

# CONN YAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

February 2003

## An INSIDERS GUIDE TO KAYAKING TERMS

By Dennis McNeal

**A**s a relatively new member of Connyak, I've found that the language of kayaking can be initially difficult to interpret. To help new members get the inside scoop, the following definitions are offered in no certain order:

**Low volume boat** – A boat with a low deck and tight cockpit, generally considered easier to roll and less subject to wind effects. This design results in minimal storage and foot room. You may think you own a low volume boat, but can you and your lunch both fit in? If you must ask others to carry your lunch, you qualify for the Connyak version of low volume.

**Easy Roller** – No, these are not the rolling papers you might have purchased during the 60's. This is a boat that is easy to roll, both over and back up. See – cheater boat.

**Cheater boat** – a term originated by the famous ConnYak member Brooks Martyn, referring to kayaks with very low rear decks, facilitating an easy layback roll. Considered by many to be un-American, these boats have such a low profile that they do not show up on radar and are now being tracked on satellite by the FBI. The term has now become internationally recognized.

**Paddle route** – this is often a question asked by new members. What route will this paddle take? There is no clear answer, only the vagaries of wind, tide and sometimes consensus.

**Lunch stop** – a misnomer for a noontime break where lunch can be taken, but rolling/sculling practice usually takes precedence.

**Greenland Paddle/Euro Paddle** – In recent times, many paddlers have switched to "Greenland Style" paddles. Members might be wondering what the reason for this is. On the surface, there are just two different paddle designs. The Greenland paddle is carved from a straight piece of wood, with a narrow, unfeathered blade. The Euro paddle is typically fiberglass/carbon fiber, with large, feathered spoons at the end of a round shaft. Both paddles are capable of propelling you and your boat through the water in good order. Of course the real difference is much deeper, approaching cult status for the Greenland paddle users (Greens). The Greens claim access to the ancient and secret knowledge of the easy roll, scull and balance brace. Their maneuvers are sometimes performed in discreet, moonlit paddles. Secret rolling techniques are handed down during solstice ceremonies rumored to involve consumption of seal meat.

Many Greens make their own paddles, while the remainder buy them from underground workshops run by Druids. While Greens and Euro style paddlers do seem to get along on group paddles, the Greens are constantly using subtle techniques to recruit others to their cult. Euros who accept paddling or rolling

advice from a Green have found a wooden paddle in their hands within moments. They had taken a bite of the apple without even recognizing it.

Aside from the obvious distinction of the paddle itself, you can pick a Greenie out of a crowd of paddlers by some of their behaviors. They tend to tip their kayaks over without any apparent reason, other than to roll up with ease. They tend to shorten their lunch stops just to go back out in the water to hang upside down. They engage in esoteric debates about blade width, laminates and finishes. They waste a lot of time and energy attempting to pronounce the name "Maliguiq". Finally, they are genetically disposed toward paddling along the shoreline and enjoying the scenery. If you wish to keep you and your loved ones away from the dangers of this cult, avoid physical contact with their paddles. Each paddle carries an infectious spell that makes new users more susceptible. Remain polite during group outings and socializing, just don't touch the paddles.

**Spray Skirt** – not the outfit worn by the girl at the carwash, but a cloth/neoprene skirt that makes a waterproof seal between your waist and your boat. It also catches crumbs rather well during lunch and looks good on you as you walk around.

**Dry Suit** – a waterproof suit that keeps you dry even if you have to leave your

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Paddling off Outer Island (Thimbles) in November Photo - Tom Maziarz

boat before reaching shore, an essential item for cold-water paddling. The suits are made of gortex or nylon, with seals at the wrists, ankles and neck. Getting into a drysuit is a bit of work. Getting out of one usually goes quickly, as most paddlers find an incentive to move fast after three or four hours on the water. Some suits have "convenience" zippers, but that takes away the aforementioned incentive.

**Wet Exit** – This is the term for safely exiting your boat while upside down in the water, usually after a failed maneuver or an encounter with a surprise wave. As a safety measure, it is essential that everyone should practice this and know how to do it. As a practical matter, nobody wants to do it. And yes, with a nod to Groucho, you can do a wet exit in a dry suit, or a dry exit in a wet suit.

**Boat Registration** – fighting words.

**Thimble Islands** – a rocky set of islands off Branford where the rich and powerful conspire to keep the great paddling unwashed from launching, touching ashore, or gathering in groups. See also – Greenwich Beach

**Watercycle (or Jet Ski)** – a loud, powered, watercraft designed to make noise, go fast, throw spray to great heights and annoy all other boaters. Generally regarded by sociologists as the vehicle of choice for riff-raff to crash the yachting world, (See also, Hell's Angels vs. Interstate Highways).

**Annual Rescue Clinic** – a once a year demonstration of valuable rescue techniques sponsored by Connyak. Usually followed by an hour or two of Connyak members attempting kayak maneuvers that lead to actual rescues.

**Annual Picnic** – a once a year demonstration of valuable eating techniques often followed by an hour or two of Connyak members attempting kayak maneuvers that lead to indigestion.

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## Yearly Purge of Classifieds

Please reinstate your classified if it's still active. Many classified items are sold and are still being printed due to the fact that the listing parties forgot to contact the newsletter. Any classifieds that are not reinstated will be dropped in the March Newsletter. Contact Jay at:

Jbabina@snet.net

- to keep your classified active.

## Why a Wooden Kayak ?

by Joy McNeil

I would recommend building a boat to everyone! Den and I ordered a CLC Northbay kit (for my Christmas present) last December. We decided to start with a kit as neither of us had any boat building experience, although we had done major construction projects. The kit came with everything. We altered it somewhat, with some technical help from Bill Whitcomb, lowering the rear deck and narrowing to a width of 19 inches. We just took it a step at a time. I couldn't wait to get home from work every day to see what I could do next. We do not have a work area in the house, so we moved the dining room table and some living room furniture and worked there. I didn't even mind the clutter for the winter months. Who needs to eat on a dining room table anyway? I was really amazed as the boat started to take shape. Den assisted when I needed an extra hand (or when he found the work interesting) and I did most of the sanding. The boat isn't perfect and I admit I could be a more careful craftsman, but I couldn't wait to get it in the water. It works well and rolls like a dream (a cheater boat). I also like the fit, which has led to another boat project. I bought a Valkyrie this past summer (Tom M. thought I needed to have one), and I like the way it handles over the Northbay, but I like the fit of the Northbay better. So here I go again, this time from scratch. I've made patterns from luan, but bought Okoume for the actual boat. We lost a plane somewhere in the garage which necessitated going out to buy another.

I can't believe a 52 year old woman could get so excited about a tool and its ability to cut a nice even 4 foot ribbon off of a piece of plywood. The hull is now stitched together, but I've had to stop for now. We're painting the inside of the house this winter, so no other inside projects. I can't wait for spring so I can start again. Den also got the bug for another boat. He went with a stripper and ordered Nick's plans for a Greenland style Night Heron. He's got it partially glassed, but is also waiting for spring to finish. So, if you have any desire for a new boat, make one yourself. It's fun, passes the time and you are invariably proud of your accomplishment, even if it isn't perfect. Be careful though, this hobby can lead to a barn full of boats (we will have seven when these are completed!). And if you need some prodding or moral support, call me. I'm

already thinking about the next venture (skin?).

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## ConnYak builders status report

Jay Babina - finishing up a Sea Spirit (Bobby Curtis design) with a strip deck and will make a new G. Paddle.

Bill Whitcomb - built a "Yare" in 2002. Now building a modified N. Bay (Cheater) w/ day hatch for a friend.

Brooks Martyn - I'm building another boat this winter. Its a highly modified CLC North Bay "cheater boat", looks like it will be the nicest & lightest one I have done so far. I plan to sell it for my material costs when done!

Don Price - A new Greenland paddle.

Nick Shade - If it is any surprise I will be building a couple boats this year.

Dick Gamble - A modified "Outer Island cheater". The volume has been reduced by flattening the deck (lowered 1.5 inches) aft of the cockpit and ahead of the forward bulkhead. The hull is stripped and the deck stripping is about to begin. An April launch looks possible. Much fun!

Dennis & Joy McNeal - Joy has a stitch and glue in process. She is trying to mix the best characteristics of the Valkyrie, Anus Acuta and Northbay into one boat. I have a strip boat (Nick's Greenland deck Night Heron) in process. The "process" has been suspended for both of us due to a cold garage. We will resume when warmer temperatures return.

Don Milnes - Modifying an existing North Bay (Cheating).

Doug Downey - Signed up for a Greenland style paddle making class over at the Mystic Seaport

Paul Donoski - making a new Greenland Paddle.

Bill Anthony - I have built an hybrid (Stitch and glue hull w/ a strip deck) Merganser (Eric Schade design) from Newfound Boatworks. It was launched for trials in the late Fall under Bobby Curtis's watchful eye. It's now back in the shop for some thigh brace work and varnishing but the shop is dusty and cool so I'll wait until spring. Several paddles are in the works waiting for spare time.

Jim Hegg - I'll be starting an Outer Island this year.

Bobby Curtis - I'm building a 17 ft Sea Spirit. I'm using home made cove and

bead strips and doing it without staples and learning a lot about being patient. You can see progress on my site <http://www.seaspiritkayaks.com/>

Wayne Smith - Building a hybrid of my own design. I'll be posting photos and commentary on my website. I'll post the link once it's online.

Josh Moritz - Just finished a Skin on Frame at the Maritime Museum Class in Norwalk. Needs varnish & backrest.

Sheldon Penn - finished a Guillemot Night Heron in 2002.

Timothy Mulherin - building a Guillemot Night Heron - should be ready for a Spring launch.

Rick Sharr - I'm building a Greenland style paddle this winter. Following design used by Jim Hegg.

Jim Distler - I'm building two this winter. A 16 1/2 Merganser for my daughter, and hopefully finishing my SOF.

Pete Strand - I am building, ready for skin, a Greenland Storm Kayak. Very radical, no ribs. 19 ft x 19 in x 10 in, deep vee, no rocker. Should be very interesting, hopefully not a widowmaker.

## FRIENDS OF OUTER ISLAND OUR FIRST YEAR

by Paul Donoski

Friends of Outer Island are volunteers working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on Outer Island. Most, if not all ConnYakers recognize Outer Island as one of the Branford Thimble Islands. It is a 5 acre island unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. Outer Island was donated to USFWS in 1995 by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Hird in honor of her deceased husband Basil Rauch. They used the island as a Summer home. She desired that Outer Island remain a wildlife refuge, for marine education and a place for public appreciation of the island's beauty. We need more Mrs. Hirds in this world.

Five of the nine Friends Board members are ConnYakers. This past year was a satisfying learning experience. We discovered hands on the beauty and temperament of this little island and it's wildlife inhabitants. We also discovered that working with USFWS was rewarding though not always easy due to the extensive area and units

they manage. Our major accomplishment was opening the island on weekends during the summer to public access. Prior to this the island had always been closed to the public except during USFWS's open weekend in September. The small island beach was open to small boat landings. As one would expect ConnYak members were frequent visitors during our open days. This might have been brought on by our 1st open weekend when most of the Friends brought a ponderous supply of snacks and food to the island - so much that every visitor was asked to partake.

This year with more active Friends members, we will have a schedule for open Outer Island days to allow visitors advance planning. There will also be an effort to have a notice at Stony Creek indicating open or closed days. When the island is open we fly a green flag with "Open" on it near the landing area.

In addition to our island open days we accomplished a clean up of the island shore where substantial flotsam and debris had collected. There was a children's Fishing weekend for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. I forgot how much fun it can be fishing and playing with young kids. Thanks to the efforts of Jay Babina an Artist's Weekend was held on the island and a Art Show displaying the work at the Stony Creek Library. There were 23 pieces of art done by the participating artists. The Library Gallery attracted over 100 visitors including ConnYak members. The artist weekend and show was so successful that it will definitely be repeated for 2003.

Now that our Friends group has survived the first year we need more members to accomplish the projects for this year and beyond. We can't keep the island open with the limited number of people we currently have. There's construction and island improvement projects on the docket. We need funds to accomplish these things. There will be a new member information and sign up meeting for Friends of Outer Island on March 12, 2003 in Branford. The meeting is open to all individuals who have an interest in volunteering to help with our efforts on Outer Island. Already we have several ConnYak members on the list for potential 2003 Friends membership. There will be more information on the ConnYak bulletin board prior to this meeting. Contact Paul Donoski ([pdonoski@aol.com](mailto:pdonoski@aol.com)) or Bill Anthony ([wanthony88@snet.net](mailto:wanthony88@snet.net)) for more info.



## EVENTS



### CONNYPAK TALK / MEETING

Friday, Feb 21 Essex Town Hall, 7:00

## Paddling Wales with "Peter Casson"

Slide show and talk by BCU Coach  
Peter Casson.

Peter is an instructor at the Kayak Center in Wickford, RI. and is originally from the Anglesley area. He's a BCU 5 star - level-4 coach.

### DIRECTIONS TO THE ESSEX TOWN HALL

Exit 3 off of Rt. 9. Head into town on West Ave. 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.

## WINTER POOL SESSIONS

Pool sessions are on-going ever Sunday in in Jan and the first two in Feb. \$10. 9 - 1 It's a good time socially and a great time to learn and practice in warm water.

**Directions: Rt. 91, Exit 15 . Rt 68 W. Go past intersections of Rt 15 & Rt 150. Take fourth left on to Hope Hill Road which is at the light. Sheehan High School is 1/4 mile on the Rt.**

### 2003 CONNYAK OFFICERS

The club officers for 2003 are:

Wayne Smith - *President*  
Phil Warner - *Vice President*  
Dick Gamble - *Treasurer*  
Jay Babina - *Secretary*  
Claudine Smith - *Librarian*

The existing ConnYak officers were re-elected into office.

Due to conflicts in his work schedule, John Sweeton has passed along the Librarian duties to Claudine Smith. We welcome Claudine into the position. We would also like to thank John for his work and dedication in not only starting the club library but putting in so much effort into it's organization.

# CLASSIFIED

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

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

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

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.

VCP Nordkapp HMC Golden Yellow deck/White hull, oval stern hatch, \$1000.00 also Dagger Outburst Surf/playboat, red, bow & stern airbags, \$700.00. Call Don 860-643-1609, Email: nordkappdg@aol.com.

GPS -Garmin eTrex Vista (eTrex best model) 24MB open memory, barometric altimeter, electroic compass, basemap with Nav Aids. incl. instruction video. \$300. (203) 265-0169 lathrop@cttel.net

Tandem wooden kayak. 18 feet long. \$750.00 \$450.00 203-544-0555 ext.15

FOR SALE - Janautica "ANADYR" Sea Kayak 17.5'X 21.25" Adjustable seat and footpegs, 2 hatches, bulkheads, rigging etc. Designed for

speed and rough water. See Mfg. webpage for complete specs. www.splashdance.com NEW -\$1699 free delivery in CT. E-mail ritey@lycos.com or call 917 567 9430

Necky Tormae 15' Kevlar/rudder, carbon paddle, skirt, Yakama rack and saddles \$2100. 203-458-2362

## 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 recieved you T-shirt, please speak up at one of the paddles. The club officers usually have them at the paddles.

**Check the bulletin board fo impromptu trips listed by members - [www.connyak.org](http://www.connyak.org)**

Send newsletter articles or classifieds to:

Jay Babina e-mail: [jbabina@snet.net](mailto:jbabina@snet.net)

7 Jeffrey Lane, Branford, CT 06405

203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136

**Please contact the Newsletter  
when items are sold.**



P.O. Box 197, Ellington, CT 06029