



Nigel Foster Day

by Wayne Smith

For those of you who didn't make it to any of the events we hosted with Nigel Foster, you missed something really good.

One of the perks of being the president is that I get to hang out with the guests. So, after I picked Nigel up at the airport on Friday, we decided to go paddling for the afternoon. However, we didn't kayak.....we took my canoe out for a spin on Coventry Lake. Now for those of you who don't know much about him, Nigel's first book was about whitewater canoe technique. And since I outweigh him by 10 pounds or so, I got to sit in the stern, and watch a master at work. He used strokes I've never seen before, with all the fluid grace that he exhibits in a kayak. It was a joy to watch and try to emulate.

Saturday's demo was an eye-opener for anyone who has never seen Nigel paddle. It's like watching ballet in a sea kayak. He has such amazing control & ability to turn effortlessly that you think he's in a whitewater kayak. And of course, his dismount on the beach is always a real crowd-pleaser. He stands up in the kayak, holds the paddle at one end, sculls the boat to shore, and then steps out in no more than a few inches of water. Everyone in attendance saw something they wanted to try.



We paddled out to the Dumplings afterward & everyone had a chance to paddle with and talk to Nigel on the water. We didn't go far, maybe an hour and a half total. Once we got back, people got to just hang out until it was time to pack up & head for Hamden.

Saturday night's slideshow about his 2004 Labrador

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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.

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

Wayne Smith - President

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Nigel Foster Day

expedition was really interesting. It seemed that at every turn, he and his partner were being stalked by polar bears. It also communicated to the audience some of the distances and conditions that paddlers of his level will take on & conquer. It was an impressive show, especially when he said that they went for 5 weeks with what they had in their kayaks, and what they could find on land. He did admit to losing quite a bit of weight on the trip, though.

Sunday's class was a lot of fun. At 9:30 Nigel got acquainted with everyone in the class. As those of you who have met him know, he's a very friendly and personable guy. Nigel's teaching methods are as low key and easygoing as he is: he demonstrates a technique, explains it, and sets the class off to try it. Then, he moves on to the next item. There is a progression to the things he teaches, and he builds the class up as the day goes on from the very basic to the most complex. He also emphasizes that each paddle, paddler, and boat react differently, and that there is no one "right" way to do these things, and encouraged the class to experiment to find what worked best for them.

The class could be summed up in two words: Boat control. Nigel emphasizes turning strokes and edging, and explains

in detail all the different situations that they are useful in. He started the class with a lesson in kayak hydrodynamics, and then explained how to manipulate those forces to your advantage using edging and paddle strokes, some of which seemed odd at first, until you saw him demonstrate them, including the "S" turn maneuver that so many people were impressed by at Saturday's demo (He taught us how to do it, both going forward AND backward).

At the end of the class, he showed us some very entertaining paddle gymnastics: Everyone had to paddle back to the launch using the "double paddle stroke", in which you stroke twice on each side using both blades of your paddle. It's fun to watch him do, and not hard to do until you start picking up speed.....then, we got to the ramp, and Nigel stood up in his kayak, and sculled it to shore from a standing position like he had done the day before. Of course, several of us had to try it. We all swam.

Overall, the weekend was a big success. Our thanks go to Nigel for coming to visit, to Dave Niles for securing us the meeting room at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, and to the various weather services for being wrong once again, this time in our favor!



Nova Scotia

by Wayne Smith

Clean air, super clear water, lots of wildlife, and friendly locals. I'm definitely not talking about the Connecticut shore. No, I'm referring to the Canso Peninsula in Nova Scotia.

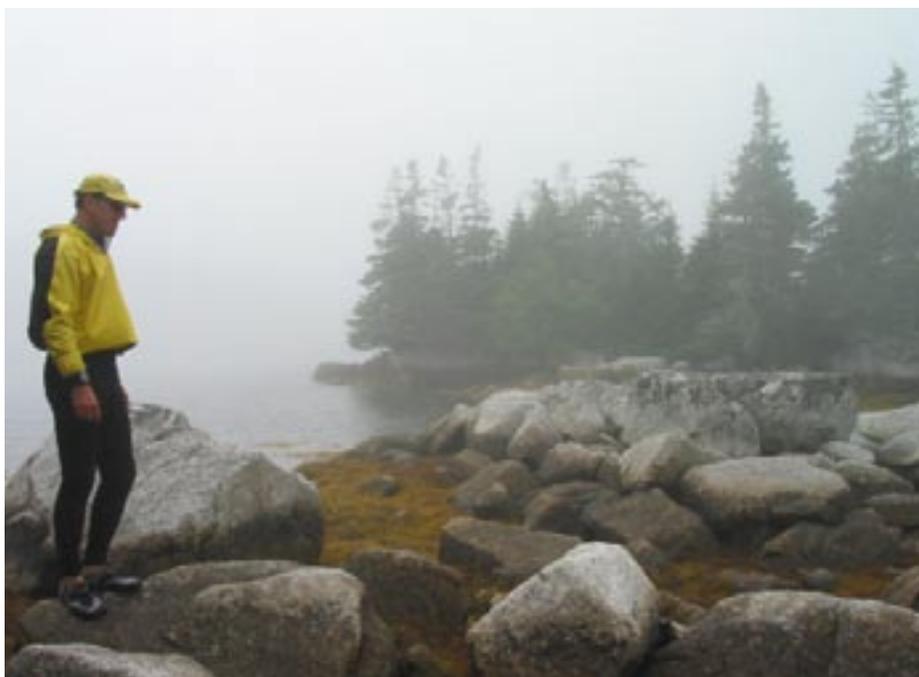
Sheldon Penn had set up a group trip there, and Judith and I decided to join in. This was the only part of the province that I had not yet seen, much less paddled, so I was really looking forward to going. We got to Seabreeze campground about 10:30 PM Saturday, having driven the 16 hour trip straight through. Cheryl and Fran were also staying there, but it was a little late to go looking for them. Everyone else was staying at Foxberry by the Sea, over in White Head.

Sunday was tentatively planned to be a wavehunt for those who arrived a day early. We slept late, and missed the launch, so we paddled in the bay at the campground. We followed the shore out to a rocky point about 2 miles from the campsite. I went to look for a rock garden or some cliffs to paddle along when we spotted two whales passing by. They were far enough away that we couldn't see exactly what species they were, but the locals said they most likely were pilot whales,



as the annual mackerel run was in full swing, and also that there was a glut of squid in the area this year, and the whales were feasting. We paddled around the bay, and around Fox Island in the middle of the bay. Fox Island was where the original transatlantic telephone cables were connected to North America. It's now deserted, and there is no obvious sign of human habitation. Quite a pretty island, in fact. The rest of the group didn't find any waves, and had a sedate paddle out of Foxberry in White Head and Tor bays.

Monday, everyone met up at Foxberry by the Sea and we launched into White Head Bay. We headed out to White Head light, and then along the outer perimeter of islands along the shore to Dover Island. We were searching for a beach to land on, when Sheldon thought he saw one. He and I checked it out, and found a small bay between several islands with no less than 5 sandy beaches! This is highly unusual in the area, so we took full advantage. The bay was shallow, and the water was as clear as it is in the caribbean. We took an extended break and explored a bit. I paddled around the bay with a camera taking photos. 16 miles later, we arrived back at Foxberry, and hung out for a while before discussing the next day's plans.



Oliver Bloch

Tuesday came, and we paddled out of the town launch in Canso. Seems everybody in town saw us, and wanted to ask a couple of questions, including the ranger who oversees the waterfront park. We paddled out to Grassy Island, site of one of the earliest french settlements in North America. We walked around the island, reading the historical information at platforms around the island. Very interesting history. The french cut channels in this and several other of the local islands to be able to escape attacks by the british. The channels now make for some fun paddling and easy escapes from bad conditions on the other side of the island. And, as we found, also are home to millions of very yummy mussels. A few of the group picked a large number of mussels, which were cooked up tuesday & wednesday night. Claudine found a pearl in one of the mussels. There was no issue with red tide, so a feast it was! While they were picking mussels, the rest of us were watching a large group of seals on a rock, who came out to see what we were all about.

After lunch, we paddled the outside of the harbor islands, playing in rocks and swells, and then headed back to town just as a substantial offshore wind picked up. By the time we got in, everyone was a bit tired from the slog back & we headed our respective ways. Judith and I went down to the docks, and bought about 5 pounds of freshly caught snow crab from the manager of the local processing plant, who happened to own a trailer at seabreeze & already knew who we were. Cost: 8 beers. A bargain!

Wednesday, we paddled out of Little Dover. The bay there has a southern exposure, and a fetch that goes to the Caribbean, which means big swells and surf if the winds are right. There was a surf break just south of the launch, and a few folks played in it while the rest were getting ready to launch. We paddled out of the bay, and around a headland that had some big dumping surf along the rocks there, and into what the locals call "The rabbit run". It's basically an inside passage that weaves between the islands there that shelters you from bad conditions for about 80% of the transit from White Head. We paddled to the back side of Dover Island, and landed in a cove next to



Dover Island

a fishing cabin & dock for lunch. It was foggy, and a slight breeze was bringing in more fog.

We launched to head back, and we all heard the distinctive sound of thunder to our north. The sun was trying to peek through the fog, so we knew the storm wasn't on us yet. We changed our return route once we got a view of the sky, so that we'd stay behind the storm, as it was paralleling our course. We went around an island to kill some time, and then saw that a tail from the storm was going to hit us, so we landed on an island with a fishing cabin on it. I walked to the cabin, and found that not only was it locked, but so was the outhouse. I joked that the owner must have been an american, because it's very unusual for a cabin in Canada to be locked (And so we later found out, illegal, too if it's on Crown Land - they're supposed to be unlocked and have a 2 day supply of fresh water & non-perishable food in them at all times). So, we sat out the storm on the rocks, and paddled back when the weather cleared about a half hour later. Now, there was clear, bright skies, lowered winds and smaller seas. We had an extended rolling session at the launch & headed to Foxberry for a potluck dinner, which featured lobster & crab salad made from the fruits of our dockside bartering, mussels that Cheryl picked and cooked up, and pizza that Oliver made, among other yummy dishes. And we all agreed that Nova Scotia lobsters are better than Maine lobsters -- they're extremely lively (One that Andy bought jumped out of Judith's hands & tried to run across the floor before he was re-captured & put in the pot), and have a lot of meat in them for their size. They taste great, too!

Thursday, it was real windy. Judith and I decided against paddling, as we had already had 4 great paddling days, and were OK with doing other things for one day. She went sketching, I went mountain biking. I rode into Canso and then out a dirt road to the selected launch site for the day. Sheldon, Pete, Claudine, Oliver, Sue and Andy decided to paddle anyway, and I met up with them right before they launched. Faye, Cheryl, and Fran also decided not to paddle & found other things to do. I spent the morning exploring the backroads and trails around Canso taking pictures. When I got back to the campground around 1:30, I thought about surfing at the campground's beach. The wind was blowing onshore at about 25 knots, and there was about a 3 foot surf, with breaking waves going out as far as I could see towards Cape Breton. I scouted out a place to launch, and decided later not to go. Judith was back by now, and we went for a hike instead. While we were out hiking the cliffs, we saw a sea otter in the rocks below us. Everyone met up at Seabreeze afterwards for lobsters & drinks. Those who did paddle covered about 6 miles in the whole day, but said it was fun.

Friday, we paddled out of Foxberry, out around the point, and into Tor Bay. We paddled around the bay a bit, and stopped on an island that's a local hangout. There was a bald eagle flying around it as we approached. Claudine spotted an ocean sunfish, and several of the group went to look. After lunch, we paddled around the bay some more, playing in the reflected waves off the rocks. The winds were building again, and we were catching some good surf rides on our way back to White Head Bay. Our return route was through an 8 foot wide canal which connects the two bays north of Foxberry. Actually, we had to portage part of the canal, as we hit it right at low tide. This was our last paddle of the trip, so we were in no particular hurry to get off the water.

On the whole it was a great trip. The locals were super friendly, and everyone in town knew who we were by tuesday or so, and also knew where we had already paddled. Everyone who drove past waved, even when I was out biking, and people

walking all said hello or waved. If you wanted to know where to launch a kayak, you get 8 different places as an answer & names of people to ask about others. As a kayaker, I haven't felt this welcome in very many places. I certainly hope it stays that way in Canso.

Specifics: It's about 820 miles to Canso from Coventry, CT, the halfway point being the border crossing at Calais, ME / St Stephen, NB.

Average water temp in the area is 60 degrees in early august, so a wetsuit at the least is recommended. I wore a goretex drysuit with one light layer underneath most of the days, and neoprene shorts and a surf shirt the others.

There are very few places to get food & supplies, so bring a basic stock of non-perishables with you. Most stores are also closed on sunday. The co-op grocery in town is very good. The closest large towns are Antigonish and Port Hawkesbury, both over an hour away. And keep your car fueled, as gas stations are not very numerous. And the gas is about \$3.50 US a gallon, so a fuel-efficient vehicle is key to keeping costs down.

Wind is a constant there. The peninsula has lots of islands around it, and you can find good places to paddle in all but the windiest of days. You just have to be flexible in your planning.

Most of the area is Crown Land, which means you can launch or land just about anywhere. If in doubt, ask a local. They're more than willing to share their knowledge. There is an RCMP station in Canso, and they'll know better than anyone what is and what is not Crown Land.

And most of all, when driving or biking, wave to everyone you see. It's rude not to.

(Wayne is president of ConnYak and can be reached on the ConnYak site)

One More Day in ...

Nova Scotia

by Susan Beecham

After four members of our original crew regretfully had to begin their treks back to Connecticut, (and two went on for further adventures on the St. Lawrence) Pete, Claudine, Shelly, Oliver and I planned one more paddle. Why stop? Who cares the winds are 20mph for the last two days and the swell is building? This could be good.

Commadore Shelly once again did his masterful work evaluating conditions and plotting the course. Yes, it was quite a wind, but SOME members of the party "wouldn't be happy if we stayed close to shore now would they?"... OK. I love this stuff.

So... the objective was to circumnavigate Little Dover Island. Little Dover is twice as large as Dover - like an adolescent child who has outgrown his name - and like an adolescent far more tricky.

The course was to put in at Black Duck Cove, keep a 140 degree course across Dover Bay - through an incredibly narrow passage on the southwestern end of Little Dover to come out into the relative safety of the island's eastern side in the lee of the NNW wind then paddle up to a far broader channel called Little Dover Run between the Mainland and the island.

Well... that's not what happened. That wind was whipping - 20mph gusting 25 - and yummy, the swell! 8 - 10 footers with white tipped 3' wind chop exactly opposite the incoming swell on a 120 degree course across the Bay. There was no way the Pintail could let this opportunity pass. The chutes were there and the door was open. She took off like a rocket. Pete, Claudine, Oliver and Shelly had different feelings about the conditions, but put in strong paddling across the Bay.

When I got to within 50 ' of the island, I recall saying to Commadore Shelly, while still at Black Duck two miles away, "Look at those waves pounding halfway up those cliffs." Yup. That 8 - 10 foot swell was making a mess on those cliffs. I paddled up the cliffs to sit on a 140 course and wait for my crew. Up and down in the swell... trying to catch a glimpse on the peaks ... careful about the opposing wind chop and the reverberations off the cliffs. After 10 mins of this I was happy, but getting coldish. I figured the crew had pulled their course and was not going to circumnavigate this this head. No puns intended. Commadore Shelly may rewrite this section - I hope so - consensus reality is interesting. But back at the ranch, this is what I have been told was happening: Pete, Claudine, Shelly and Oliver were holding their

course sloughing across the Bay. They came up slightly south of where I had been sitting. I had not even been able to see the original goal - the first "passage". Shelly found it. It was far narrower than it appeared on the chart and absolutely pounding with breaking waves. Discussion ensued and the group decided to do as I had done - travel down the island on its Bay side.

Somewhat north of the passage, there was a tiny harbor. Swell was rolling in big and lovely past the rock sentinal arms at the mouth of the harbor. Once into the harbor, the world changed to kind and gentle. Beautiful evergreens down to the shore and quiet water. Nice.

Our paddle continued its separate explorations. I continued down the Bay side of the island to a second broader harbor, explored that, then came out to see the juiciest narrows passage one could ask for - going toward Little Dover Run. With the swell pushing directly through, I know I do not overestimate that I was ripping at 9mph+ (I can do 8kmph briefly on calm water - I know the difference.) It was heaven for about a 1/4 mile. I was then at the mouth of Dover Run and the world dropped back to glassy calm. I respied the only boat I had seen two other times during the paddle. I followed a friendly family up to their little dock on a cove. They reported Shelly was half the Bay behind me coming across. For me, the second part of the paddle became exploring a wonderland of tiny islands in Bear Island Cove - the Eastern arm of Dover Bay. I would heartily recommend this area as a sheltered paddle. The islands and channels were different from the others on previous paddles during the week. Because of its very sheltered position, the islandlets were more Minnesota lake in quality. The thick evergreens came right to the waterline. Exposed rock was minimal. Endless channels went off providing long narrow "tours" through the area. I kept taking compass readings to ascertain returning on time - as this was a labrynth waterway.

I came out and started back across the Bay cutting behind the string of islands running across from Dover Run to Bluff Point. The swell was not particularly big in here, though the wind was still whipping. I saw Shelly, Pete, Claudine and Oliver on Keef Point as I neared the west side of the Bay. It turned out they did not have positive feelings about the passage I took to the mouth of the Run and had started back across the Bay.

I promised Shelly I'll get a radio soon, but basically everyone appreciated their own efforts against the wind. Shelly really wants to get back to do that original SE passage minus killer waves and I want everyone to NE passage on a big swell day, but you can't do it all the first time. That's why we write these tales to encourage interest.

Breaking the Sound Barrier

Originally published in the
ConnYak Newsletter December '99.

A solo crossing of Long Island Sound was not something Ted Barnard planned for a long time. It's something that he occasionally thought about and decided to "just do it" a week before his departure. On the second week of October, Ted decided he was ready, packed his kayak and headed off. Since he lived in Branford, the departure point was easy - Stony Creek. Although there are shorter crossing points and Middle Ground Light and Island lies between Bridgeport and Port Jefferson, the convenience of leaving from close to home dictated the decision. His destination was the Wading River in Shorum, 18 miles directly across the Sound. He discovered that there was a state park right along the water and that's where he decided he would spend the night. Although this is not an official camp ground, he figured it would make the ideal landing spot and would camp in any secluded area of the park he could find. Being the off season also made it a little less populated and monitored. The weather was predicted basically calm and warm for the weekend.

"I departed at 12 noon since I didn't want to hang around over there for half a day. I arrived approximately 6 hours later and a mile from the State Park. Fisherman in the area pointed me in the right direction and in 20 minutes I was at the Park. I worked with a compass only and tried to compensate for the little drift I encountered and turned out about a mile off course. My bearing was 210 degrees. When I arrived, I made a phone call to my mother who was worried about the trip. My evening was pretty uneventful and I was glad to have landed and set up camp. I felt no apprehension or anxiety during the crossing and my only major concern was: will I have a place to camp. The vague thought of sea sickness was the only other passing thought and since have never been sea sick, it wasn't a major issue although I know it can happen to anyone.

I could see the cliffs on Long Island throughout my

entire trip over. Since the cliffs were always visible, you always felt like you're closer than you really were, however it still seemed to take forever to get there. A Camel Back for water made it easy to drink while paddling and I stopped for about 10 minutes to have a sandwich while in the middle of the Sound.

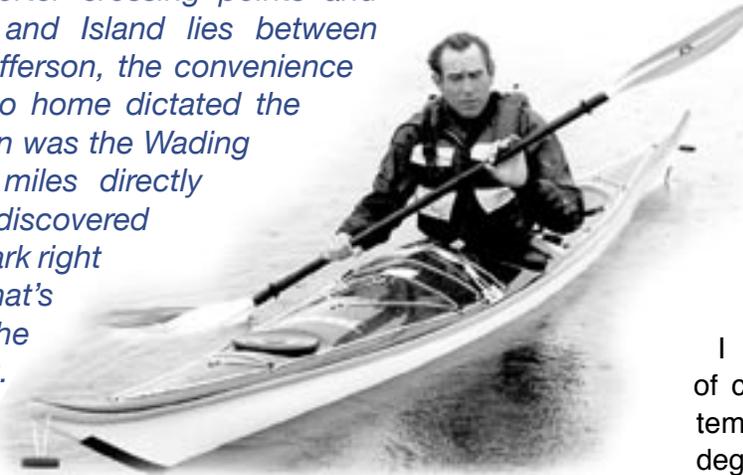
7:00 am the following morning, I was in my boat and on my way back. It was a sunny, hazy morning and I paddled for about 3 hours with no land in sight. There were a few freighters and tugs in the distance, but throughout my entire trip I had no close contact with any boats. Most of the fishermen were within a mile of each coastline.

I carried no VHF, because I don't own one although I realize I should have had some kind of communication. The noon time temperature reached almost 68 degrees, so I was very comfortable and the sound was basically calm.

On the way back, I just wanted to get it over with. I was feeling fatigued and bored. There's really nothing to see out there and obviously, I had no conversations to pass the time. You're basically paddling looking at your compass and occasionally looking up hoping to see something. As I approached CT, I didn't trust my compass bearing and thought Faulkners Island was a bit too far to the right, so I compensated and corrected my course by heading towards Guilford a bit. This was a mistake. As land became more visible, I spotted Outer Island on the Thimbles and realized that I was about a mile too far north. I also weather cocked all the way back which can really get tiring.

I paddled a Nordcapp HM which pulled to the south the entire way back in spite of it's built on skeg. Once again, it took about 6 hours on the return trip.

Would I do it again? Probably not - at least not alone. It's just boring. I'm glad I did it for my own sense of self achievement because it was something that was tucked away in my mind for a while. I also took some advanced classes with Maine Island Kayak and wanted to use my navigational skills. However, it felt really good to be back on land and stretch my legs when I finally arrived back in Branford.



5th Annual Rescue Clinic

by Jay Babina

Some new Coast Guard paddleboat guidelines were addressed by members of the Milford Coast Guard Auxillary.



As usual, our Rescue Clinic was an enjoyable and educational event for everyone. We did the full array of traditional kayak rescues with the annual sinking of the flotation less recreational boat as seen above. I think Rich Centola gets a real kick out of doing this because every year he can't wait to get into it and is the first one to volunteer for it. (looks like fun)

The Dept. of Enviromental Protection was there to do some test firing of flares. That's always interesting since most paddlers never fired one or have seen the different varieties go off one after another for comparison. You could also fire one yourself since they brought a bunch of outdated flares along for that purpose. The simple smoke flare was quite impressive and powerful for such a simple thing.

After lunch, most of the paddlers got on the water to paddle, or practice and have some fun in their boats. A lot of paddlers helped some newer paddlers learn to roll or at least help them refine what they had.

The clinic was actually started with a small talk and display set up by the Milford Coast Guard Auxillary which had some very interesting information. Fred Bietsch, Vice Commodore and vessel examiner explained the required items needed to pass the new safety requirements and get a sticker. Assisting him was Tim Mulhern who is also a kayaker and understands paddling and kayak safety.

The Coast Guard Auxillary has always been involved in doing the safety inspection of boats and is now active in doing the same for paddle boats. They have a list of items that would be necessary to get a safety sticker as well as a more expanded

list of recommended items for the paddler. The absolute basic items needed for the paddler to get a safety sticker are:

PFD (worn)

Audible signal device - Whistle and or horn etc.

Visual signal device - Signal Mirror and or Flares

Night visual signal - Flashlight and more.

(All items attached to the PFD by a lanyard)

The expanded recommended list includes:

Reflective tape, Knife, Personal Marker Light (PML)

Spray skirt, Paddle float, Dewatering pump/ sponge

Extra paddle, Protective clothing, Hat, Sunscreen

Paddle tether, Water bottle, VHF radio, GPS unit

Charts for Area Of Response (AOR)

Distress signaling equipment, and of course cold water apparel

Right now this is not law - where you can be fined if you don't have them. The CGA is out there trying to raise awareness and safety standards and this incentive comes down through the Coast Guard. In boating there are certain items that are mandatory or you can get a fine. So far in kayaking there are none other than wearing a PFD from Oct. - March.

All your items must be fastened in some way. The CGA also showed their PFD with pockets which raised an interesting question. Bob Ferranti mentioned how years back, a PFD with pockets was not acceptable to the Coast Guard, and I too remember that. They didn't want anything of weight on the PFD to counter the buoyancy. It seems that now pockets are looked upon as good or necessary. With things on lanyards, I think all paddling PFD's will now be adapting to (more) pockets because the CG wants these items on you if you're in the water - not stored in the boat.

I personally think the heir achy of necessary items is a tiny bit off. I think the pump is quite important. However, the mirror although very limited is a non mechanical device like reflective tape and serves a purpose without undo expense or complications. The CG is thinking rescue and I think we are more used to independence and being totally self-reliant. But for the most part, we are advanced. Since most paddle deaths are the inexperienced, they are probably right in their priority about being able to signal for a rescue.

The bottom line to all this is the CG's and CGA's intent to raise the awareness of paddlers which is great.

I remember years back (before rec. boats) the kayak was sold with a PFD, pump, paddle float and spray skirt and at some stores, this was mandatory. Plus... a person to contact for lessons.

It must be noted that both Fred and Tim from the CGA made it clear that they would like to see far more than the minimum basic items.

Dimensions

Length: 5.15 m / 17 ft

Beam: .54 m / 21.5"

Cockpit: 1.01m x .4 m x
40.5" x 15.5"



I can reset my watch, or take a drink with hands off the paddle in 1-1.5 foot chop. That is very stable compared to a lot of other boats with similar speed.

At rest, the boat can feel tippy in chop, but once up

to some speed, it feels much more stable.

The Nelo Razor is a fast boat, which Nelo markets as a sea kayak. To the American eye, it looks more like an ICF K1 trainer.

The Razor's strength is its speed while maintaining a high degree of stability for such a fast boat. It has a wedge shape, allowing for a good catch up front, and follow through to blade exit.

The sharp entry allows the boat to slice forward through the water with minimal resistance. The wide aft section gives stability, and helps the boat catch waves and wakes.

I'll try to summarize what I think are good and bad points about the boat as follows:

(Please note that I am a tough grader. I've done other reviews on boats, and given some of them 3s, or even 1s!). Most of my paddling with this boat is on a protected inlet off of Long Island Sound (Five Mile River in Rowayton, CT). This area generally has at most 2-3 foot waves at the Sound side, with <1 waves for about 90% of the approximately 1 mile long course I use to train on. There is often pretty heavy boat traffic going at (mostly) marina appropriate speeds at about 5-6 mph.

Speed (10/10): This is the boat's strength. The hull is about 17' long, with plumb bow and stern. A wing paddle is required to get the most out of this boat. The boat really shows its stuff in flat water. The speed is great, and makes the boat a lot of fun to use.

In shallows, (<3-4 ft) speed does not suffer as much as with most sea kayaks. Hour long workout speeds for me are in the 6.2-6.5 mph range. This is an effort level just below AT, and well below LT.

I've heard informed opinions that this boat is about 30-40 seconds per mile slower than a current ICF K1. This is extremely fast, and the claims seem accurate, based on its race performances.

Stability (9/10): Good, if an Epic Endurance is a 7-8, this boat would be about a 5. It is tender compared to almost any sea kayak, but much more stable than a full on racing hull like a Mako or other race boat. Compared to advanced ICF k1 designs, it is very stable.

Comfort: (10/10). The Olympic sized cockpit gives plenty of room. While the boat is narrow, one never feels confined. The long cockpit allows for good leg movement and rotation facilitating good motion for quick movement. This boat is more comfortable to me than any other decked boat I have tried. After an hour, I usually have no soreness or numbness as one so often does with sea kayaks. This comfort rating is high praise and a welcome addition to such excellent performance.

Surfing (9/10): This boat catches wakes from other kayaks easily, allowing for a good wash hang. It also catches rides from power boats and waves quite nicely. I've surfed this boat faster than any other kayak in my fleet. What is impressive is how fast (7.5+ mph) this boat can ride on a wake, and require so little stroke input.

Tracking (7/10): This is the boat's weak point. Frequent corrections to course are needed in anything by very calm conditions. Wakes or waves approaching 1 foot require careful attention to avoid heavy yaw. The good part is that course corrections are easy.

The tradeoff to relatively poor tracking is that the boat turns really fast. This is a big benefit when rounding buoys during training. After some time, one gets much better at keeping on track. Early on, this will require a lot of attention and effort to control.

Construction quality: Excellent (9/10) - Nelo really builds a quality product. The seat is adjustable for paddler size, which helps trim the boat. The footrest is also adjustable. The boat finish and fit are excellent. The layup is strong, and stiff. Much tougher than most other decked performance boats that I've seen.

Summary:

The Razor has a combination of speed and stability that make it a joy to paddle. For fitness training and stroke development, it is a brilliant boat that can be enjoyed in a wider range of conditions than full on racing boats.



How to win friends and influence people

Joy's Ginger Cookies

These will always guarantee you paddling companions, prime seating at lunch and many helping hands at launching.

Father's Ginger Cookies - from Cooks.com (known to kayakers as Joy's Ginger Cookies)

3/4 c. veg. shortening
1 c. sugar
1 lg. egg
1/4 c. molasses
2 c. flour (I use SPELT flour, as Jay and Den don't eat wheat)
sugar for dipping the cookies
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 1/2 tsp. ground cloves
1 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1 1/4 tsp. salt
1 Tbl. spoon baking soda

Cream together the shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Blend in the everything else. Combine until it forms a dough and then chill for at least 2 hours. I also place it back in the fridge as I am waiting for cookies to come out of the oven. Use a teaspoon to make small balls of dough, roll them in sugar and place on baking sheet. Use thumb to flatten a little. Bake at 375 for about 8 minutes. NOTE ! I use a silicone baking sheet on my cookie sheet. It keeps the cookies from sticking to the pan. I let them cool on the sheet until set and then place on wax paper till cold. These get really thin (when I make them, a friend tried the recipe and come out with blobs) and they would be hard to get off of a regular cookie sheet without sticking or blobbing up. Hope the recipe works for you.

Joy McNeil

Happiness Relearned..

by Scott Lovrien

The sunshine on my face and paddle in hands weren't the only source of happiness at the moment. My two daughters were also paddling rec boats in the calm waters of Mystic Harbor in the summer of 1998.

My girls travelled from their mother's home in Seattle only once a year to spend a month in Connecticut, so being with them in so beautiful a setting made me forget for a moment that I saw them so rarely. Their laughter, slaps of the paddle to splash each other, and realization that they were masters of their own water craft kept their spirits high and joy unbounded.

We had rented three rec boats there on the harbor and donned the required PFDs over our T-shirts and swim suits prior to paddling. We had no clue that we weren't dressed for immersion, that we had little or no experience in self or assisted rescue, or that our "arms only" paddling technique was incorrect. We were having a ball and life was good.

During our paddle out past the railroad trestle and into the lower harbor/marina, we saw two kayakers dressed in dry tops, PFD's, wearing sprayskirts, gloves, hats, and carrying pumps and paddlefloats. We gave them a nod in greeting which was curiously ignored though we were only yards apart. It seemed they didn't want to acknowledge us for some reason, but I pushed it into the back of my mind - as I was there to have FUN!

Out to SixPenny Island, then on to Mason's Island we paddled, joking, racing each other, then stopping for sips of diet soda from cans on our laps (no sprayskirt, mind you) and then back to the harbor after a short lunch stop on SixPenny again. A perfect end to a perfect day with sore arms, salt-crusting lips, and of course, the

requisite sunburn on top of my head.

Here I am, years later, years wiser, but yet wondering how it was all so much fun when we did it "all so wrong". I realize several things now in retrospect:

1. If one of us had capsized, we would definitely never have recovered.
2. Without spray skirts - the capsized boat would have been lost!
3. Based on articles in various magazines and postings on our board, the reason we weren't greeted by the "real kayakers" was probably because some paddlers treat rec boaters that way or they didn't want to assume any liability for our potential drowning by acknowledging that they had noticed us.

I now carry all the safety gear, paddle more wisely and even practice rolling and self rescue. In the corner of my home office sits my huge "paddling pile" of gear that can outfit me safely in any condition. When I get ready to go out now, it takes me 2 hours to put the boat on my car, select my gear and load it up, and figure the tide, best launch point, and wind and sea conditions. But by the time I get ready to go, somehow I lose the enjoyment of getting out to just paddle and have fun. It has become a chore.

I know I am safer now, more wise in the threats of the sea (and PWC), risks of offshore breezes with outgoing tides, onshore breezes with outgoing tides, cold water and numerous other situations to watch out for. But in the knowledge of it all, something has been lost in the spontaneity, the bliss of stupidity, or maybe just the happiness in freely paddling.

Maybe its time to start learning to have fun again. Rec boats, anyone?

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.

Dues (when are my dues due?) (am I still a member?)

We are now exploring the possibility of having everybody's dues renewal date at one time of the year. This would alleviate confusion and we could do a mass notification by post card. People who join just before the due date would roll over to the next year. Those who join before 6 months to the due date would join for the half year price.

We are working out these details and will probably come up with some solutions as we resume club meetings in October. We originally assumed that this could be done easily by email, however, many people have changed their addresses and we get no notification of these changes. Since we abandoned the snail mail newsletter, we have been trying to resolve this but have been very busy tending to our paddling.

So if you think you're still a member but not sure, don't worry, you are. And if you know you're not a member, don't worry, you are a member.

ConnYak Picnic - Saturday, Sept. 17

Lower Moodus Reservoir, East Haddam, CT -10 am on

Bring your boats, a dish to share, and plenty of sunscreen. There will be a gear swap table, raffle, and as always, plenty of bilge sponges. 11 am Group paddle.

From Rt. 9

Exit 7, left off the ramp

Right over the E. Haddam Bridge (Rt. 82)

Left at the fork (Rt. 149)

Bear Right at the stop sign (Landing Hill)

Stay on this road until you see the reservoir and parking.

From Rt 2

Exit 14 (Rt. 149) Right off the exit.

Continue through light and down hill.

Left at the water (Mott Lane) to end. Right to the beach.

Reservoir at bottom of hill.

Anyone's Invited

Many thanks to all those who contribute to the newsletter with photos and stories. If you sent an article and it's not in, they will be in the following newsletter coming out in a short month.



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