

# CONNYPAK

CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

January 2004

## Norwalk Islands Adventure

by Anita Berson

*This trip gently unfolded into the highlight of the paddling season.*

The first adventure was the two paddlers who arrived at dusk due to unbelievable Friday night weekend traffic. Intrepid paddlers that they are, they put-in anyway and paddled out in darkness to Shea Island. One paddler had scouted the trip in daylight once before, and camped on Grassy Key, the other paddler followed on blind faith. It is an easy paddle - just follow the coast, head to the Power Station stacks, and turn left to Shea Island, about 5 miles total. The two stealth paddlers were met on the water just as they arrived at Shea. It was amazing to actually find each other on the water in total darkness. Kayaks do not stand out!! Dinner was ready in the form of sesame noodles (Oliver) and pasta salad (Kathy.) It is essential to have one dish that is prepared and ready to eat, without any fuss.

Saturday: During our breakfast, the people at the next campsite had a horrible incident. While cooking, their butane stove erupted in a fireball. The man was burned on his arms, chest and face. One of our trip paddlers, John, is a medical First Responder, and instructed the man to get to the hospital, keep the burned area dry and clean. They got into their motorboat and sped away. Later we learned that he was in the Burn Unit in Bridgeport Hospital, in serious condition.

We then went through what we have in your first aid kits, and discussed how to treat burns. Don't put anything on a burn!! Keep it dry and clean and get medical care.

Having put this incident behind us, the day was beautiful. Don had to paddle back to the mainland. We were sorry to see him go because he had a lot of the goodies, which we then scavenged off him. We waited for Madelaine and Ellen to join us for the day. They had promised to bring bagels and cream cheese - what a treat!! We explored the other islands. Saw lots of birds.

## Benefit Raffle

### Win A Handmade Greenland Paddle...

*And help Cheri Perry go to Greenland to compete in the Greenland Kayaking Championships.*

Announcing a raffle for a handmade Greenland style paddle. Winner will have a choice of a ready to go, hand carved, quarter sawn cedar paddle or another that I will build to his/her specific dimensions. All proceeds will go to support Cheri's trip to the Greenland Rolling Championships. Raffle tickets will be available starting at the Dec. 19 Connyak meeting and then will be available at pool sessions, meetings, events or by mail to me at PO Box 350, Moodus, CT 06469 (receipts will not be sent, to save on postage). Tickets are \$3.00 or 2 for \$5.00. The drawing will be held at a late spring Connyak event. Let's help Cheri show the world what Connyak paddlers can do! - Joy McNeil

At our lunch stop, Ronnie and Mike paddled up!! Then two other paddlers joined our group. We had a wonderful paddle and lots of socializing. Betty's daughter was also camping on Shea Island with her boyfriend. They came by to say "Hello."

Back at our camp site on Shea by about 3 pm, we didn't have anything else to do - so we decided to start "Happy Hour." Unfortunately we finished off the wine a little early. As we watched dusk arrive, we engaged each other with life stories and secrets (never to be revealed, by sworn pact). Communal dinner and a campfire (woodgatherers, John and Kathy). We had the beach entirely to ourselves. It was MAGIC. In the dark water, we could see sparkling fluorescent microorganisms: dinoflagellates.

Sunday. We packed and paddled back. Notably, Ruth's tent and new kayak (an Impex Montauk) were exactly color coordinated - striking white, blue and yellow. The paddle back was windy but lots of fun with a following sea. We finished off with a pizza dinner in nearby Norwalk.

#### Some Things Learned:

Use nautical charts

(lamine the section you need for the trip).

Carry (extra) night lights and have them accessible.

Always carry a First Aid kit and examine it regularly and learn what you can about first aid.

Have a communication device(s) - VHS or cell phone.

Know how to use your stove.

Bring more than enough wine.

You'll need a local paddler in your group who can get the camping permit (!).



Cheri Perry

## Rolling Maligiaq's Kayak (the turning point)

By Cheri Perry

I guess it began at the Arctic Boat weekend at Mystic. Being a longtime roller I have always been mystified by the strait jacket roll. One of my main motivations besides working with Greg Stamer again was to see a strait jacket roll. On Sunday morning while paddling with Greg, I asked him about doing a straight jacket roll, thinking he would say, "Like this." And pop one off.

He went on to explain to me that first is the elbow roll which I hadn't heard of before. He then introduced me to Dan Segal and suggested I go and work with the pondscum at Walden Pond. Dan welcomed me there, and within weeks I was at Walden Pond in Concord, MA, where a bunch a very good Greenland style paddlers practice. (Dan, Turner & Will)

After leaving Arctic boat weekend with some information about the Qajaqusa website and information on obtaining a video called "Rolling with Maligiaq" I was prepared and motivated to play with these new rolls. I found a valuable diagram that John Heath made describing the elbow roll and proudly showed it to Bill Whitcomb nicely folded into a ziploc bag so I could read it and roll. He said "this means nothing to me!" I was

horrified! "Bill it makes perfect sense to me!" I owe Bill a lot for escorting me often 5 times a week to practice sessions and modifying my boat and sizing his new one to fit me.

I read my description of the elbow roll and did it. Wow, I thought that was easy. From somewhere behind me I hear Bill, "Did you just elbow roll on your off side?" At that time I had no idea it's a difficult roll since I haven't paddled Greenland style long enough to know about these things and most rolls I tried come easily for me.

I soon learned that this is news when I emailed Dan Segal who I was scheduled to paddle with at the pond for the first time. He said something like "THE ELBOW ROLL?"...not the roll with the paddle held in the crook of the elbow? I laughed. When I went to the pond he offered me the chance to paddle in Maligiaq's (Greenland Natl. Champion) kayak which they had possession of.

I had only been in a skin boat once and I viewed them as torture chambers only to be endured but not enjoyed. I also was having some fit issues with my own kayak and added knee braces and hip pads to no avail. My kayak was OK if I really pressed hard on the pegs and focused on "Locking in" but when upside down in deep concentration, trying to work on a new roll I would sometime slip out.

When this happened I would have this second of panic because without hips there is no rolling. I would typically let go of the paddle and use two hands to grab the coaming to pull myself back in (all that hip padding made it tough to get back in against gravity), and hand roll up.

As Dan coached me into Maligiaq's kayak, I had to remove my neoprene booties and put on some neoprene socks that he gave me. Meanwhile, I was having thoughts like - what if I have one of those panic moments - this could get ugly. I slowly slid my heel over one rib only to encounter the masik (the deck support in front of the cockpit opening) firmly stuck on the front of my kneecaps. "Oh yes", says Dan with this smile on his face. "just hyperextend your knees a bit". I'm now thinking "20 minutes tops in this torture chamber and someone else can paddle this boat". So I bend my knees inside out and slide them painfully under it and wa la! I'm in! My heels are resting on some rib forcing this really awkward forward pointing position but I'm in - "so lets roll so I can get out of this torture chamber". Dan says "you're not in yet" slide forward one more rib so your stomach touches the front coaming." "That's odd, but I'll humor him because there is no way I could lean back from the position I was in without causing pain and possible damage to my back". I inch forward and slide my heels over one more rib and Wow! nothing hurts anymore!!!! This is amazing!!!! Not even the lack of seat was uncomfortable and my legs feel so firm in the boat it's utterly amazing. I have nothing to press my feet on but with the last deck beam resting on top of my toe knuckles, I could pull myself into the boat like this and hold myself in there. I looked down and there was no padding near my hips. I could have easily run my hand around the whole hip area, yet I felt secure. However, I was still skeptical that all of this could suddenly change when I'm upside down. Tentatively I paddled out and left Bill on shore trying to get Dan comfortable in one of his boats. I was out on the pond with Will and Turner and asked them to spot me because it's such a different fit and I didn't know what



While having lunch on Ram Island just out in front of the Mystic area a friendly horse pays a visit. Many animals run free on that island. Photo - David Fasulo

### About ConnYak paddles:

*This is the introduction on our registration form that every member signs. With the start of a new year, it's good to re-connect with our goals and intentions on posted trips. Paddle safe and have fun.*

ConnYak trips are listed by members who want to paddle in certain areas that they know. Our trip leaders are neither experts nor instructors. You are the captain of your own craft and you alone are responsible for your own safety and well being. No one can force you to launch your kayak from shore. This is your decision and your responsibility.

This sport can be dangerous. You can be injured and possibly die from kayak related accidents. That is why we continue to disseminate information on safety, safety equipment, self rescues, group rescues, hypothermia, navigation, rules of the road, tidal currents and weather related hazards. Members are alerted to the many skill elements that make up a good paddler and are encouraged to obtain formal training from a qualified instructor.

We urge our members to beware of so-called experts, who may put the inexperienced paddler in a dangerous situation. Know your limitations and remember that it is safer to paddle in a group rather than alone. Always be aware of your surroundings and the conditions.

We urge you to paddle and have fun. Learn as much as you can about our sport and share your knowledge. It will make us all better and safer paddlers.

was going to happen. I tried a standard Greenland roll and wow! - nice... not a bit of hip movement from the seat. I was rolling away and never again thought about having a panic moment.

This Kayak is an amazing combination of years of know-how passed down through the generations. I can truly say that I have never been this comfortable in a kayak before. I felt like I have been one of those kids with their pants hanging off and now I'm wearing my own pants and they fit wonderfully.

One problem I have in my own boat is my back gets tired and I have to lie down on the back deck to rest it. Never did my back get tired in this kayak. I rolled that boat for the whole session never even thinking to get out and even let anyone else try it. It's a life changing experience. Now when I paddle my own boat I use a foam masak, and scoot as far forward as I can. (I get in the kayak and squeeze a thick piece of foam between the deck and my thighs) By using this method of fit I immediately became a better roller.

As I practiced and learned, there was a slow realization that I just might be

competitive in Greenland and I would be able to experience a wonderful adventure! I started checking off the rolls on the competition list, and watching the Maligiaq video and taking notes as well as going to the pond when I was stuck. I now have all the required rolls including the strait jacket, however most of the paddle rolls still need work. The hand rolls are better, and I need to work on my paddle stroke and improve my racing ability.

The actual decision to go to Greenland really occurred sometime after entering Maligiaq's Kayak, which was a pivotal turning point for me.

*Thank you for all the support and special thanks to Joy McNeil for her Greenland paddle raffle.*

The Qajaq USA web site is:  
[www.qajaqusa.org](http://www.qajaqusa.org)



**Winter Haters Tolerators**  
*The Days are now getting longer once again!*

EVENTS



## WINTER POOL SESSIONS

SUNDAYS: JAN. 4, 11, 18, 25,  
& FEB. 1 & 8

ConnYak pool sessions run for four hours - 9 am to 1 pm at Sheehan High School pool in Wallingford. If you arrive at 9, you will have help with your boat - however, you can come and go as you please. This is open pool time for practice. The fee is \$10 for each session payable at the door by cash or check made to ConnYak. You may pay for one or more sessions with one check if you want. Please bring cash in an envelope with your name on it.

Although the pool is heated, wear a farmer john or some type of in-the-water apparel because you can get chilled if the water is a few degrees cooler than expected. We always request that they raise the temperature a bit for us.

**Directions: Exit 15 Rt. 91. Rt 68 W. 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.**



## JAN. MEETING

WED 14, 6:30, WALLINGFORD PARK & REC  
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Nomination for officers should be submitted in Dec. by email or at the Jan. meeting when elections will take place. You can nominate yourself or any willing candidate for any position. If you would like to help the club in any way, please say so. Any office is up for new personnel if you're interested although all officers are willing to maintain their positions. The officers volunteer to serve the club, not to govern anyone or anything. Our club belongs to (you) the members and anyone can contribute or do any project or event they choose at any time. If you want something to happen, just do it and others will help you if needed.

### DIRECTIONS TO WALLINGFORD PARK & REC.

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

# CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE - Invisible kayak, great shape, well cared for, must sell due to back injury, includes spray skirt, paddle and extras. Paid \$8000 will sacrifice for \$7800.

ConnYak members can list items for sale or wanted in the Classified Section of the newsletter for free by emailing:

[jbabina@snet.net](mailto:jbabina@snet.net)

Mention ConnYak message title

**CLASSIFIED ADS**  
Also check our Website Clasified  
Section for listings of various  
kayaking items.  
[ConnYak.org](http://ConnYak.org)



Standard  
Submersible  
**249.99 USD**

**ADD TO CART**

## VHF Radio Class

Saturday, February 21st

- All there is to know about how to use a VHF radio.
- For group communications.
- Weather forecasts.
- Emergency broadcasts and transmissions.
- Communicating with other boaters and commercial vessels.
- How to use a VHF to make phone calls if a paddler is outside of cell phone range.
- Spend a lot of time learning the phrases and protocols relevant to radio use.

**Location: The Community Room at the  
Brainard Library in Haddam, CT.**

**Time: 10am to 2pm.**

**Cost: \$45 per person**

**Maximum class size: 20 participants.**

**Instructor: Adam Bolonsky**

For more info, contact Doug Downey at  
[roy.downey@snet.net](mailto:roy.downey@snet.net)

Or call 860-345-2987 and leave a message.

## 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 check to:

**ConnYak c/o Wayne Smith**

**680 Browns Road, Storrs, CT 06268-2717**

**E-MAIL: [CONNYAK@CONNYAK.ORG](mailto:CONNYAK@CONNYAK.ORG)**

**WEBSITE / BULLETIN BOARD: [WWW.CONNYAK.ORG](http://WWW.CONNYAK.ORG)**

### T-shirts for Articles

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

### ConnYak Over-Dues

On the newsletter you receive, your due-date is on your label. If you fall behind with your dues, you get two months of newsletters which are stamped "over due" and then get cut off the list of active members.

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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



# ConnYak

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