly safety but the question of paddling at a rhythm and pace that feels good and not causing the entire group to get totally spread out.

The one key issue that was not brought up was the sense of responsibility by the group members to stay together. There has to be a collective conscientiousness in the group that "we are a group" and will stay relatively together. It's no one's duty to herd the group like a cattle drive. We have all been on trips where paddlers charge out ahead and would paddle to China if someone didn't stop them. If there's a conscience effort by everyone to stay together, it would seem like an effortless solution to a simple problem. Leaving together is also part of this - not assuming we're leaving because someone is paddling around a bit and stampede off.

You arrive on a paddle with the idea that there will be some slower and faster paddlers and both sides of this diversity should make a little effort to accommodate one another. It's not going to kill anyone to stop for a few minutes and wait to collect the group. If someone feels the need for speed, then paddle to the back of the pack and back up to the front. On the other hand, if you know that the entire group is always waiting for you, you might want to also show some respect for their desires and address this with a little practice and training.

There's always going to be a situation where a paddler should really not be along because of total lack of ability. It's unfortunate but this person should be turned back early rather than deny the entire group an enjoyable day.

There's only one person in our club who's never late - Dick Gamble. Everyone runs in to unforeseen problems commuting on occasion. However, if you know you're prone to tardiness, make an effort to get there on time so the entire group can leave as scheduled. It's not a race, but people who like to paddle are there and want to do exactly that - paddle - not sit in their boat and wait while you get it together. If the group leaves, blame yourself. You can meet them at lunch. Usually a collective opinion on leaving will rule by the paddlers.

A little combined effort on everyone's part to accommodate one another will go a long way in making our trips a more enjoyable experience for everyone!

- Jay Babina

## THE BARN ISLAND PADDLE

SATURDAY, OCT., 16- STONINGTON

Conditions: Sunny, wind, less than 5 knots. Seas to 2 feet. Water temp. aprox 64 deg. F.

The paddle at Barn Island was ideal. 29 individuals turned out for wonderful trip past Watch Hill. After leaving the boat launch we grouped up around Dick Gamble who volunteered to take the lead paddler position and discussed the planned route. VHF radios were tuned to matching frequencies sweep positions were assigned (Phil Warner, Jim Mathews and Ed Milnes) and we were off. Jim hung back to wait for a couple of late comers. The rest of us proceeded to Sandy Point Island and waited for Jim and company to close ranks. We regrouped and paddled on the beach by the Watch Hill light house for lunch (and an exciting surf landing). After lunch and a few Eskimo rolls we paddled around the point deeper into Rhode Island, played in the small surf and headed back. As we paddled back towards the launch we stopped and discussed options for the return trip. The main body of paddlers decided to paddle through Watch Hill Harbor while 5 of us elected to head back to the launch ramp and trade boats, practice rescues and rolls. All in all, an excellent day.

In view of the discussion at our last month's meeting, we decided to try out a few of the suggestions brought up at the meeting. We had a definite "Leader" (Thank you Dick for volunteering) and definite "Sweeps". Though it proved to be unnecessary on this paddle, VHF radios were tuned to the same pre-agreed upon channel and left on. We also stopped and let the group reform after a gap had formed. When the group split up on the return it was after a brief discussion so

everyone knew who was going where. These few actions helped to keep the group together without placing any rules on the group. After much thought and observing the results of Saturdays event I have come to the conclusion that all we really need to do to have a safe and enjoyable paddle is, have a brief meeting before leaving the launch point to let everyone know where we are going, who is "leading" and who is running sweep. If a large gap develops just give everyone a chance to catch up. The one other thing I would stress is, it is important to get to the launch ramp early and get yourself and your boat ready to paddle. The "In the water times" listed in the newsletter in the events schedule is the time we want to be in the water, not the time to show up at the ramp. Please allow yourself a good half hour or forty-five minutes to get ready (many of us arrive a full hour early).

Even though I started the discussion at the meeting and my concerns were genuine, I have come to believe that to force a bunch of rules and regulations on the group of individuals that are ConnYak would be contrary to what the group started out to be (and remains). We are all safety conscience, we are all willing to share whatever knowledge and skills we have developed with each other. And we all look out for each other on trips. We are all individuals with a shared passion, paddling the simplest of crafts in an environment that can turn nasty quickly. We all know we need to show good judgment in when and where we paddle. We all know that we are the "Captains" of our own boats and ultimately responsible for our own safety. To impose rules and regulations would only serve to stifle the freedom we all share while in our boats. I think we just need to be aware of what's going on around us and what the group is doing and enjoy the time we spend in our boats to the fullest.

As always any questions or concerns please feel free to let me know directly or via e-mail or as an article or editorial comment in the newsletter. Paddle often, Paddle safe.

- Ed Milnes

## FREE KAYAK CART

Water Wheel Boat Carts by McDonald Industrial Services, New Haven, CT donated a kayak cart to ConnYak. It will be given away at the "Paddling Georgan Bay" slide show and lecture on Friday, Nov. 12, in Essex.

## CONNYAK MESSAGE SYSTEM

(203) 603-4615

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

*The Barn Island trip was much much fun!  
The weather was perfect and the seas calm.*

### **Some trip observations and personal conclusions regarding trip discipline and etiquette".**

1. Anyone not in the water and ready to go at the announced time is considered not part of the ConnYak trip. The people who get there on time shouldn't have to sit around for inconsiderate types to make their grand entry.
2. Making lists of people on the trip is a burden that I personally find detracts from the fun of the event. Our club membership application form statement regarding personal responsibility says it well and is adequate. The more we formalize the process; the more we make it look like we are admitting that we are trying to take responsibility for people on the trip. Instead of helping our liability situation, we are making it worse!
3. The grouping or straggler problem can be helped to some degree by having a meeting of the participants prior to launching; stressing that the club expects people to stay together. Appointed "sweep" and "side guards" left and right should be respected. Anyone wanting to paddle elsewhere in the ocean is free to do so, however, they will be considered not part of the trip.

4. Anyone who wishes to have more discipline should join the army.

*- Dick Gamble*



#### **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)**

## *View from a Kayak*

*I will describe my love for a perfect vessel that elegantly skims the sea's lively surface.*

*Ocean waves rock in the flow of life as the wind captures then carries my spirit transported to flight.*

*I have found life-enhancing experience through kayaking's boundless offerings.*

*Mother earth gives delight with her gentle blue sky holding soft white scatters of cotton candy.*

*Her unique and passionate art form is sweet to my soul.*

*Feathered tribes rejoice... Their freedom demonstrates an exceptional truth.*

*Illumination, Glowing Moonlight with millions of bright stars. A reverence for the universe and its power evolves from within.*

*I watch the subtle reflections of the sun's healing light dancing on the sea's surface...  
An enchanting display.*

*I believe Earth's ever-changing presentations are one-of-kind paintings to cherish forever.*

*by Karen Duffy*

## **NOV. CONNYAK MEETING**

*Video - Hypothermia  
...and normal business discussions.*

**WED. NOVEMBER 17, 7:30 PM  
WALLINGFORD PARK & REC.**

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

## **A GOOD TIDE SITE**

At last, a nice easy, intuitive tide site that you can easily print out your own tide table for the month.

**WWW.TIDESONLINE.COM**

## **POOL SESSIONS**

All pool sessions are now full and no additional money will be accepted; however, a "wait list" has been started for anyone wishing to be notified of someone wanting to sell a reservation slot. I will return any money received from this point on and asked if they wish to be on the wait list.

*- Dick Gamble*



## **NOV. SCHEDULE**

13th - Guilford / Madison

20th - Lyme

### **EAST RIVER - GUILFORD**

**SATURDAY, NOV 13 - GUILFORD**

Inland waterway paddling - pack lunch.

**In the water by 10.**

#### **NOTE: NEW LAUNCH SITE ...DIRECTIONS**

*Patty Klindienst - a Guilford resident, got us permission to launch at Guilford.*

*Exit 58 off Rt. 95. Head (south) toward water on Rt. 77. Take a right and left around the Town Green and continue on Rt 77 to the end of the Green. Continue Straight ahead on Whitfield street to the end where there's a launch ramp.*

### **LT. RIVER - LYME**

**SATURDAY, NOV. 20**

Morning paddle on the Lt. River.

**In the water by 10.**

#### **DIRECTIONS**

*I-95 to exit 70. go south on rt. 156 (Shore Road) approx. 1 mile there's a bridge over the Lt. River. The launch area is to the right and before the bridge. Pack a snack for on the boat, but we will be back by lunch time.*

*All itineraries can change due to conditions.*

## **DRESS FOR THE WATER**

November starts the change in weather that can be severe or mild. Please remember that if the air and water are cold and if you get wet, it's not only an uncomfortable situation but can be very dangerous. You may never capsize in your lifetime, however we must never forget the potential for serious problems with Hypothermia. Years ago there was a situation where a paddler slipped in mud while launching and got soaking wet a mile from his car. He had no spare clothes. Even dry clothes won't immediately warm you up. This paddler personally told me what a brutal ordeal he had paddling back to his car. At next months meeting there will be a video on Hypothermia - which as paddlers, we must take very seriously.

# 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

Necky Nootka - 22' tandem sea kayak, double hatches, kevlar, brand new. Cost \$3500. will sacrifice for \$2500.00 Call 860-456-0558.

Aqueterra 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

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

Wanted: Necky Looksha Sport kayak or other smaller second hand kayak. Call 860-693-0211

Wanted KeeoWee or similar playboat. Call 481-1881.

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

Thule outrigger, load assist for your rack, brand new. Paid \$43 Sell for \$25. (203) 368-4453 leave message.

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

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

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

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

## GOOD LUCK MIKE!

Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri  
*is off doing his expedition (circumnavigating the U.S.) and will be back in the spring.*

You can read the progress at [www.uekayaking.com](http://www.uekayaking.com).  
Also... T-shirts for the expedition are available at the meetings or call Nancy.

**Classes continue and will be taught by  
John Tobiassian and /or Chris Hauge**

For specifics call Nancy at 860-228-0105

## 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  
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e-mail: [Connyak@mindspring.com](mailto:Connyak@mindspring.com)

**Website:** [mindspring.com/~connyak](http://mindspring.com/~connyak)



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