



PADDLING WITH JOSH AND NOAH

BY CHERI PERRY

I had just finished a busy kayak season as a guide, and felt a desire to get re-acquainted with my son and rekindle my exuberance for Mother Nature. My son had spent the summer in a cast and was deprived of most activities. After working as a guide all summer as well as my "real" job, I really needed to reorganize myself and spend some time outside. I needed one of those trips - one of those back to nature trips. No telephones, just peace and quiet, digging bare toes into the sand, feeling the unmowed grass tickle your arms as you relax onto the earth. . .ahhhh. So when I suggested a weekend kayak trip with Kirk and Noah, Josh was all smiles.

Columbus Day Weekend ended up being warm and sunny which was

GREAT! - since the plans included two kids, Noah age 10 and my son Josh, age 11. In addition, there was my friend Kirk, Noah's dad, whose outdoor experience is extensive, but kayaking experience is limited to one afternoon of paddling two years ago. We planned to put in at Salmon River

had a creeping feeling that our back to nature excursion was in jeopardy.

Bright sun and boat wakes accompanied us downstream. The boys adapted quickly to the barrage of power boats. Boat wakes are quite a bit of fun! First, they pointed their bows into the wakes and paddled



Josh

Boat Ramp on the Connecticut River paddle to Selden Island and camp out. The next day we would paddle to our takeout at the ferry landing in Chester.

Sunday morning was chilly, and with our mittens on, we packed up our boats and donned our wetsuits. I was surprised at the amount of power boat traffic in the ramp area, this late in the season. As I took note of the constant parade of power boats being continuously deposited on the river, I

hard so when the wake hit, it threw their bows into the air and came slapping down with a hard slam! Next they tried to surf them, paddling hard down the wave face at just the right time which either gave them a little ride or caused them to broach, all quite fun! Kirk and I liked the reflective action of the waves hitting the cliffs and bouncing back, sometimes combining with an oncoming wave for a great mix of irregular waves. We paddled by the Goodspeed Opera House and watched folks fishing from the banks of the river. Josh has become quite a good paddler but I'm not quite sure how. He hasn't paddled a whole lot. I've decided it's through osmosis. He's been in a boat since the age of three, and always hung around while I've learned and taught. We've made up games like kayak tag which sharpens skills quickly and are a lot of fun. While it was Noah's first paddling adventure, what he lacked in



Noah

experience he made up for in exuberance. He was always ready to learn the next thing and didn't whine when he got tired.

The bright sun made us warm and Josh being the "show-off" that he is, decided to splash his buddy, and then dart away. Noah got soaked. Kirk and I decided that retribution was in order, and we chased Josh down. Although he didn't give in without a fight, Josh got a good dousing.

We stopped at Gillette's Castle for lunch and enjoyed the accommodations. A great sandy landing place, picnic tables, even an outhouse. After lunch we shoved off for Selden Island. We decided to camp on the creek side of the island because of the sheer number of power boats in the area. The downfall of this decision was the dropping tide. When we finally choose a suitable area, we were already up to our elbows in mud due to the lack of water in the creek. There's something about kids and mud. As soon as you say "don't get in the mud", they look up at you, knee deep and say "What?"

Leaving our boats in a mud flat, we scouted around for a nice flat camp spot. We found one on top of a hill. We ventured back to pry our gear out of the mud laden boats. Unfortunately, just getting the gear out, wasn't the only challenge. Trying to go up the hill with our muddy booties on and an armful of gear was, well, . . . *trying*. The funny part was when you slipped and fell, the drybag that was dropped in the fall, rolled . . . ever so predictably down the hill, off a little cliff and, flew into the air and landed PLOP! into the mud, about 15 feet from shore. . . There was one second

of silence, then shouts of "I'll get it" as both boys, eager for an excuse to wallow, headed for the bag. I couldn't even watch as the boys clamored about retrieving the bag, the best thing to do was walk away laughing. By the time we were set up.... MUD! MUD! MUD! The payoff- peace and quiet, with no other boaters around, I wonder why?

The following morning we arose to a higher tide. We packed our gear and followed the small stream back out to Selden Creek, we caught the outgoing tide and rejoined the Connecticut River. We took a break on the bank and waited for the tide to turn. Paddling with children you take all the free rides you can get! Plus there was a lot of sand for castles and moats - and no mud.



In front of the train bridge at Gillette's Castle

We got back on the water and began to paddle upstream with the tide, making a complete circumnavigation of Selden Island. On our way to the take-out we passed a huge cabin cruiser docked at a newly built waterfront property. I saw Josh look-

ing at it with envy, his arms having long since grown heavy with paddling. He said "I wish we had that boat"

"Why?" I asked.

"They have a radio"

"I have one, too."

"They have a bed in there."

"I've got one in my boat too."

"No, you don't... Oh yeahour sleeping bags"

"Well, they have a stove."

"I've got one, too."

"Bet they have a refrigerator?"

"The bottom of my boat is pretty cold, besides I know that boat costs a lot of money, and needs gas all the time and we never run out of gas."

"Yeah. . . and they can't get their boat into all the neat places that we can fit ours into."

We surfed our boats onto a big mud flat, ONLY about 50 feet of mud, glorious, gooey, sticky mud between us and the car. What a fitting end to the trip.

Well, it was nice to spend time with my son and our friends ...the trip was memorable and fun. It was obvious to all who saw us that we had spent the weekend well immersed in Mother Nature for she left her brown traces all over us.

Cheri Perry is part owner of The Sea Kayaking Company in Wallingford along with Cheryl Hensel and Beth McCabe. 203-265-4147. The Sea Kayaking Company is in its third year of business and offers guided trips and instruction to adults as well as children with their fleet of kayaks. Cheri has been teaching and guiding for 6 years, holds a level two BCU Coach Award. Favorite places to paddle include Maine's Casco Bay area, the boundary lakes, and Lake Powell in Utah.

NOTES FROM THE MEETING - CON-NYAK AND THE ACA

The complications of the dues form, the extra cost and the bookwork has caused us to re-examine the issue of belonging to the ACA. We have been looking into the possibility of an insurance writer for group leaders or just not with dealing with the

insurance issue at all. Most of our neighboring clubs have no insurance and therefore charge a lot less for dues. Since we are non-profit and run a club based on the desire to have fun and networking between paddlers, the ACA affiliation is in question. If we drop it, we will forward the money towards next year's dues for each member. We can also reimburse

the money to anyone who wants it. Then we can drop our annual dues to \$20 and still have a newsletter and some surplus money for additional expenses.

We need your opinion. If you don't care, that's fine, but eventually we will bring it up to the floor at a meeting and vote on it. Call, write or e-mail if you have an opinion on this.



CONNYAK T-SHIRTS ARE "IN"

ConnYak T-shirts are available and should be in stock by mid-March. They come in one color - a stunning dark blue with an off-white logo. These are 100% cotton, and available in medium, large and ex-large. They're pre-shrunk which really means they're only supposed to shrink a little. They will be at all the meetings, club paddles and maby the pool sessions and sold to members for (our cost) \$6. (who said there's no member benefits?) We will also sell them at our table at the various demo-sales to non-members for \$10.

WHERE'S MY DUES FORM?

You'll notice that your mailing label now has the month that you need to send in your dues. The Jan. issue of the newsletter had the form printed on the entire page 3 with a bold headline stating to save it. If you don't have it, contact us and we'll get one to you. We are trying to make things as easy as possible with the bookwork it takes to run the club.

TENTATIVE TRIP SCHEDULE

April-

Barn Island - Dick Gamble
Bluff Point - Jay Babina

May-

Selden Isl. Camping - Dave Hiscocks

June-

June-6 -Ct River- Clark Bowlen
Clinton Beach - Peter Hull

July-

July 5, Cobscook Bay - Clark Bowlen
Mystic - Jay Babina

August-

Full Moon Paddle - Doug Murry
Milford Harbor - Clay Luce

September-

Norwalk Islands with MASK

October-

Bluff Point - Jay Babina

If you would like to organize a trip please speak up. Trips will usually run themselves and the decisions are democratic. You don't have to feel a sense of responsibility or expertise, especially if you keep trips to the conservative side. We are sharing an afternoon with friends, doing what we like to do. If you want to do a challenging trip, pick your friends or qualify the group.

YOUR ACA BILL?

You may receive an invoice from the ACA asking for \$15 to renew your membership. Disregard it. If we stay in the ACA, ConnYak sends in the \$15. for each member which is part of your \$30 dues. If we drop our affiliation with the ACA, you can send in \$15 with that form to the ACA if you want to remain a member.

CANOE & KAYAK EXPO SMALL BOAT SHOP

Saturday and Sunday, March 7 & 8

Indoor paddle expo featuring canoes and kayaks from all major brands and accessories on sale. Location - National Guard Armory in Norwalk.

Also Sat., March 21, Cold Water clinic to be held at The Small Boat Shop. Lecture, demos & dry suit trials.

Call for further info. 203-854-5223

INTRO TO MOVING WATER

Sat. June 6., - Connecticut River

Learn how to play the tidal currents. We'll practice eddy turns, ferries, and other moving water techniques on the Connecticut River below the King's Island state launch ramp. R. with leader, Clark Bowlen. 860-623-6587

Note: no fee - this is a group instructional paddle.

COBSCOOK BAY ENCAMPMENT

Monday July 5 - Friday July 10 - Maine

We will sea kayak from shore-side campsites at Cobscook Bay State Park, which combines a near wilderness setting with the most interesting tidal water on the Atlantic coast. See Tamsin Venn's article in the August '96 *Atlantic Coastal Kayaker*. A low-key, share-the-chores and decisions trip predicated on intermediate sea kayaking skills. Come for as many or as few days as you wish. Wet or dry suit mandatory. For information, registration call Clark Bowlen, 860-623-6587

CONNYAK POOL SESSIONS

SUNDAYS, MARCH 1, 8, 15
SHEEHAN HIGH - WALLINGFORD

The fee is \$20 for each session or \$50 for all three. Please bring checks made to "ConnYak".

DIRECTIONS -

Exit 15 Rt. 91. Rt 68 W. past intersections of Rt 15 & Rt 150. Continue on Rt 68 and take the fourth left on to Hope Hill Road which is at the light. Sheehan High School is 1/4 mile on the Rt.

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. (always carry extra dry clothes)

CLASSIFIED

Wanted: Betsey Bay Recluse, glass or wood. 203-269-0569

Werner Camino paddle. 1 pc. 80° feathered - \$ 50. 203-481-3221

Thule Rack System: Racks, adapter kit, & mounts - \$90.00 (new: \$220.00) Thule Accessories \$45.00 each: Kayak saddles, Windsurf saddles, Bicycle carrier, Ski Racks. (203) 486-5934 during the day or email: inukshuk@mindspring.com

Wanted: Inexpensive used sea kayak for adolescent - 860-693-0211

Dagger Apostle for sale. 17' X 24" with rudder. Used half a season. \$850. In Fairfield - 203-256-1913

Necky Tesla, Kevlar. 17 ft X 24", 45 lb. expedition equipped, rudder, hatches, bulkheads, seat upgrade. Teal Deck, white hull. \$1650 or BO. 860-693-8205

ConnYak classifieds are free.

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

NEXT CONNYAK MEETING

WED. MARCH 18 - 7:30 PM
WALLINGFORD PARK & REC.

Discussions on Insurance, Trips, the ACA and Group leader liability.

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). Take your first Rt. off Barnes on to Fairfield Blvd.
Wallingford Park & Rec. is the 2nd building on the left.

SELLING A KAYAK?

Terry Harlow is going to the symposium in Charleston in April. He has room on his trailer for anybody's kayak for sale. Commission is 15%. \$50 if it has to be brought back.

Last year all boats were sold at the symposium. 860-659-1223

KAYAK SKILLS & ROLLING

Urban Eskimo Kayaking - Mike Falconeri
Skills Workshop, Sat., March 21
Eskimo Rolling, Sun., March 22

Classes held at Sheehan High School Pool in Wallingford. Call Wallingford Park & Rec 203-294-2120 or 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 fees are \$30. Members are automatically joined into the membership of the ACA 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
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CONNECTICUT SEA KAYAKERS

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