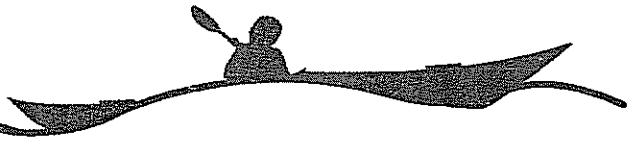


CONN YAK



CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

October 2002

ENFIELD TO ESSEX 55 MILES ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

By Paul Donoski

One day during the Winter while talking with fellow ConnYaker Ernie

DeSalvatore, he mentioned something about a 3 day Connecticut River paddle / camping trip. I quickly pounced on the fact that he was planning a trip without consulting with me. The truth was that Ernie and his Yale University co-workers who paddle together after work had concocted this trip. He said there was a possibility one of the group might have to drop out due to scheduled surgery. One man's misfortune was another's gain. I immediately requested that I fill any group openings. He already had a big jump on the planning and logistics for the trip. Ernie and I are birds of a feather when it comes to making trip plans. There is more fun and enjoyment in the planning phase than the execution. Especially when the plans fall together like a 20 piece jig saw puzzle. The paddle was going to cover 55 miles and Ernie had selected campsites at 20 mile increments from the Enfield launch. He estimated that if we were in the river by 8 AM each morning with a leisure pad-

dle we would reach our camps by 3:00 to 3:30 in the afternoon. Our standard deviation for a 3 day sample was 10 minutes. Ernie and his son Mike over the Spring had paddled or hiked to each camp and launch to make sure they were suitable. AAA couldn't have done a better job.

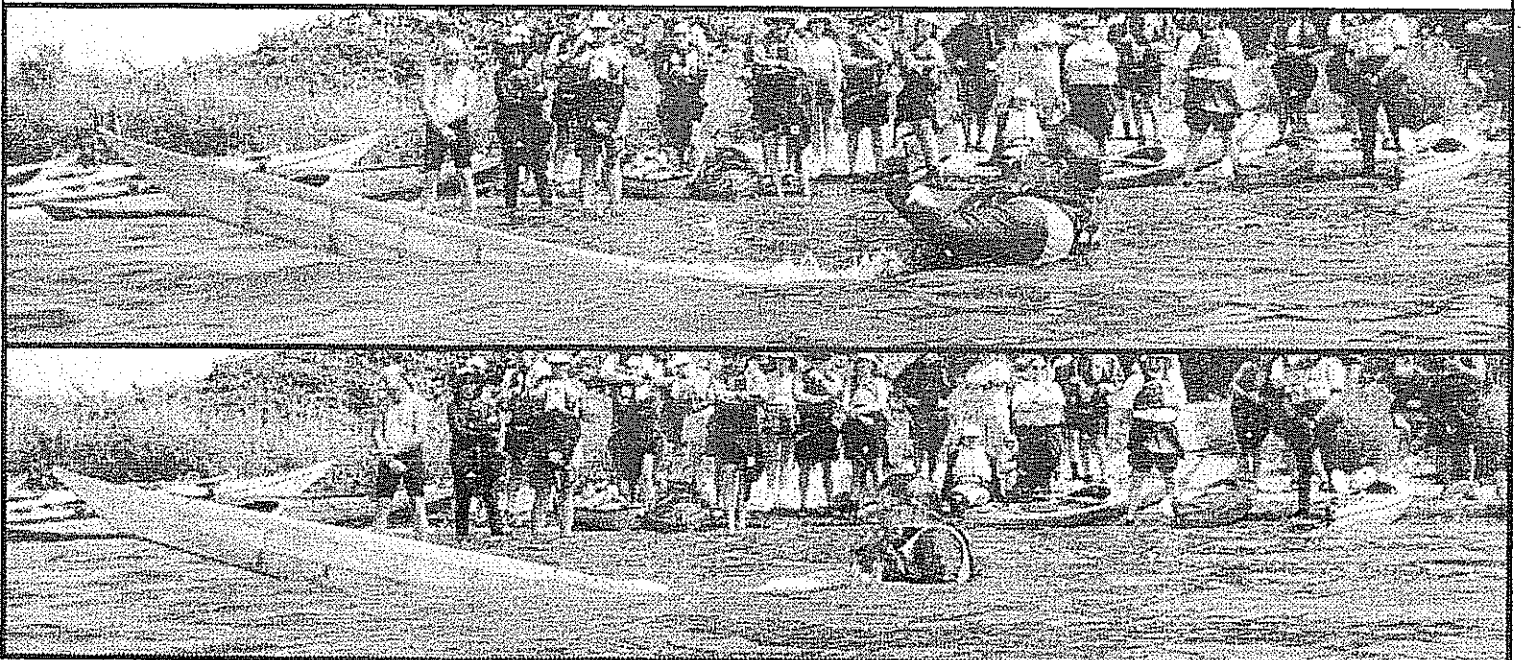
Our group of five put in Sunday morning June 9th at 8 am at the Enfield East shore launch just below the Enfield dam. There was me, Ernie, Mike, Barbara and Pam. The river current was about 7 mph and we had to reach the West bank of the river to avoid some heavy rapids along the East bank. Only real problem was Kings Island in the middle of the river which took some serious paddling to clear against the current. It almost took the stern off of Pam's kayak before we were safe across. The 1st day's paddle was easy with a good current and a breeze at our back. I expected this to change once we got below Middletown 35 miles ahead. I had all 3 hatches filled in my Dagger with about 100 pounds of

food, water and camping gear. Everyone got a laugh out of the detailed packing diagram I had.

It took me 3 evenings and one trial paddle to come up with this pack sequence. I couldn't get over how well my Dagger handled and rolled with the lower center of gravity because of the weight. Since I didn't want to beat on my Kevlar hull, I unloaded and repacked in shallow water at the campsites. The plastic boats in the group didn't get that luxury.

There was an abundance of dead fish floating in the river and I assumed they were the result of the high water or fish ladder kill at the dam. Our Sunday night camp was at Crow's Point in Windsor. There were several power boats at the little beach when we pulled up. Type A Barbara managed to obtain a cold beer from one of the boaters. I countered by refusing to share my little bottles of wine with her. Talking with the boaters we learned that this site was a popular keg party stop on Friday and Saturday nights which was all the more reason to avoid camping during the weekend if you can. The last of the boaters left about

continued...



Pete Strand was a good sport at the Rescue Day and did a Reentry & Roll in his Greenland skin boat with no float bags. Everything went well except for a few minor details.
Photos - Tom Maziarz

7:30 pm just as we were putting dinner on our backpack stoves. Mike and I went with freeze dried meals which are light and easy to clean up. Using only hot water for preparation means the whole meal only requires one pot. No sooner was dinner done then the local mosquito population was out in force. Since there was already a fire ring at the site we quickly got a fire going to hide from the mosquitos. There was a ready supply of trash left over from keg parties to burn. You would think with 18 to 22 foot power boats carting out the trash would be easy. In fact the garbage along the river bank from boaters, fisherman and just humanity in general was depressing. After quenching the fire we all made a mad dash for our tents except Ernie. He had rigged up a jungle hammock between two trees and it took some effort to climb into it without going into orbit. Suprisingly he got thru the night only falling out of it once.

Several times during the night I was awakened by the loud slap of a beaver tail. Beavers were a common sight at most sections of the river. Again we had a decent current and breeze at our back for Monday's paddle. We really roughed it for lunch stopping at Harbor Park and eating on the veranda. Barbara and Pam agreed this was their idea of kayak camping. After 20 miles of paddling and drifting with the river we reached Hurd State Park which was Monday's camp site. We had the Park to ourselves so we chose the best site overlooking the river. As much as I am a *Leave No Trace* camper now which discourages camp fires it was so relaxing sitting around a fire next to the river before calling it a night.

We broke camp and were on the river by 8 am. The lower end of the river has very little current but a serious head wind which ended the easy paddling. Just across from Haddam Island I came across a doe with her fawn browsing along the river bank. I slowed my stroke and was able to keep pace with them without spooking for a good 15 minutes. This is one of the benefits of beating the power boats onto the river and being in a kayak. We were joined by two more of Ernie's Yale University friends at Haddam Meadows for the last day of paddling.

Lunch was at Selden Island. After lunch to get out of the wind we paddled around the back side of the island. Keeping a wary eye out for the legendary Selden Island attack swan I thought we were home free. The only swans I could see were at the opposite

end of the marsh over a 1/4 mile away. All of a sudden a loud honk came from one of these swans and here he came like a kamikaze pilot diving straight at me, Barb and Pam. I managed to keep him at bay while Pam and Barb paddled out of sight down stream. What a show he put on huffing and spitting. I hung around just out of his reach to see what would happen when our other four paddlers came into sight. I had a front row seat while they twisted and joisted with the swan before exiting his territory. I couldn't help but notice the house on the hill overlooking the marsh has a spotting scope or telephoto video pointing towards the back of Selden Island. They must have some side splitting footage. Two hours later we were taking out at North Cove, Essex with a head full of memories and plenty of tired muscles. We couldn't call it quits without a John Courage ale at the Griswold Inn.

A Rescue left out at the rescue clinic

by John Dyckman

My 5 year old son has been fascinated by rope for a long time. He loves to tie his toy trucks together and tow them around and often he employs me to connect something together with a bowline or a sheetbend, or some such complication. As a parent, I find much joy in teaching a child many of life's lessons, and many times we can learn from a child.

Any Wednesday night usually finds a small group of paddlers on the warm waters of the Quonipaug lake in north Guilford. The water is in the 80's, fairly clear, it's a nice pond to paddle or hang out, roll, work on rescue techniques or simply escape summer's heat. At the start of this season I purchased a new spray skirt that I thought would work better than my previous one since it has a "strong" velcro mesh pocket and more durable grip around the coaming. It works great for most paddling but as I discovered not so well for rolling. On this particular afternoon I switched back my old skirt; a nylon touring type with shoulder straps. Hastily I stashed my keys in the velcro pocket of this skirt like I have done many times before.

We all set about to rolling and the usual conversation. After an hour or so, I decide to get going.. when I notice that the velcro pocket is loose and hanging wide open - so that's what that "tugging" feel

was during some of my rolls. Upon laying back on the deck, the shoulder straps pull snug, and the bottom of my PFD was catching on the edge of the velcro pocket, working it loose. I knew in a moment that my car keys, gym card, Mobil speedpass were all GONE to the weed choked bottom of the lake. Not even a thought of trying to search for it.. on to Plan B... call for rescue!

Back at the lot, I borrow a cell phone (mine is locked up in the car tighter than a drum) and call my wife to deliver the spare key... it's a 45 minute ride... the tension in her voice is powerful as she informs me that dinner is on the stove, and it will be awhile before she arrives. As she pulls into the lot, rolls the window down, hands me the spare (without uttering a word) ... My 5 year old son from his car seat emphatically exclaims "Dad you should've tied your keys to your boat with a piece of rope!"

Lessons learned:

- 1) Velcro can't be trusted.
- 2) Have a spare hidden somewhere.
- 3) They make floats for key chains.
- 4) There are nice people out there who are willing to help by lending their cellphone, but I will plan on buying a "pelican" type case just the same.
- 5) Listen to your children's advice.

That's the second "key" rescue to be performed at lake Quonipaug this summer.

We actually executed a beautiful glove compartment to window to other side window transfer via coat hanger wires one week. We won't mention any names but I'm sure she now has a spare key in her PFD pocket and one under the car. -JB

Rec Boats and Boyancy

The 56 paddlers who attended our rescue clinic saw that the rec. boat with no flotation bags not only sank but a single paddler couldn't drain it because of the enormous weight. (A scary thought)

I recently showed a few recreational boat paddlers the paddle float reentry. One boat (the kind with the enormous cockpit) had a float bag and a bulkhead and small rear compartment. It also sank, float bags and all as the paddler was doing the paddle float reentry due to the enormous amount of water it took in the cockpit area along with the added paddler weight. Would you believe it! Imagine all of them that are out there thinking that they have added safety going for themselves! (an even more scary thought). We towed it in, and struggled to drain it on shore. -JB

Anyone got a Spare?

By Jay Babina

The reason and need for a spare paddle is obvious, however the full reality of its importance may never make itself known even in the lifetime of most paddlers.

I was taking one of my usual exercise and practice paddles on the lake with a 20 mph wind going. I stopped facing into the wind to ditch my dive mask under the skirt as I watched my paddle slide off the boat. As I grabbed it, I watched a tennis ball sail by in the whitecaps and the thought of loosing my paddle in the wind came into focus. I decided to put my paddle under the deck bungees and try to chase down the tennis ball, pretending it was my paddle to see how it felt.

My kayak is 18 ft. long and a strong tracker making it quite a chore to turn it around 180 degrees from facing into the wind to the direction of the ball. That took me several exhausting and frustrating minutes of paddling with one hand and using the other in reverse. If you stop for a second, the kayak starts to turn back into the wind. Now that I'm facing in the right direction I start the chase. I used both double arm paddling and single arm paddling accompanied with an occasional one hand rudder to keep on course. Here's a case where the rudder would be a real asset.

For any of you who play kayak polo, you know that unless you practice regularly, your shoulders are ready to fall off in about 3 minutes of hand paddling.

Since the wind was at my back I made decent progress and caught up to the ball in about 6 minutes of paddling and course correcting. It was quite a chore, and remember, this is on a small lake with no real wave action or currents.

This little experiment made me much more aware of the need to take along the spare since the wind could kick up any time and I could make a foolish mistake and loose the paddle. I have also seen paddles snap when paddlers bridge it off the kayak while getting in by putting too much weight on it which also reinforces the need to have a spare or two along on group paddles.

You could certainly paddle in with a half or broken paddle using it canoe style - it's really a matter of how extreme the paddling conditions are and how far you have to paddle.

A paddle leash is a great inexpensive insurance policy insuring the paddle won't float off on you or that you won't

loose it on a capsized. It's also really great if you have to do a paddle float reentry to keep things in place while you attach and blow up the float. Many people keep them rolled up on the center of the paddle and only use them if they ever find themselves in the water. I used to use one but abandoned it once I switched over to the Greenland paddle. After this incident, I'm now less likely to cheat on taking the spare along even on short exercise paddles.

Obviously, it's not necessary to have an expensive paddle equalling the one you normally use. You can even carve a small Greenland paddle made to fit your back deck for almost nothing other than a little elbow grease and determination. Even if you don't paddle that style, it will get you in or allow you to chase down a paddle that tries to escape. The small Greenland backup is also very compact and non-obtrusive on back deck.

The next time you paddle, do a little hand paddling and try to turn your kayak - you'll develop a new sense of admiration and respect for your paddle, and a little more caution about loosing it.

Greg Stamer at ConnYak

48 paddlers, both Greenland style and some Euro-style showed up at Bluff Point to watch Greenland National Champion Greg Stamer in action. We were treated to an awesome display of Greenland techniques and rolling as well as an impromptu class on paddle strokes. Influenced by Greg, paddlers are already setting up to roll with the paddle behind their back.

It was refreshing to learn from such a humble, down to earth person who was an absolute master at all phases of paddle use as well as the cultural Greenland traditions.

The evening presentation which featured a slide show and short video of the championships was equally well received. The unbelievable speed of the kayaks and paddlers at the sprint races was something that stuck in my mind. The idea of building the right boat for the event seems to line up with the entire tradition of building the right boat for the job of hunting which started the entire sport of kayaking in the first place.

Greg described his personal experiences in Greenland, the friendliness of the people and displayed his well-deserved 1st place rolling medal. As they say, It's nice to have friends in high places and I'm sure I speak for everyone who attended!

EVENTS



HAMBERG COVE - ESSEX (N)

Sat., Oct 12 Essex launch site
Lunch Paddle - Hamberg Cove - 10 am Launch

Note: Other more energetic paddlers may want to launch under the Baldwin Bridge State launch in Saybrook and meet with the group. Please post your intentions on the bulletin board.

BOSTON HARBOR

Sat., Oct. 12, 10:30 launch (1/A)

Launch from City Point Beach in South Boston and paddle out to Lovell's Island for lunch, and back around harbor islands. Approx 12 miles round trip. Rain or small craft advisories postpone.

Directions: From Sturbridge, MA Mass Turnpike to Rt 93 south to Columbia Rd. exit - Left @ the end and go to and straight thru the rotary - You're now on Day Blvd. (State Police station on you right) - Follow past the L. St. bathhouse and the old Kelly's landing. The put in is the sandy beach on your right

From New Haven - Rt 95 North to 93 north to Columbia Rd. exit - turn towards bay @ end and go to and straight thru the rotary - continue as above -

MANSFIELD HOLLOW

Sunday, October 13, 10 AM launch,
pack lunch (N)

Take out your canoe, rec kayak, or any other human powered boat that's not your sea kayak for a mellow flatwater paddle on eastern CT's largest lake. If all you have is a sea kayak, that's fine too. Rain postpones. No set itinerary other than a good time. Maybe we can have a rec boat rolling contest?

DIRECTIONS: From Hartford, Take Rt 84 east to Rt 384 east. At end of 384, take Rt 44. East to Rt 195 South. Proceed through UConn, to Mansfield Center and turn left at second light (Bassett's Bridge Rd) There is a garage and a package store at the corner. Go straight for about 2 miles, and the state launch area is on the left just before the causeway.

From Willimantic, Take Rt 32 North and then get on Rt 6 East. Take Rt 195 exit, follow straight for 1 mile to Rt 195, and head north on 195 to Bassett's Bridge Rd, about a mile north of Willimantic Reservoir. Turn right, and then proceed on Bassett's Bridge Rd as above.

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Derek Hutchinson Toksook paddle new 230 Kevlar .
New \$330 now \$225 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

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

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

Old Town Nantucket - 1 year old - \$500.00 yellow
poly, rudder, thigh braces, adjustable hip pads Pete
860-749-0471

Impex Montauk, Fiberglass, \$1800 includes Skirt
and compass. Call Bill - 860-535-4473

NORDKAPP HM good condition. Day hatch, rear oval
hatch, canvas storage bag, compass. Orang / white
\$1600 860-633 7254.



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 .

Wilderness Systems Shenai, Red over white, Kevlar.
Very light, fast boat. \$1400.00. Phone 203-270-9134

Perception Pirouette White Water kayak: Float bags,
\$450 B/O. 860-613-0622 or Bkahuna@snet.net

Stearns Self Bailing inflatable kayak; life jacket,
pump, paddle and storage bag. Used one season,
great shape. Lists new for \$479. Asking \$300.
Elizabeth 203-878-8336, elizmont36@aol.com.

16'x 22" Yellow/White Dagger 'Meridian SK' 1/g kayak
with skeg, 2 hatches, Nexus Type 85 Compass, spray
skirt, 1/g paddle, Milford, CT \$1850 203.877.8493
'clayluce@hotmail.com'

Cold Water Clinic

Outdoor Sports - Wilton

Sat. November 9, 10 - 3

Lectures and a hot tub with ice water to try
out apparel. Sale Pricing
Information email boats@outdoorsports.com
800 782-2193

Check the bulletin board fo impromptu
trips listed by members -
www.connyak.org

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

TO JOIN CONNYAK...

ConnYak is a non profit club that is open to all
paddlers interested in sea kayaking from any lo-
cation. 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 arti-
cle and haven't recieved you T-shirt,
please speak up at one of the paddles.
The club officers usually have them at
the paddles.

T-SHIRTS WILL BE AT THE PICNIC

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



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