

CONNAYAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

July 2002

Surf entries and exits

by Jay Babina

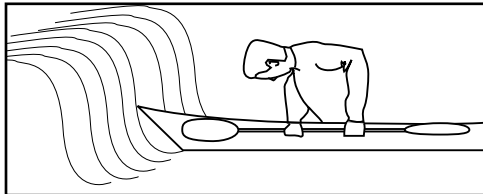
In CT we really don't get much surf other than on Napatree Point paddles or the occasional windy fall day that kicks up some surf at low tide along our beaches. Never-the-less, entering and exiting the surf area can be a dangerous even in less than 3 ft seas. Most paddlers are able to land through surf, even if its a clumsy capsizes in the sand as the water leaves you laying there looking embarrassed and helpless.

Contrary to perception, the surf entree is where the greatest danger for the unaware paddler lies. Most paddlers push off in several inches of water and charge through the surf to get to the safety zone that lies just behind the breaking waves. The real danger is in what you do with you paddle as the breaking wave comes crashing against you. If you have done this before, you know that even a three ft. wave has an enormous amount of power as it hits you. The major mistake that beginner paddlers make is picking the paddle up, presumingly to avoid the wave. In this position, the wave can smash the paddle into your face, neck or chest and actually shove your entire torso back violently, injuring your lower back if you're prone to back injuries. It can also knock the breath right out of you.

ENTRIES

Before you launch, scan the beach for the smallest surf area allowing for the easiest entree. No sense in assuming that you have to enter where you exited - that particular area might have changed into the steepest surf while you had lunch. A three ft. wave looks mighty menacing when you're sitting in your boat and looking up at a wall of water coming straight at you.

As you paddle forward and approach the breaking surf area, you want to assume the kayak roll set-up position as the wave is just in front your boat. Basically, you lean your head forward and down towards the deck with the paddle held tightly along side the boat. If you're right handed, hold it along the



left side of the boat. Either side is OK, but you might as well do it the way you'll learn to roll from. You won't capsize (nobody ever does) and you'll find that the wave will break right over you with very little force on your body. At that point, resume your paddling position and paddle hard to the safety zone just beyond the breaking waves. You'll only have to go through one breaking wave to get out. Make sure you enter straight into the waves. Entering from an angle will only make you broach or capsize.

LANDING

Generally most beginners luck out with surf landings and seem to come sliding up on the beach with not too much fuss.

As you approach your landing spot or the area of smallest surf, you want to come in behind the wave. As you get to the point where the waves are breaking, back-paddle so the wave doesn't pick you up and give you your first unexpected surf ride into the sand. As the wave is breaking in front of your kayak, you paddle in right behind it. As the water is pulled right out from under the kayak, you'll be left there on the sand. Immediately jump out of the kayak and drag your boat up the beach before the next wave comes in and crashes on your open cockpit and fills the boat with two hundred pounds of water and sand. This can happen and you be left there with a boat that you can't move. Trying to drain a boat while the surf is constantly pounding you is a real chore to say the least. If this happens, it's best that a few paddlers gang up and drag it up away from the surf and drain it.

During our warm weather months, it's great fun to practice and play in the surf. Sea kayaks are not good surf boats because of their length, but in 2 1/2 ft. type of surf you can have a lot of fun getting occasional rides. You can also paddle right below the surf area if it's not too big and let the waves crash over you as you brace into them. Playing along a sandy beach with small surf will teach you a lot about how your kayak will react to these conditions and will better prepare you for the time when you really need to land in conditions that would normally be challenging. Playing in your

kayak like this is one of the best ways to become a better paddler and...you're doing exactly what you're supposed to be doing - having fun!

Another nice area to play in surf is at the



Paddlers gathering at Mystic Seaport

Surf continued.

Four Mile River area. As soon as you come out to open water, the sandy bay on low tide with an on shore wind will produce nice surf with real long runs in a safe 3 ft. water depth area.

Friends of Outer Island

By Paul Donoski

Outer Island, part of Connecticut's Thimble Islands, is the farthest from the shoreline as it's name implies. It is located off of Branford and is a part of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. Last year at a USFWS meeting on Outer Island four ConnYak members including myself volunteered to be on the Board of Directors for the USFWS Friends of Outer Island. The other ConnYakers are Bill Anthony, Ernie Desalvatore and Chris Hague. Later on another ConnYaker, Ainsley Highman, from the Branford Land Trust also joined the Board. National Refuge Friends are an extension of USFWS assisting with refuge maintenance, education, public access, fund raising and special events.

Over the Winter during our monthly board meetings we have put together a number of projects for 2002. The next step will be to form committees and work groups to handle these projects with volunteers. USFWS has already turned over a list of volunteers collected at last Summer's Outer Island Open House weekend. I suspect there are many ConnYakers on that list. Bill Anthony is heading up a Maintenance Committee whose 1st task will be installation of a solar composting toilet similar to one on Faulkner's Island. This group will also be responsible for island clean-up and facilities repairs. There will be at least two special Outer Island events during the Summer. One is the annual weekend Open House where the public is invited to the island for tours. The other event is a USFWS fishing derby for children called "Take Me Fishing". The derby will be for children from Greater New Haven who wouldn't normally have an opportunity to visit or fish on a small island.

Once details for the number of people and restricted areas are established with

USFWS we will assess opening up Outer Island for limited public access. Currently the island is closed to the public. Friends of Outer Island will have to train a group of volunteers to be greeters when the island is open to the public. Part of this effort is putting in place a flagpole or other system to indicate that the island is open. A Friends Greeter or USFWS Staff person has to be on the island during public use.

Eventually Friends of Outer Island will mature into a active and central part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Refuge. We want to improve the aesthetics and public knowledge of the island. Many of us already consider Outer Island to be the crown jewel of Long Island Sound. We want others to share in our view. As we start to collect volunteers and Friends of Outer Island general membership we will announce a annual meeting to review the activities and goals for Outer Island.

The Gasp Reflex

by Bryan Nystrom

It was warm (mid-60's) and sunny. The water temp was around 50 on the dead-flat-calm lake and I was clad in my usual dry suit and fleece. One of the students in the beginner's class who I was assisting, asked about balance bracing, so I took the opportunity to do an impromptu demonstration without my hood or nose plugs. After sculling down, I rested on the surface for a few seconds and all was fine. The water was brisk but not uncomfortable. To recover, I normally submerge momentarily, set up and do a lazy roll onto the aft deck. No big deal, right?

This time, however, as soon as I went under, I started gasping uncontrollably. I managed to avoid sucking in any water, but became disoriented and felt that insidious feeling of panic creeping up on me. Things went downhill from there in a hurry. A rushed setup and head-up exit resulted in a blown roll. Sculling furiously kept me above water for a few seconds, but I was gasping hard and so far out of position that I couldn't stay up. The partial breath I got wasn't enough

and when I submerged again, I knew I was in trouble. The fastest way out would have been to set up and roll as I had originally planned or simply scull to the surface, but reason was overridden by the desperate need to breathe RIGHT NOW, and I grabbed the release loop and bailed. I even let go of the paddle, something that I almost never do. UGH! How embarrassing!

Although my body was warm and dry, I could not control my breathing, having inhaled a bit of water during the wet exit. Since I was swimming, we took the opportunity to demonstrate a T-rescue for the students.

LESSONS LEARNED:

1) The gasp reflex can strike you even when you're comfortable, relaxed and paddling in benign conditions. I have been swimming and rolling in much colder conditions without problems, but I was always wearing a hood.

2) The gasping is absolutely uncontrollable and can incapacitate you quickly. Self rescue would have been quite difficult until my breathing calmed down. I don't know if I would have been able to execute a re-enter and roll at all.

3) Always wear a hood when playing in 50 degree water. I suspect that it was the lack of head insulation that triggered the gasping.

4) Even a reliable roll isn't 100% reliable. Although I was executing moves that I had practiced many times, the effects of gasping were so overpowering that even muscle memory failed me. Unexpected occurrences can disorient you to the point where your skills will desert you.

5) Spend lots of time in the water, especially upside-down, to help alleviate the feeling of panic that can occur if you're not comfortable being submerged. I thought I had licked this, but I was obviously wrong.

6) Regardless of your skill/confidence level, you should not take the effects of cold water lightly. Unless you have gills, it's a foreign environment that can hurt you.

I was never in any real danger, as rescue was close at hand, but this was certainly an eye-opening experience.

Paddle safe - BN

Check the bulletin board for other impromptu trips listed by members - www.connyak.org
We need paddles listed by members this year to avoid overcrowding launch sites.



The Multiple Kayak Rack

Not long ago on a rainy afternoon my wife and I stood next to her vehicle in the driveway while we peered into our two-car garage. My kayak was resting happily on the left side, and my pickup truck was parked on the right.

My wife asked me, "Do you notice something wrong with this picture?" I said, "No, everything looks as it should be." That turned out to be the wrong answer, and my wife proceeded to explain in detail why her vehicle deserved to be where my kayak was.



The desire to store one's kayak indoors may lead to such conflicts. Multiple kayaks can make the problem worse. There are solutions to the kayak storage problem. Wall racks are a possibility. Suspending boats from the ceiling is a somewhat more complicated option. I have done both, but these methods have their limitations. Talic makes a nice looking and versatile kayak rack that can accommodate multiple boats. However, the price to store three kayaks can run as much as \$500. It seems to me that storage options in one's own garage should not be so costly.

I recently experimented with the construction of what turned out to be a very functional rack for our three kayaks (see photo). It took me under three hours to build and cost me approximately \$50 for materials (6-2x4x8s, 2-2x6x8s, some scraps of 1/2" plywood, 4 casters, 8-5/16x3" bolts, a handful of various length sheetrock screws, and a few pieces of dense foam rubber). The rack is strong and stable, and as built could store four kayaks easily. Its footprint is 3'x8'. Looking back, it is clear to me that some adjustments could be made to customize the dimensions to meet one's needs, ie. a smaller footprint. Since the rack is on casters, it can be moved about as needed with the kayaks aboard.

This rack has returned a measure of peace to my household. My wife is happy, my truck is pleased, our kayaks have a comfortable residence, and the investment in time and funds was minimal. If you seek such harmony and would like to build such a piece of functional framing lumber garage furniture for you kayak(s), please feel free to e-mail me at pleaholmes@worldnet.att.net. I can send you further information/detailed pictures. - Paul Holmes

Connyak Rescue Clinic - Aug 10th

The Annual ConnYak Rescue Clinic will take place on Saturday - August 10 - at Bluff Point State Park. This is a forum type of affair with demonstrations of various rescue techniques by instructors, would-be instructors and anybody who would like to share experiences and knowledge. We'll show the typical "T" Rescues, Scoop, Paddle Float and others. Any paddlers who would like to demonstrate something or be involved in some way please let us know. The water

should be quite warm and there will be plenty of experienced paddlers there to answer any questions or help people with these techniques. We will start at 10:30 am. If people would like to paddle prior to or after the event please do so, or.. you can come as a spectator as well since the demos will be right there on the beach adjacent to the parking lot.

If you're having problems with your roll, there will be a lot of help available on that as well.

EVENTS



HADDAM MEADOWS

Sat- July 13 (N)

Grand slammer paddle - just like the old days! Want to meet all the Connyak paddlers at once? Haddam Meadows can handle us. Lunch trip up river and back.

BARN ISLAND

Sat- July 13 (N/I)

Out to Watch Hill Light, lunch on beach

MYSTIC - ANTIQUE BOATS

10 AM - MEET AT OLD BOATS (N)

Sat - July 27

View the boats on display and paddle the loup around and have lunch etc. No highway traffic and no parade.

Sun - July 28 - Parade Day

View the boats on display and paddle the loup around and have lunch and catch the parade as the boats leave Mystic.

NARRAGANSETT BAY PADDLES

Sat. & Sun., August 3, 4

Aug 3rd, paddle west passage from URI Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI. Lunch on Dutch Island

Aug 4th, paddle east passage from FT Wetherill, Jamestown, RI. Lunch on Gould Island

Both intermediate paddles, in the water at 10:30 AM connyak@connyak.org if in doubt.

ConnYak Paddles

Beginners must have taken a basic course and be proficient in performing a wet exit, paddle float re-entry and carry a pump. All paddlers are responsible for their own safety, including dressing for immersion. You must **wear** a CG approved PFD and a spray skirt. The boat and equipment must meet CG requirements, including an appropriate signaling device. Kayaks without bulkheads should have floatation installed. (always carry extra dry clothes, food and water) Paddlers are expected to show a sense of awareness as far as staying with the group during paddles.

CLASSIFIED

Derek Hutchinson Toksook paddle new 230 . New \$330 now \$275 or best offer. 860-561-4415 work 860-635-1979 email: bobyak2@aol.com

Dry-tops. Stohlquist. One new, one used. \$100 & \$65. Both mens medium. Tom 413-593-6167.

Old Town Castine Kayak 14' beginners kayak. red, 2 hatches, paddle and skirt. \$600. 860-985-6893

Valley Skerray, Fiberglass, Blue over White, with skeg and Chimp Pump. Great condition! \$1700 203-854-9713 brianenichols@aol.com

Aquaterra Double - Gemini, poly, tandem, wide beam, great for the kids or lake. Asking \$600.00 or best offer. Call 860-388-2464 Sharon.

BRAND NEW Surf/whitewater kayak. Selling for 1/2 retail. Riot Dominatrix 44. Blue composite. \$600 contact Don at donpwhite@aol.com

Perception Eclipse 17'2" X 22.5". Poly, yellow/red. Rudder. Cockpit cover. Excellent, purchased 10/01. \$1075. 203-750-0362 or e-mail obloch@optonline.net.

Valley Skerray XL, Fiberglass, Turquoise over white, with skeg, two hatches, chimp pump, and compass. Immaculate condition! \$1795. Contact (203) 840-0156.

'93 Wilderness Systems Tchaika with float bags, fiberglass, no rudder, no hatches, purple over white. \$750.00. 860-444-6950 orriley@uconnect.net.

Paddling partner wanted M/F, intermediate skills - CT shoreline or rivers - Phil Goodsell 860-436-4507

Wanted. Sparrow Hawk - Wilderness Systems call: 413-593-6167 Necky Looksha IV for sale, red, poly, with rudder and 2 good sized hatches. Stored indoors, in excellent condition. \$1000 includes skirt and compass. Email kmack2@earthlink.net

Two Werner paddles for sale; one left hand control San Juan and one right hand control Camano . Both in Fiberglass . \$175.00 each . Call 203 226 9674 days or 203 454 2278 eves .

Double Kayak- Necky Tofino (fiberglass), yellow over white. Sprayskirts and paddles. Extremely stable/seaworthy, excellent condition. \$1800.00 203-270-9134 (Newtown, CT.) or (haeger1@earthlink.net)

Anus Acuta...red deck, white hull, skeg, factory installed pump, new VCP hatch covers..good condition. (718 823-4672) or E-mail...\$1450.00

Janautica Anadyr - Fast, seaworthy coastal touring kayak - Excellent boat for motivated beginners, intermediates or experts. Fiberglass, 17.5' X 21.25", adjustable seat and footpegs, 2 rubber hatches, bulkheads rigging and more. Brand new - \$1599. E-mail ritey@lycos.com or call 917 567 9430

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.

Membership includes monthly newsletter, paddles, functions, etc.

Send inquiries to:

ConnYak, P.O. Box 197, Ellington, CT 06029

E-MAIL: CONNYAK@CONNYAK.ORG

WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD: WWW.CONNYAK.ORG

T-shirts for Articles

Authors of articles for the newsletter get a free T-shirt. If you have written an article and haven't received your T-shirt, please speak up at one of the paddles. The club officers usually have them at the paddles.

Send newsletter articles or classifieds to:

Jay Babina e-mail: jbabina@snet.net

7 Jeffrey Lane, Branford, CT 06405

203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.



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