



Nantucket by Nordkapp (HM)

Woods Hole - Martha's Vineyard - Nantucket ...by Phil Warner

Wow! "That wind must be blowing 15 to 20 knots!", I said to Mike and Joe as they got out of the truck and walked over the bike path and to the launching area. Looks a little rough, I said to Joe. There might be 8 foot breakers out there. We'd better watch out for the headlands! As I got my binoculars to see what the offshore area looked like, Joe and Mike discussed the conditions. "Looks like 3 to 4 once we get out there", said Mike as he got his boat down. We stood there for a moment and just stared out toward the Vineyard. I said "We got a couple of days so we can hang out a day, or go for it - if it's too rough we can always either come right back or catch the ferry back from Vineyard Haven. "We have the tide and wind with us, ...it will be kind of like Bluff Point - we'll probably make pretty good time". After a few more moments of consideration, while we milled around deciding what we might want to bring, we individually made up our minds. Soon there were three packed boats waiting at the water line.

We headed off on a ferry angle that would take us to West Chop where there were some headlands. The usual stability of the Nordkapp in rough water was even better with 30 to 40 pounds of gear. Needless to say, an occasional brace was necessary as we encountered rogue waves. At one point, Joe and I discussed a potential collision course with one of the ferries out toward the Vineyard. To avoid losing any time, we chose a parallel course and then passed behind. On our way out, we decided to skip Vineyard Haven and go around East Chop to Oak Bluffs. We were making good time, but Joe was driven on by the need for coffee. Once we landed in Oak Bluffs, he headed down the street with his gunny sack looking for a coffee house.

I paused at a phone booth to let my wife know where we were and that plans had changed. We were going past Edgartown where I said I would call - and away from civilization. It was a good thing that I

called (I only left a message) - later on I found out that someone we were trying to meet up with had already spoken to her about his view on the paddling conditions. We left Oak Bluffs around 11:00 after hanging around for almost two hours. We wanted to keep going with the tide behind us. The sun had come out and the wind had died down and the paddling was easy over relatively calm water.

At one point, Mike said he was hot and was going to cool off. "Brrrrr - that water's cold!" he said as he shook the water out of his hair after rolling up. "I guess I'm a little hot too" said Joe who proceeded to cool off in the same way.

Well.....?

After all, I was wearing a drysuit and was also warm; however, I was wearing my glasses and used that as an excuse. The next thing I knew, Mike was holding my glasses and I was finding out how cold the water was. "You know, I don't think I've ever rolled without a mask on!" I said. A Nordkapp is surprisingly easier to roll up when it's loaded. I didn't even think about my nose. I just did it!



3rd Annual

**Sunday July 19
12 noon - on**

West Hill Pond - New Hartford, CT

Directions: Take RT 8 to the end. (Winsted) East on Rt. 44 toward New Hartford. About 2 miles a shopping center is on the right. Just past the Shp. Ctr. take a right on W. Hill Rd. Follow signs to launch ramp. Ramp is on the end of the lake. The cottage is half way down the lake on the left side from the launch.

(If you're coming from the Hartford side, it's best to look up West Hill Pond on a map and get to the launch ramp)

Food: Bring anything special you want including beverages and anything you wish to share. ConnYak will supply salads, ziti, dogs, hamburgers, corn on the cob, chips etc. There will be a gas grill and a nice lake to paddle and play on ...so pencil it in and come! Stay as little or long as you want.



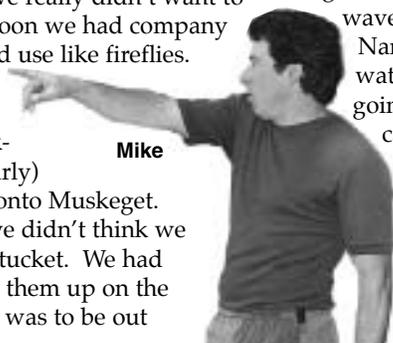
Phil Warner and Joe Dunn. - Photo by Mike Falconeri

We proceeded around Cape Poge where there is still an operating lighthouse. We stopped for lunch about a mile south. The beach was dedicated to Piping Plovers, so we didn't go far. Several times while we were eating, trucks came out onto the beach and several fisherman tried their luck. We finished eating and



pushed off around 2:00 PM. At that point the tide was slack and we wanted to make the most of it. We were headed for Muskeget Island, which we couldn't see. We set out on a heading of 142 (Mike's course verified by chart and GPS) for the 7.3 nm crossing. Halfway over, conditions started to change - the wind came back up (stern quarter) along with the current. At last, Muskeget Island came into view. I was getting tired so it was good to see. Working late the night before, driving a couple of hours, and sleeping in your car for four hours is not the best way to start a long trip. I guess if I had no sleep it could have been worse. A little way offshore, Mike spotted a shoal where there appeared to be a rock pile covered with seals - there were possibly 300. We drifted slowly by so we wouldn't disturb them and continued on. There were several large bulls that we really didn't want to disturb. Pretty soon we had company with seals around use like fireflies.

It was getting dark (heavy cloud cover darkened the skies early) when we rolled onto Muskeget. After 21 miles, we didn't think we could make Nantucket. We had our tents and set them up on the beach. Our plan was to be out



Mike

early the next morning, leaving only keel prints. As we unpacked, the seals came in very close - just about to the water's edge. They would snort and torpedo down, parallel to the beach. Joe said several followed him as he walked down and back up the beach. After dinner, prepared by the island's temporary chefs, we watched the sunset through the base of the clouds. With only the sea, sky, sand, and seals, I think each of us felt like the only humans on the planet. Very relaxing.

I faded early, but Mike and Joe watched the Red Sox and Yankees game on a Watchman Mike had brought along (no wonder why his boat was so heavy - he said it was the paint job). During the night the wind built to about 30. At one point, one of my stakes let go, but at first I thought a seal had come ashore and was laying down next to my tent. I pushed on the fabric and it really felt like there was a presence there. The morning light brought calmer winds. At day break, there were whitecaps everywhere, but by the time we launched, things had settled down. The day's objective was Nantucket - approximately another 14 miles. We were going to pass Tuckernuck Island on the way. As we paddled out, we were again escorted by our friends who once again greeted us in the morning at the water's edge. In the shallow water we watched them glide below our hulls.

For most of the way to Tuckernuck, we were paddling over shoals. Most of the way we could see the bottom at six to eight feet. It was at that point that Joe pointed out to me how lobster men tell that their pots are full. "Look at the way that buoy is leaning over - that one is really full". Apparently many were quite full as I noted that they were all tipping over toward us. After noting the lobster pots, we began to feel like we were paddling against a light current. The wind was at our backs so it didn't feel like much. However, as we rounded Eel Point, life became a little more interesting. The wind had started to build along with the seas. Pretty soon we were paddling in three to five foot waves. We paddled against a stronger current, surfing down waves on our way to the jetty to Nantucket Harbor. I was watching a water tower that didn't seem to be going anywhere. When I missed catching a wave, it seemed as though I lost distance. The water tower never seemed to move. Occasionally, I would catch a big wave and it seemed as though I rode it forever (somewhat out of control). My Nordkapp liked

setting its own course on those waves. It looked like Mike and Joe weren't even paddling - they were just ruddering, catching every wave. At one point, Joe paddled back and asked me if I needed a candy bar. I told him there was no problem with energy, just speed - I wasn't catching the waves as well as they were. At last, the jetty was reached, just in time to encounter the high speed ferry. At that point the wind was pushing us through the jetty and into oncoming traffic out of the harbor.

I thought paddling would be a little easier as we entered the harbor; however, we had a beam wind a little off the bow. We stopped to talk to those on a boat at anchor and noticed a coast guard cutter coming in. We wondered if they had been watching us and if so, for how long. We paddled around Brant Point past a large crowd on the beach waiting for something as we made our way into the inner harbor. Immediately south of the ferry pier there is a small sandy beach. Just up from the beach are pay phones. While we went in to purchase our tickets for the ferry ride back to Hyannis, one of the ferry personnel offered to watch our boats. That was a friendly welcome into Nantucket.

I'd like to return by ferry this fall during low season and explore the island over a weekend and camp out in a bed and breakfast. Passage on the ferry (one way) is \$11 and boats are \$5.

- Phil Warner

Dear Members of ConnYak

After reading Jim Mathews "Don't Let Yourself Be The Last One" in the June newsletter, I felt compelled to write this letter. Jim's article is certainly "eye opening" and right on target. It also raises some issues that I feel need to be brought up.

When I first got into the sport of sea kayaking I didn't know anyone who paddled and I wanted to join a club, or somehow get connected with other area paddlers. My primary reasons were (and still are) to meet other paddlers, learn about kayak safety, improve my paddling skills and have fun. Having grown up on boats I already had an appreciation for the potential dangers of any water sport and the need to learn all I could about paddling safely. This not only includes learning self and group rescue techniques, but using good judgement, understanding your limitations and developing an awareness of the surroundings and conditions.

Another unexpected, but beneficial area of learning, was learning group dynamics and how they relate to paddling. I nor-

mally paddle alone, so I always look forward to the occasions when I can hook up with other paddlers. While I have never been involved with anything like the paddle of April 25th, I have observed many minor, but very important issues, which always seem prevalent at our group paddles. Our paddle meetings are (and should remain) casual and fun, but there is always the question of responsibility. Who is in charge at these paddles? Who is responsible for keeping things organized, cohesive and safe? Who is liable, should someone get injured? Who should enforce the requirements stated in each newsletter regarding the use of spray skirts, PFD's and "being dressed for immersion", etc.? I believe each person should be responsible. According to the same statement, individuals are responsible for their own safety. Is this really the case? In my opinion? YES. At the same time, however, by virtue of paddling in a group, we in turn have a responsibility to that group and its members. What does this mean?

While paddling with a group, stay with the group. As in any group activity, there will always be diversity in the skill and ability levels of its members. If a decision is made to split the group, which often happens, stay with the group that best suits your skills. If you wish to be challenged and try paddling with the more adventurous, that is fine and part of learning, but let the group know how you feel about it and be willing to listen to others for instruction and advice.

Remember, you can only travel as fast as the slowest paddler in the group. If the group wishes to split into "fast and slow" groups, that is fine too, but discuss it and agree on set rendezvous points and wait for the group to re-form, before moving on. Good communication is vital to the success of any group activity. If you decide you want to split off from the group you're in and do your own thing, or return to the launching area, let everyone know, so people don't worry about you.

Be responsible. If you show up to paddle, have all your gear in order and follow the ConnYak guidelines regarding PFD's, spray skirts, etc. When you are not prepared you can place yourself in danger, as well as other members of the group. If you show up unprepared at a group paddle, be ready to be told "Sorry, but you do not have the required equipment", or some such thing. Please do not take it personally, or think that some paddlers are being arrogant or stuffy. It is for your own and the groups protection against disaster. Likewise, to those who are prepared, do not be afraid to tell someone they cannot

go, or hesitate to help a prepared paddler, who is not as skilled or is having difficulty. Most importantly, be prepared to have a good time and meet some great people! The ConnYak general monthly paddle sessions should be set in areas that accommodate paddlers of all abilities. These are great times to meet other paddlers with similar abilities as your own, as well as better paddlers who are generally willing to help you improve your skills. It really is quite a sight to see 20 or 30 kayaks cutting through the water! You can then arrange to meet your new paddling buddies at a time and place of your choosing to do the types of trips you enjoy. Before we embark on any group paddle we should all discuss the proposed route, time and distance to be covered and options so everyone knows what's going on.

I believe that paddlers must take responsibility for themselves. If you are just getting into the sport, take lessons (there are many good sources in our area). Regularly practice what you learn. Learn the rules of navigation. Learn about tides, winds and currents and how they affect your craft. Know what your average maintainable speed is. Do not expect that someone will be there for you in a time of need. Be prepared for any and all possibilities. These are the responsible things to do, whether you paddle solo, or with a group. Most capsizes seem to happen on the calmest of days... reaching for your water bottle, looking back to measure your progress, fussing around with some item or another. At least that is generally how I end up capsizing (frequently, too!)

Just to let you all know, I am not an expert paddler or skilled trip leader. These are just some personal observations I felt warranted discussion. To me, these things seem to be common sense, but I welcome any additional advice or corrections to information I have written here. I always have an open mind to new or better ideas. If there are any other thoughts, our newsletter is a good place to communicate them to our group. Paddling together safely and having fun is what it is all about. Lets all work together to keep our club what is started out to be; a place where people can meet, learn, paddle, develop friendships and have fun! My hat is off to you, Jim, for having the presence of mind to look back and assist a fellow paddler and then writing about it so we could all learn from it!

See you all out there!
Sincerely,, Peter Hull

EVENTS

ANTIQUE BOAT PARADE

SUNDAY JULY 26 - MYSTIC

In the water by 10:00. We visit the old boats and paddle the loop out the Mystic river and have lunch at the mouth of the river. If we want, we can watch the parade from along the river.
Jay Babina 203-481-3221

DIRECTIONS -

Go past Mystic Seaport on the right. Take your first right on Isham Street. Launch is at the end of the street. Street parking is available.

PADDLING ON CALL

I paddle every weekend, both days and during the week. If you need a partner or want to join in - just call.
Jay Babina 203-481-3221

BASIC KAYAKING & ROLLING

July 14- Basic Kayaking, July 28- Rolling at Wallingford Outdoor Pool

Instructors Cherri Perry, Cheryl Hensel and Beth McCabe. For course information call - The Kayaking Company 203-265-4147

Note: All paddlers on ConnYak trips must wear the appropriate CG approved Personal Flotation Device and wear a spray skirt. The boat and equipment must meet CG requirements, including an appropriate signaling device. All paddlers are responsible for their own safety, including dressing for immersion. Beginners must have taken a basic course and be proficient in performing a wet exit. (always carry extra dry clothes)

Trip Cancellations - In doubt due to weather? call 203-481-1881 - a message will be on answer machine.

CLASSIFIED

Feathercraft K1 Expedition Single (foldable kayak) 15' 11" x 25", sea sock, spray skirt, color teal, 1996 costs \$ 3850.00 sacrifice \$3500.00. Never in the water. 203-772-3174.

Necky Tesla, Kevlar. 17 ft X 24", 45 lb. Teal Deck, white hull. \$1650 or BO. 860-693-8205

Kokatat Drysuit, men's large \$225, Cricket Greenland paddle - \$150 - 401-596-4482

2 Woman's Kokatat drysuits, med & small - Bib style, boots incl. New \$275. 860-693-9625

Women's feet heaters, size 5 -\$15. Women's wet suit, sm. farmer John & Jacket \$100. 203-481-1912

Toksook Paddle - two piece - carbon fiber Ex. cond. \$230.00. 860-529-4612

Arluk II, Kevlar, 18 ft x 22", 45 lbs, rudder. Teal. \$1500. 860-521-9054.

Keowee - 10 ft. x 26", spray skirt & Paddle \$325. 860-793-1285

Aquaterra Spectrum, 15' x 25", Rudder, skirt - Red - \$450. 860-673-4736

Wilderness Systems Sparrow Hawk- fiberglass, includes day hatch, pump, skirt, paddles. \$1100. 203-263-3437

Wanted - P & H Series -low volume or Romany 16' 860-278-7440

Wilderness Systems soltice ST, with Compass \$1995. firm. Other items avail. 401-596-4482

CONNYPAK WEBSITE

www.mindspring.com/~connyak

MORE T-SHIRTS HAVE ARRIVED

If you missed out on the first batch, a new order has arrived. Cost to members is \$6. ea. - our cost. They will be at the party and at various paddles etc.

CONNYPAK PARTY & PADDLE

Sunday, July 19, West Hill Pond - New Hartford, CT - 12 noon on.

Paddling and eating at Lind Ivany's cottage on the lake. Stay as long as you want. Bring your own beverages and anything special you want to eat. There will be food there as well as a gas grill.

Wanted, used double Kayak Call 203-426-2414

Please contact the Newsletter when items are sold.

Send newsletter articles or classifieds to:

Jay Babina e-mail Jbabina@snet.net
7 Jeffrey Lane, N. Branford, CT 06471
203-481-3221 Fax 203-481-1136

KAYAK SKILLS & ROLLING

Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri

Skills Workshops and Eskimo Rolling throughout July and Summer.

Classes and trips by appointment. call Mike at 203-284-9212.

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. Members can join the ACA through the club for \$15 which entitles you to full insurance coverage on trips as well as a full subscription to PADDLER Magazine. (a \$15 subscription) Send inquiries to: Stan Kegeles P.O. Box 2006, Branford, CT 06405 e-mail Connyak@mindspring.com Website: mindspring.com/~connyak



ConnYak
CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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