

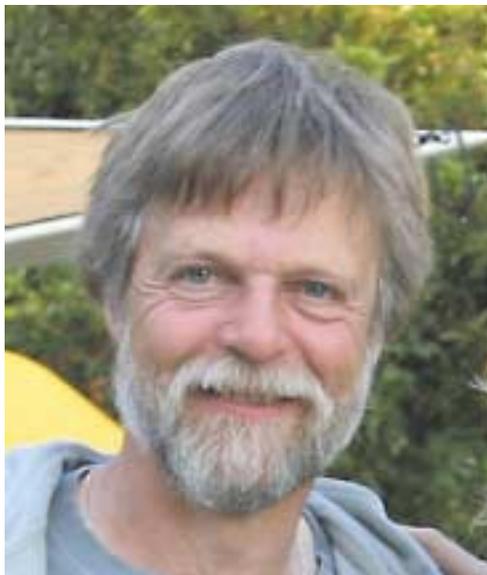
Nigel Foster

Demonstration / Paddle Lecture / Classes

*Saturday, May 14, at 10:00 AM, Esker Point Park
in Groton. Paddle with Nigel is immediately afterward.
2004 expedition to Labrador Lecture is at the
New Haven Unitarian Society
700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT
(Sunday classes with Nigel are sold out)*

Our Nigel Foster demonstration is open to all paddlers. After the demonstration we will have lunch then engage in a paddle when you could ask questions on technique or just enjoy yourself. Pack a lunch. Later in the evening, we will have the slide show / lecture in Hamden. The following day Nigel will be teaching a class at Bolton Lake to those who signed up for it. Directions to the events are inside.

Nigel Foster is an international figure in Sea Kayaking, known for his writing, instruction, symposium appearances and kayak designs, (to date he has designed six sea kayaks, three of which, the Legend, Silhouette and Shadow, are manufactured and distributed by Seaward Kayaks.) He writes for Sea Kayaker Magazine and has written five books on paddling topics. These are his popular "Nigel Foster's Sea Kayaking" and "Nigel Foster's Surf Kayaking", his latest book "A Sea Kayaking Guide to Southern Florida", (all three



published in USA by Globe Pequot Press) and "Kayaking, a Beginner's Guide", and "Open Canoe Technique" (both published in U.K. by Fernhurst Books.

Nigel began paddling at the age of 15 in a canvas kayak, but soon graduated to the "slalom" kayak in which he developed an obsession for surf kayaking. One of his first journeys in a sea kayak was across the English Channel to France, which he then repeated at night. His 400-mile solo journey around the southwest peninsula of England and along the English Channel coast led him into his longer explorations in Scotland. In 1977 at the

**This Issue:
Nigel Foster
Newport Neck
Florida Keys**

CONNAYAK

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. Our membership supports our website, the ConnYak library, lecturers, paddles, pool sessions and various functions which require permits, etc.

Wayne Smith - President

Please send checks to:

**ConnYak c/o Wayne Smith
85 School St,
Coventry, CT 06238**

**WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD:
WWW.CONNYAK.ORG**

**EMAIL:
CONNAYAK@CONNAYAK.ORG**

age of 24 he became the first to circumnavigate Iceland by kayak with companion Geoff Hunter. For this trip they paddled a pair of Foster's first design of sea kayaks, the "Vyneck". By this time he was professionally involved in teaching kayaking, and in the following years began leading groups in places like Norway and the Faroe Islands. This didn't prevent him from escaping to explore the Atlantic coast of Newfoundland, and to cross France from North to South in a double racing kayak following canals and rivers.



In 1981 he set off on what almost proved to be his last trip, a journey south from the then "Frobisher Bay" on Baffin Island, to Resolution Island and the Hudson Strait. From there he crossed 45 miles of open water to the Button Islands off Northern Labrador. This is an area with a tidal range up to 40 feet and tidal streams running in places in excess of 7 knots. He suffered frostbitten fingers and the loss of some of his gear some 300 miles from the nearest village after an epic time in the tide races off the Button Islands in the dark. The crossing is described in an earlier book "Raging Rivers, Stormy Seas", Oxford Illustrated Press. (Currently out of print.)

Nigel taught at the National Watersports Centre in Wales UK before starting his own kayaking business running training courses in Wales, and guiding trips further afield in England and Scotland, and to places such as Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Arctic Norway. Well known for his travels and his distinctive teaching style, Nigel Foster became a popular international figure, teaching and making presentations in Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, and across the Atlantic in Canada and USA. Increasing demands on his time for presentations and teaching in USA



prompted him to finally move to USA where he currently lives in Seattle WA. A partner in Sweetwater Kayaks in Florida, Nigel continues to travel both to teach and to explore new paddling areas.

Nigel Foster **Demonstration / Paddle-10 am** **Eskar Point Directions**

It's on Rt 215 in Noank. Get off Rt 95 at Rt 117, and head south towards Rt 1. At the intersection with Rt1, go left & go up the hill & take a right onto Rt 215. Esker Point park is across from the Fisherman Restaurant next to a bridge. The launch ramp is behind the Fisherman Restaurant.

Evening Lecture 6:30 pm **"2004 Expedition to Labrador"** **New Haven Unitarian Society** **700 Hartford Tpke, Hamden**

Address for MapQuest is 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT. Star on map is the entrance to New Haven Unitarian Society

Directions: Rt 15 Southbound: Take exit 63- at end of exit light, turn left onto Hartford Turnpike. Go through three traffic lights, then a blinking yellow one and one more light. The entrance is then about .7 miles ahead on the right.

Rt 15 Northbound: Take exit 62- at end of exit light turn left onto Dixwell Ave. Go through one light and turn right at the next one, onto Hartford Turnpike. Go through the yellow blinking light and one more light. The entrance is then about .7 miles on the right.

I 91 Northbound: Take exit 10 onto Rt 40 connector. Look for exit 1 off the connector (State St/Dixwell Ave) It comes up quick so start looking as soon as you are on the connector. At end of exit light, turn left. At next light (200 yds) turn left onto Hartford Turnpike. Go through one light, a blinking yellow light and then another light. The entrance is then about .7 miles on the right.

I91 Southbound: One way is to cross over to Rt 15 in Mariden and follow Rt 15 Southbound directions above

----- Or you could take exit 10 in North Haven onto the Rt 40 Connector. Look for exit 1 off the connector (State St/Dixwell Ave) It comes up quick so start looking as soon as you get on connector. At end of exit light, turn left. At next light (200 yds) turn left onto Hartford Turnpike Go through a blinking yellow light and one more light. Entrance is about .7 miles ahead on the right.

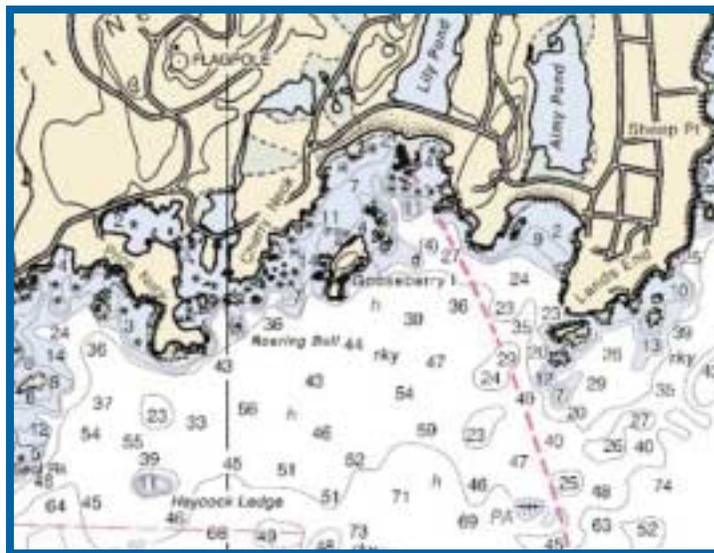
Newport Neck

by Michele Sorensen

MAY 24, 2004

Every year in May, I travel to Newport, RI to kayak before the summer hordes arrive. Newport has three exceptional paddling sites: the ocean rock gardens along Newport Neck; Newport Harbor, chock full of sailing yachts; and Second Beach, my son's favorite summer surfing venue, and a good place to surf kayak off-season. It's an ideal two-day outing. Last May, with two daughters home from college, I decided to combine my kayaking trip with a visit to a third daughter, Anna, who lives in Warwick, RI.

Our plan was to paddle the ocean the first day with Marie and Cecilia, then kayak in Newport Harbor the next day with all three girls. Marie, a 25 year-old graduate student in architecture at UC Berkeley, was looking forward to seeing the Newport mansions from the sea. She had paddled in the Norwalk Islands with me the previous December. Cecilia, 19 years old, is an undergraduate at UC Boulder, studying environmental biology. Both girls had done a two-day whitewater trip while in high school, and were fit and adventuresome. When I kayak in a mixed ability group, I like to have a tandem. Then I can paddle the stern of the double with the weaker paddler and keep the group together. For



this trip we chose two Heritage Kayak 17' Expeditions (now called SeaDart 17s) and a 16'6" Heritage Tandem from my small fleet, leaving the sit-inside and smaller SOTs at home. We left at 2 pm on May 24, and drove the two and a half hours from Norwalk, CT to Newport. Heritage kayaks are manufactured in Bristol, RI, and were designed by Paul Cronin, a naval architect who is an America's Cup sailor. Made of high-density super-linear polyethylene, they are an excellent choice for the frothy waters of Rhode Island's rocky coast. The Expedition was reviewed in the February 2000 issue of *Sea Kayaker*.



We arrive at the King's Beach put-in at 4:30 pm, Heritage Kayaks piled on the Volvo.

The launch site I use to access the rock gardens is King's Beach. It's on Ocean Drive, about a quarter mile east of Brenton Point State Park. We arrived at 4:30 pm. "We're launching in fifteen minutes," I announced. "Get into your gear." We pulled on Farmer Jane wetsuits, dry pants, paddling jackets, gloves, hoods, and booties. Dressed first, Cecilia and I unloaded the kayaks and carried them down the concrete ramp. I stowed water, snacks, a VHF radio, and nautical chart and donned my

Continued on next page

tow-belt life vest. We waited for Marie to finish gearing up.

With an outgoing tide, offshore breeze, cloudy, cool weather, and a late afternoon launch time, I felt spooked. I was thinking about the two college girls lost kayaking off Cape Cod the previous October. They had also launched in the afternoon, with an outgoing tide, offshore breeze and 58 degree water. (But add pea-soup fog, no life vests, and recreational kayaks. Read their story at: http://www.kayak-adventure.net/'Yak_Yak_Autumn2003.htm) I called out to Marie, "You're delaying our launch." When she joined us five minutes late at water's edge, she made it clear she didn't appreciate being "accelerated." She refused to paddle with me in the tandem. To improve the mood, I offered a snack, which we readily consumed. It was 5 pm when we launched.

Two fishermen and a flock of cormorants saw us off. My daughters were unprepared for 2-4 foot waves, a rocky seascape, and the discipline of paddling in unison. Within moments of launching, they veered toward a clump of rocks awash with breaking surf. All the patience I summon for clients evaporated. "Sweep! Pull harder! Turn that boat," I bellowed. "Shut up, Mom," Marie barked from the stern. I realized I should have put her in the bow. (She'd been studying all year and had lost a lot of the strength she usually has.) The nineteen year old, a daily rock climber, was frustrated by her sister's lack of muscle power, but was able to keep them off the rocks. Over the next hour, they refused all advice and zigzagged continuously, covering twice the distance I did. I bit my tongue and followed them, keeping my kayak in position for a potential rescue.

Just past the rock known as "Roaring Bull," in forty feet of water, we suddenly saw a rounded pectoral fin casually sculling the surface. Gliding closer, a huge white body, the size of a picnic table, became visible. The creature appeared to be lying on its side, grazing. It was only about twenty feet away. Marie began to furiously back paddle. Cecilia, the bio major, pulled hard forward to get a closer look. The fear of the older girl gave her strength she hadn't earlier been able to summon. The boat made no headway. "Back off," I warned. "It's big enough to flip us over!" We watched the animal for ten minutes. We were unable to see a



Michele checks the nautical chart from a pocket beach along the route.

head, tail, or dorsal fin. Much later, we learned it was an ocean sunfish, *Mola mola*, a gentle giant weighing 700-1000 kilos. They are specialized to feed on jellyfish, and have evolved to tolerate the poison. Ocean sunfish can breach, rising up to three body lengths above the water.

Here is a website about them:

<http://www.oceansunfish.org/sightings.html>

Leaving the creature before it showed any interest in us, we paddled along Gooseberry Island and Spouting Rock, keeping close enough to shore to stay out of the wind, but maintaining a bearing for Land's End. Marie asked if we were going to round the headland to see the Cliff Walk mansions, as I had promised. Worried about their lack of control of the tandem, I said, "Not unless it looks safe."

As we approached Land's End, we faced a difficult choice. To avoid paddling through breaking waves on the rocky ledges at the point, we would have to paddle out past a small island and beyond the windbreak protection afforded by the cliffs. With a northwest wind pushing us out to sea, I suggested we forget about seeing the mansions. My daughters over-ruled me.

Once again, they played chicken with the rocks. This time they took a wave that swamped both cockpits, stalling the sit-on-top while it drained. They started back paddling, seeming at last to realize the danger they were in. A surging wave that could easily have capsized them, instead gave them an assist, turning the tandem towards shore. The kayak continued to drain.

Continued on next page

With heroic strokes, they followed me back into the calm water between Land's End and the small island.

We rested for a moment. I recommended we go ashore to reconnoiter. They had no patience for such a wimpy tactic. Marie was insistent on getting a view of the famous mansions. "Let's go, you first, Mommy," they sang, "we'll follow." Four-foot waves broke over the rocks that lined our passage. Tucked close astern, they followed me over boulder-strewn Coggeshall Ledge. Now we were in the biggest seas of the trip. Awed by the towering rollers, they implored, "let's go home!" We paddled well seaward of the island to return, riding the flanks of six-foot waves for seven hundred yards. As soon as we cleared the ledge, the seas abated to tame three footers. Chastened, the girls called their strokes in unison and paddled lickety-split for the put-in.

Scared to the core now, they refused to listen to me at all, paddling hard, fast, and quite straight. Straight, in fact, towards the rock gardens off Cherry Neck, a half-mile short of our destination. Repeated whistle signals failed to get their attention. I thought if they saw me staying out to sea, they would understand they were headed for the wrong beach. I held my course for ten minutes, then raced in to warn them before they got too close to the rocks. They were starting to bounce around in the backwash by the time I reached them.

For the third time that day, they seemed receptive to some guidance. Now, with practiced sweep-strokes, they turned their kayak and sheepishly followed me back out to sea. We rounded Price Neck fifteen minutes later, as heavy clouds darkened the sky an hour and a quarter before the 8:15 sunset. A lone Great American Egret turned to watch us as the ocean swells carried us into the protected water of King's Beach.

We loaded the kayaks in silence and changed out of our wetsuits. Cecilia joined me on the rocks for a long, contemplative look at the sea. We finally began to talk, in hushed tones at first, then almost exuberantly, realizing what we had survived. Cecilia said it was one of her most awesome experiences ever - seeing the huge sea creature so close. I realized how little control they had had over the tandem craft, and understood how we had tempted fate. Marie kept to herself and said nothing during the half hour ride back to Warwick, where we would visit their sister Anna.

This had been my fourth trip off Newport Neck. The seas had never felt threatening to me. I had wanted to share their majesty and the stunning Newport coastline with my daughters. Back in Warwick, I made comfort food for dinner. Marie began speaking to me again. All night I felt those six footers rolling under my boat, felt myself riding the sea like an animal.

Lessons learned:

- It's easier to guide clients than family.
- I was glad we were dressed to the gills and well fed. Neither ever complained of being cold or hungry.
- I should have more realistically assessed their paddling skills for such a challenging trip, especially using a tandem without a strong paddler in the stern.
- We should have worn helmets.

If you go, take the Narragansett Bay chart, as well as the other gear recommended. Do not attempt to access this area by paddling through the East Passage, as the tide rips off Brenton Point require expert level skills. Use the Sea Conditions Rating System to assess your risk: <http://site.netopia.com/tsunami/seaconditionsrating/system/>

With water temperature of 58, wind about 10, maximum wave height six feet, breaking waves and rock gardens, this trip was class IV. Planned properly, it's worth i

Michele Sorensen is a Connyak member from Norwalk and an ACA certified kayak instructor, she operates Kayak Adventure LLC year-round on Long Island Sound. Find her on the web at www.kayak-adventure.net



Newport mansions from the water.

Off to the Keys (again)

by Bill Anthony

This year five of us from ConnYak made it down to the Florida Keys for a week of paddling in early March with a day's stop at Tybee Island, GA on the way back.

After our trip of last year, I thought it would be fun to have some paddling companions and try more destinations with a larger group. A number of months ago, I broached the idea to Sheldon Penn, a master trip planner, who was very receptive. We had five of us go the whole distance: Sheldon Penn, Cheryl Barnaba, Sue Klupacs, my wife, Joan, and myself. Sue Beachum would end up joining us for a day at Tybee Is.

It is a long trip by car, in this case my van, which carried four kayaks and spillover gear from Sue's car. By leaving Woodbury, CT at 3:00 AM, we reached Savannah, GA by 7:30 PM. We had at least an hour and a half of rest, meal and fuel stops. Leaving Savannah at 4:30 AM the next morning, we made the campground at Sugarloaf Key by 5:30 PM. Again we made about the same amounts of stops. When you leave Marathon Key and head out over the vast expanse of water beneath the fabled Seven Mile Bridge to Bahia Honda Key, you know it was all worth it. There is just water, water everywhere and no end of places to get on it.

The campground this year was just a little more crowded with tents and a little less so with RV's and campers.



Joan and I got there a day ahead of the rest and staked out some high ground close to the bathrooms. We all eventually piled in under one site reservation and kept the per night cost down to around \$10.00 per person. There is nothing like a wooden boat for conversation starters, however, and by the time Sheldon arrived with his beautiful Night Heron; we always had a steady stream of admirers including some who had built boats of one sort or another. Of course, we had a prime spot on the way to the bathrooms, which engaged more viewers. In that regard, it amazes me how many people (Spring Breakers especially), who would not be caught dead on their front lawn in their pajamas, would merrily saunter by similarly dressed morning and night. Wooden boats or not, Sheldon and I thought we had a good site.



While I got about a 5 mile warm-up paddle from the campground on the day the rest were still on the road, the real paddling did not begin until the first day we were all there when we went to Bahia Honda State Park which encompasses all of Bahia Honda Key. Several miles long, bisected lengthwise by Route 1, located at the southern end of the Seven Mile Bridge and separated from Big Pine Key by a mile long bridge, it is remarkably uncrowded, tranquil, and surrounded by the most crystal clear waters which spread over an often brilliant white sand bottom. One of the most beautiful and relaxing public coastal

locations on our east coast, it is a great place to start a paddle vacation. We circumnavigated the key, a leisurely trip of about seven miles. On our return to the beach in the Atlantic side from which we launched, Sheldon graciously let several college kids try out his boat. They were very impressed and thanked us profusely. Equally impressed was an older Coast Guard Auxiliary officer, who gave us an unofficial inspection and was truly amazed at the safety and emergency equipment we carried.

There is nothing like a Greenland paddle to gather attention as well. I used my wooden boat only on my short solo paddle and used my Chatham 18 for the rest of the trip. Sheldon and I used Greenland paddles while Joan in her Looksha IVS, Sue in her Romany and Cheryl in Sheldon's Aquila used euro



paddles. The water in the Keys on the Gulf of Mexico side is often very shallow and I found the Greenland paddle an excellent device to pole oneself along when needed. They can be a bit of a handicap, however, to paddle with through a narrow mangrove tunnel.

On our way back to the campground, we explored Big Pine Key to check out the famous Blue Hole and to search for the diminutive, endangered Key Deer, which are only found on Big Pine Key and its surrounding larger islands. The Blue Hole is part of the Key Deer Wildlife Refuge and houses some resident alligators in a freshwater coral quarry plus some poisonous snakes we did not see despite all the warning signs. We also found plenty of key deer, some along the road by the slash pine woodlands and some in a small herd in someone's back yard. Our wildlife adventures were not over yet. On heading back to our cars after food shopping we stumbled over a half a dozen roosters in the supermarket parking lot. Free-range chickens are pretty common in the lower keys.

The next day, it was the mangrove tunnels at Perky Creek that got us started on another adventure. We launched at the marina off Route 1 at Perky. Except for the \$5.00 entrance fee at Bahia Honda, the marina's launch fee of \$1.00 was the only other time it cost us a fee to launch. I don't know what it cost a group going out with an outfitter when we were launching, but a grimmer looking bunch we had never seen before. Sheldon advised them to smile, as they would have great time. There were weak smiles from the group but the glare from their guide could have splintered Sheldon's boat. We got out of there quickly and never saw them on the water. One can disappear out there very fast in maze of look alike keys.

I had a good compass heading for the narrow entrance to Perky Creek across Sugarloaf Sound and we found it quickly. Once through the mangrove tunnels of Perky Creek which at the end get down to about thirty inches wide, we were out on the windward side of Dreguez Key and headed for Marjoe Key which is about a mile and a half to the northwest in wide open water. The Snipe Keys, another couple of miles farther out, beckoned; but we decided to circle to the east and take a now 15 to 20 MPH wind at our back to get back in the lee of Dreguez Key and explore

its shoreline. The sudden appearance of a wide channel through the mangroves allowed us to shoot through to the other side and we paddled slowly along the very shallow shoreline fascinated with all the bottom life. At noon we ate lunch tethered together in a bit of a current as the bottom was too soft to step out. Cheryl managed to make a BLT sandwich in the process. We thought this was a display of extraordinary skills when confined to a kayak cockpit with a swift tidal current ready to snatch you away at any moment. Anticipating a decline in the wind, we paddled back to the windward side for some more meandering exploration through a long channel against a very strong current. While the tidal ranges are not much more than a foot to a foot and a half, the tidal surge of the Gulf of Mexico rushing over the very shallow waters of the Keys can create a very strong current. At the end, it was to give us a fast journey back to our launch point. The trip was about nine and a half miles.

After a day off to visit Key West, our next paddle was to head into the open waters of the backcountry off Cudjoe Key, which is one key east of our campground. The launch site is towards the north end of Cudjoe Key and gets you started well out into the Great White Heron Wildlife Refuge, which covers a great expanse of the Gulf side waters of the lower keys. This was the launch site Peter Smith mentioned in his article. The wind was packing a full 20 MPH with a good chop and after some additional consultation we made a go of it. Once we launched, a paddle of about one mile brought us in to the lee of Little Swash Keys where we spent some time exploring channels to get us to the other side. Finally, one very narrow, serpentine channel bravely explored by Sue in the

Continued on next page





lead got us to the other side. Not wanting to get downwind too far, we chose to slug it out in a circle back upwind to the outer edge of Little Swash Keys. Tarpon Belly Key with its coral beach beckoned windward to the east. While Sheldon, Sue and Cheryl went on to explore it and come across a sea turtle, I accompanied Joan back by a more direct downwind run to the launch point. Once there, I had an interesting chat with a Florida Fish & Wildlife officer, who had twenty-five years experience in the Keys. His one word of advice was not to call the Coast Guard if in trouble as they will never find you, while his twenty-five years of experience would. In addition, I watched him investigate a couple of guys who showed with large containers of fuel in the back of their pickup. A small outboard met them at the launch to ferry the fuel to a houseboat moored a quarter mile off in the channel. The officer explained that they were sponge fishermen who lived on the houseboat and used a flotilla of outboards to do their gathering. He also surmised that the fuel might also be used to fuel clandestine forays to Cuba to pick up refugees. Except for the activity at the launch, we did not see any other boats during the whole day. We covered just less than ten miles.

We took another day off to go snorkeling out of Bahia Honda State Park. The outfitter took us on a high-powered catamaran some five miles off shore to a protected coral reef sanctuary. There were quite of few other boats out there but plenty of room for us to roam about. The reef was alive with brightly colored schools of tropical fish including a lot of large solitary Barracuda. Wetsuits were a must if one wanted to stay in the water for over an hour. We finished the day with a run into Key West for the Mallory Square sunset festivities and a dinner out.

Joan flew back on Saturday as planned. That day we went back to our Cudjoe Key launch and headed out for a little over a ten-mile trip, looping further to the east than our previous trip. The day was glorious with bright blue skies, temperatures in the middle seventies and calm winds. All along we would see large numbers of diving Pelicans, Snowy Egrets, Great Blue Herons and the frequent Osprey. In the waters we saw the odd Nurse Shark, Barracuda, a couple of turtles and an occasional ray.

We finished the day with a great dinner at the Caribbean style roadhouse called Mangrove Mamas, which is across Route 1 from the campground. At the end of our all day drive up to Tybee Island, GA, we stumbled into a

great Caribbean restaurant next to our guesthouse at Georgia Sea Kayak. Here we ran into Sue Beachum, who having flown down earlier in the week to do some house hunting, joined us for dinner.

The next day four of us opted to follow Sheldon's plan for an all day guided-trip to Little Tybee Island and some surfing for those who wanted to try it. The tides along the Georgia coast range up to nine feet as the Atlantic tidal surge pushes its volumes of water up against the shoreline, which is laced with expanses of estuaries and tidal creeks and rivers. When the tide recedes, these areas empty rapidly with strong currents. Any trip revolves around planning for available water depths and current directions. Our plan took us south across the Tybee River through various cuts and creeks on Little Tybee with a return along the outer barrier beach to the river's mouth. This last leg, which was the only way back, was a wild ride up the coastline in a two to three foot following seas complete with dolphins occasionally leaping out of the water in front of us. Grim-faced we were and I do not remember Sheldon urging anybody to smile. Sheldon, Cheryl and Sue, however, performed perfectly although we all admitted to a shaky start. I made it, determined not to go into the mid-fifties water, with some great respect for my Chatham 18, which can really lock on to rough water despite its twenty-inch beam. I also conjured up some Greenland paddle strokes I never knew existed. We ended up at the "infamous" triangle featured in the "This is the Sea" video shown at the February ConnYak meeting. We played around in various degrees of surf without mishap. In the meantime, Sue Beachum, who had not joined us and to whom I had lent my wood Merganser for a day's solo paddle, appeared seemingly having paddled seven miles to our one. During the time we hung around the triangle, she practically disappeared over the horizon a couple of times. It's a quick eighteen foot boat with a long water line and Sue could keep it at its fastest. Our guide, Ron, was pretty amazed. In fact, even with the four of us, he kept asking us to slow down. He was not used "Yankee" paddlers. Speed was to be essential at the trip's end as we little time to spare to return, clean and load our gear before a severe thunderstorm struck.

Sue Beachum graciously treated us all to pizza and beer that night. But she really showed us her mettle when after all that paddling, she leapt out of the boat on our return to the launch site to treat a young man with a sit-on-top who had badly cut his foot on an oyster bed. All our adventures really made the trip back home a breeze as we rode along on a quite high reliving the events of the previous ten days. I am already planning a trip for next year. There is nothing like a warm-water paddling break after the long run of winter.

Paddles

Paddles for the month of May and future events can be found on the ConnYak web site - opening page / events. The expected difficulty rating is posted with the paddle.

Posting Paddles

Anyone can post a paddle on our bulletin board.

If you want to paddle in a certain area and are looking for paddling partners, please post one. You do not have to be a group leader or feel responsible in any way - you are just posting your intention of paddling at a location on a certain day and making that information known to others who might want to join in. It's why we we have a club and a bulletin board.

You can also send your paddling intentions to the webmaster to be listed on the events calendar if you would like to schedule something in advance. You are not committed. If you can't make it, that's fine, others will paddle and have a good time without you.

Rescues

The ability to help another paddler in need - doing a rescue - is fundamentally dependent on you getting there. Nobody knows how cold the water is more than the person who is swimming. That coupled with the fear and panic of suddenly being plunged into the sea and doing a wet exit, can create some serious anxiety. For the person in the water, minutes seem like hours. This is an entirely different situation than a group of paddlers going out to practice rescues in any conditions.

Speed and efficiency is of prime importance especially in dealing with paddlers in the water. First you have to see them and know they are in need, and second, you have to get there and in position. Being able to turn your boat 90 degrees to the right and left or 180 backward quickly is something you can practice when you get the chance. Also the side draw scull on both sides. If you end up next to a paddler in need and are 4 feet away from them, you need a good side draw scull or draw stroke to get to them. Many people who have their rescue skill down really well as far as text book execution have a real tough time getting to the victim or maneuvering their boat into position to execute a rescue.

One trick you can use: if you need to get to a person's bow and get your boat perpendicular to lift the boat up and drain it, grab their boat and use THAT to leverage you boat in position. It's way faster and easier than trying to paddle your way perpendicular to their bow using the paddle.

I don't claim to know everything or do everything well. I just know how much it has helped me as I learned to turn my boat extremely and learned to do a strong draw stroke and sculling draw stroke. If you practice in shallow water you can lean your boat a bit without worrying about a capsizes and see how much easier it is to turn as you lean it on edge. -JB



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. Send check to:

**ConnYak c/o Wayne Smith
85 School St, Coventry, CT 06238
WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD: WWW.CONNYAK.ORG**

ConnYak Dues

ConnYak annual dues are due yearly to the month when you joined. Email notices will be sent when your dues are due. Some people will get a post card until our data base is current.

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T-shirts for Articles

Authors of articles for the newsletter get a free T-shirt.

Visit our web site for the Bulletin Board, Library Information and more information on ConnYak

www.connyak.org