

Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 2
November 1993



Hello! We have had an eventful late summer and fall season. Thanks go to **Chris Robinson** for organizing a fun trip to Mooselookmeguntic Lake; to **Lee Bumsted** for being the only SMSKN member to join MITA in cleaning up Muscongus Bay Islands, including our adopted island, Crow; to **Jeff Wescott** for the Equinox paddle; to **Tom Bergh** for entertaining us with beautiful slides of our Maine coast; to **Daryl Kelley** for an informative evening on boat repairs and prep for winter storage; and to **Wayland Linscott** for joining the Board of Directors as a Member at Large.

Some of us are still paddling and may continue to through the winter. Due to more extreme weather conditions it is difficult to plan in advance. Therefore to allow for more spontaneous networking, the **Newsline** will be set up in a way that will allow members to call in on short notice and leave a message which can be retrieved immediately by other members. Specific instructions are given on the membership roster. I hope this will help the Newsline to function more like a **Hotline**.

We have membership meetings scheduled each month throughout the winter; three slide shows and an informative talk on wilderness medicine. Also, a **Holiday Party/Potluck** will be happening in December. We hope to see you at some of these events. See "What's Happening".

Happy and safe paddling!

Barbara



March Newsletter

Deadline for entries will be March 1.

Please send kayak related stories, articles, book reviews, jokes, cartoons, artwork, and classified to: B. Carter, 7 Gilbert Lane, Portland, ME 04101

Classifieds

Classified ads are free to members.

FOR SALE: 2-PERSON GERRY TENT- A Frame Back Packing Tent with rain-fly, no-see-um netting on door and window. Packed size: 15" x 9". Excellent condition. \$49. Call Bill Ridlon, 799 - 5161, after 5 PM.

LOOKING FOR "SEA KAYAKER MAGAZINE" Volume 1, #1. Call Daryl, 345 - 9844.

PADDLING TALES

The Magic of Phosphorescence

Jeff Wescott

For those of you needing an excuse to paddle at night, phosphorescence is a great one, especially if you can catch it as bright as a group of us did one night in September. Five of us set out from East End Beach at 8 PM to go out through Whitehead Passage, up the outside of Peaks and around Long Island, then a long straight shot back to Portland.

We experienced some rain as we surfed in the darkness, and then everything started glowing. We could see the golden glow of fish as they swam underneath us. Our paddles went through the water like magic wands leaving trails of glittering bubbles. Even our hands picking up a cupful of water would set off the organisms glowing as though we had a miracle in our touch. None of us had ever seen it so bright before. It seemed to be concentrated in a small area, and we were sorry when we had to paddle on and leave the magic behind.

Now we could have come up with a good list of excuses to not go out that night, but it turned out to be one of my best experiences on the water in a long time. So, any opportunity to paddle should be jumped at because you never know what fun might happen to you.

Phosphorescence - A chemical reaction of enzymes in floating organisms that creates light as a defense mechanism similar to a firefly.

Mooselookmeguntic Lake

Fred Wilson

On August 27th seven members of SMSKN went to Mooselookmeguntic Lake just west of Rangeley. We camped two nights on Students Island which is a short paddle from the put-in at the Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve. From our sites we had a wonderful view of the lake, the surrounding mountains, the sunset and a brilliant waxing gibbous moon. On Saturday, after a brief morning shower, some of us paddled across the lake to explore the dam that feeds Richardson Lake from Mooselookmeguntic. Some serious salmon fishing was going on there. Along the way we saw some of the loons we had listened to calling out in the night.

We later met up with the rest of the group for lunch and a swim, and then headed for the northern part of the lake to scout out camping sites for future trips to the area. On the way back to Students we caught the prevailing west winds howling across the lake challenging each of us to stay upright and on course through choppy whitecaps. Our neighbors on sailboards seemed to be having a lot more fun as they flew off the crests of the waves and zigzagged between us.

Saturday night after dinner, we gathered around a campfire and confabulated about kicking up our heels with Olive (the reservation mistress of the preserve) seeking the excitement of Rangeley nightlife. Unfortunately we were all too tired, and the loons were calling us to slumber.

Sunday morning dawned bright, and we leisurely broke camp and returned to the put-in to lighten our loads for an hour of rescue practice. The water was warm and it felt good to splash and play. That afternoon some of us did an excursion around Toothacher Island, the largest island on the lake. Although there are summer homes on Toothacher, there are three secluded camp sites on the west shore. By late afternoon we were all ready to depart, tired and with varying degrees of sunburn. However, before leaving, we were sure to make reservations with Olive for our return next year.

Knubble Bay with the Appalachian Mountain Club

Bill Ridlon

On the weekend of October 16-17 three SMSKN members joined the Appalachian Mountain Club at the AMC's Knubble Bay camp on Georgetown Island (Southeast of Bath) for two days of Autumn kayaking. Through Friday night and early Saturday morning approximately 35 kayakers arrived for the weekend. Some stayed in the cabin and others tented in the surrounding woods.

After Saturday breakfast we split into two groups. After a paddle meeting to discuss the route, weather, water, and conditions, the advanced paddlers started out into Knubble Bay. The group totaled 21 including two leaders and two sweeps. Our first challenge came early as we planned to go through Goose Rock Passage against the tide. Some made it through the passage quickly and easily while others were caught in the current for almost 20 minutes. Eventually all made it through and we continued on to the northern tip of Barters Island in the Sheepscot River.

Lunch was on a tiny unnamed island at high tide with nowhere to sit but in the weeds. We were assured by our trip leader, Al Hansen, that it was a very nice island with plenty of rocks to sun on at mid-tide or below. Several kayakers made a note concerning islands to avoid. The return trip through Goose Rock Passage was also against the tide but as everyone was now experienced it was a much smoother trip.

We had an excellent meal that evening complements of Frank Stockwell and then told stories around the campfire.

Sunday dawned much as Saturday had: gray and overcast but at least not raining. After a hearty breakfast nineteen paddlers headed north through Knubble Bay and up to Lower Hell Gate by the north end of Beal Island, a MITA island owned by the AMC. From a distance of about 100 yards Lower Hell Gate looked very much like class III+ whitewater. We chose to go around it. We continued into Hockomock Bay and then traveled up into the entrance of Montsweag Bay before turning around and paddling to another MITA island, Erratic Island, for lunch. As the MITA guidebook mentions, Erratic has room for only one tent but is a very pretty island.

We returned to our put-in in Knubble Bay by way of the western shore of Beal Island, a pretty paddle in October. Within 15 minutes of bringing the kayaks onto the shore it began to rain, so we loaded the boats onto cars and trucks, cleaned the camp, and headed home.

What's Happening ?

Call the Newsline 24 hrs. for updates

*** 874 - 2640 ***

Sundays, December - March, 10 AM - Noon

POOL SESSIONS AT THE YWCA, Practice paddling/rescue/rolling skills

Sunday, December 5, 6:30 PM L.L. Bean Discovery Room in Freeport

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

KAYAKING IN BELIZE, Slide show given by Ted Myers

Friday, December 10, 7 PM, Contact Mike or Mark, 865 - 9558

HOLIDAY POTLUCK in Freeport (directions on Newsline)

Tuesday, January 18, 6:30 PM L.L. Bean Discovery Room in Freeport

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

PADDLING THE EASTERN SHORE OF NOVA SCOTIA, Slide show by Mike Perry

Thursday, March 10, 6 PM at Norumbega Outfitters

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

KAYAKING LABRADOR AND NEWFOUNDLAND, Slide show by Dee Kimball

new location

58 Free ST



Pool Sessions

Last winter our pool sessions at the Y were quite successful. Members commented that they learned a lot from each other and had fun as well. We have reserved the pool this winter two Sundays each month from December through March from 10AM to Noon. We ask that you sign up and pay in advance. A session will be considered full when 8 people have registered. The cost will be \$8. per person for two hours of pool time. There will be no instructors, so those of you who sign up are on your own to work together in sharing your knowledge and skills.

Tom Dougherty, Director of Recreation at the YWCA, is enthusiastic about kayakers using the pool. The pool is easily accessible; a car can pull right up to the door into the pool area. There is room for 3 or 4 sea kayaks and 2 or 3 river kayaks in the pool at one time. Feel free to call Tom directly and set up pool time yourself, 874-1130.

-----Tear-off Pool Session Registration-----

Please send check for **\$8. per session** to **Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network.**

Mail to : B.Carter, 7 Gilbert Lane, Portland, ME 04101. The first 8 to register for each session will be notified and given the names of others in their session to enable them to plan as a group. Those over and above the first 8 for each session will be notified and offered alternate dates or money will be refunded.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Please indicate which session(s) you are interested in.

December 5 December 19 January 9 January 23
 February 13 February 27 March 13 March 27

Indicate skill level: Can do wet exit, self rescue, assisted re-entry, group rescue, Eskimo roll

Comments:

Letter to the Editor

Much has been written about the issue of paddling safety, in fact the sea kayaking literature is replete with it. This network went through a fair amount of collective soul-searching about how to promote safety on the water both as a liability issue and as a learning process. We publish a list of recommended equipment as well as a release form with every issue. This organization has been in existence for over one year and yet, I feel that as a group we have failed to implement the second most important kayak safety measure of all (the most important being cautious judgement, which we appear pretty good at).

Last summer, we celebrated our first year with a party and (what else?) a short day trip. The trip started off with a bang. The beginner wasted no time finding out how much he could lean his boat until it would tip over. The rescue went classically, the paddler didn't have time to get cold and we all set off to circumnavigate Orrs Island. As it became obvious that there were going to be people who were going to have different comfortable paddling speeds, we split the group into two, rendezvoused at the designated snack area and split up again.

Shortly thereafter, the day being hot, I decided that it would be nice to get wet and cool off. Normally I roll in a situation like that (it's one of the most practical reasons I know for practicing your roll) but since we were in a group, I asked if anyone would do a rescue with me if I wet-exited to cool off. The silence was deafening. A quick bit of inquiry revealed that there was no one in the group who felt comfortable doing a deep water rescue even though the wind and water were almost flat calm. I finally persuaded one of the more experienced paddlers in the group to be the rescuer if I promised to coach him through the procedure.

Now I am by no means a threatening person. I am certainly less threatening than having to deal with someone who capsizes and really needs rescuing. I must assume, therefore, that the people I was paddling with were genuinely apprehensive about their rescue skills. We later found out that two paddlers who had gotten behind the rest of the group had experienced an equipment failure, and although they made it back safely (in fact they hove into sight just at the time I was thinking about going to look for them) one of them was quite upset about having been left behind.

Now that I've rambled on for four paragraphs, here's the point. If nobody in the group can perform a deep water rescue in conditions as benign as they were on that summer day in Harpswell, paddling in a group provides a false sense of security that could have deadly consequences. What, in fact, is the point of paddling in a group if nobody in the group can put a capsize victim back into their kayak? Is the group supposed to split up and half go for help while the other half provide cold comfort until help arrives or the victim succumbs? Or should we stand by and cheer while the victim tries to figure out a paddle float rescue?

What if the two paddlers who had had trouble were still with the rest of the group when the equipment failure occurred? Would anyone have been able to help? Did anyone besides me have a tow line which they were prepared to use? What if the equipment failure had caused the paddler to capsize and I had not found out that morning that I could go paddling that day? I have always thought that there could be no more horrible way to die than to drown all alone. Now I realize that it must be even more horrible to drown while your friend watch helplessly.

Do you really want to paddle safely as a group? Learn to do deep water rescues. Go to the pool this winter and rescue each other until you can do it in your sleep, not just once or twice. Learn to let each other into the water without capsizing (it is the same as a rescue, only backwards). Learn to direct the rescue while you are the victim. It's easy. It's fun. Then go out and practice it in real life. It will add to your confidence when planning a trip and increase the range of conditions you will be able to paddle in if you know that the group has solid rescue skills to use if necessary. The deep water rescue is as basic to sea kayaking safety as the roll is in whitewater kayaking. (Yes, I think you should learn to roll too, but you should be able to put someone back into their boat when they blow their roll.) Without group rescues you might as well be paddling solo. As a matter of fact, you are paddling solo.

Jon Cons

Surf: Waves steepen and break on beaches and shoals. Generally, try to avoid landing in surf with a loaded kayak. Avoid surf on rocky beaches.

Headlands: Conditions are frequently more difficult off headlands with increased wind (funneling), accelerated current and re-bound waves. Seas become chaotic.

Cliffs: Cliffs limit landing sites and can cause chaotic rebound wave conditions.

River mouths: Difficult wave conditions occur when a river outflow runs against the waves.

PEOPLE HAZARDS

Watch for power boats, ships, tugboats with barges and all other watercraft. Make yourself visible and never assume you have been seen or have the right of way.

LAKE PADDLING

With the exception of the tides, large lakes pose most of the difficulties and dangers of the sea. Waves, however, are steeper and more likely to break than on the sea.

... FINALLY

The basis of safe sea kayaking is sound judgment, self-responsibility and technical competence. Join a club, take a class, read books and/or consult local experts to learn all you need to know about the sport. Remember that where you paddle, others will follow. Leave your campsite as you would like to find it.

HAPPY PADDLING!



Trade Association of Sea Kayaking

Before You Go . . . A GUIDE TO SAFE PADDLING

We'd like to welcome you to sea kayaking with a word of caution. It can be a safe and rewarding activity if common sense prevails and certain precautions are taken. Before you put in for a day's paddle, check that you have the following:

ALWAYS TAKE:

- a kayak in good, serviceable condition, with plenty of secure buoyancy, fore and aft
- a paddle
- a spraycover that fits your boat
- a personal flotation device and whistle
- clothing suitable for the conditions
- a bailer or pump
- an accessible spare paddle, min. of 1 per group

IN ANY BUT THE MOST BENIGN CONDITIONS, ALSO CONSIDER:

- an accessible flare pack
- a flashlight, (even if you are only planning a daytime trip)
- self-rescue aids
- rain gear, and extra clothing in a waterproof bag
- a minimum of 25 feet of tow line
- charts and tide tables, current tables if appropriate
- a compass
- a knife
- matches or a lighter
- first aid kit
- a weather radio



Trade Association of Sea Kayaking

Without wishing to alarm anyone, we want to make it clear that sea kayaking is an activity that demands sound judgment and caution. This is always the case, no matter how experienced you are. Not surprisingly, your most vulnerable time is when you have most to learn, as a beginner.

Here are some basic cautions and precautions to help you through the early stages.

THE GREATEST SINGLE DANGER TO SEA KAYAKERS IS HYPOTHERMIA. COLD WATER KILLS. DRESS APPROPRIATELY. LEARN ABOUT HYPOTHERMIA.

Thoroughly familiarize yourself with your boat.

Start gradually in moderate weather, close to shore, with an experienced companion. Experiment with strong winds only when they are blowing toward shore.

Develop your paddling skills, including turning and bracing.

Learn and practice a self-rescue method appropriate for you and your boat, including deep-water re-entry.

Practice a group rescue so you can help others.

Make a habit of carrying safety equipment. It will be easier to carry your safety equipment if you keep it stored in one bag.

Leave a float plan. Let someone know where you're putting in and when and where you plan to return. Leave a full description of your car.

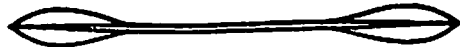
Read all you can on the subjects of sea kayaking, weather, oceanography and cold water survival.

Get a weather forecast each day you are out.

Avoid paddling alone.

Be sure you are using a boat for the purpose for which it was designed.

Like any mariner, you must know the principles of navigation and seamanship.



PRECAUTIONARY NOTES:

Make sure you are familiar with how to deal with the following situations which can occur in open water. Consult local experts or available literature for additional information on these important subjects.

A. WEATHER

1. Wind

Avoid paddling when whitecaps are visible until you thoroughly appreciate their effect. Wind can 1) upset a kayak, 2) make it difficult to turn, 3) create unmanageable waves, 4) prevent you from holding a course, and 5) slow you down or stop you.

2. Fog

Fog can result in sudden and total disorientation. You will need a compass, but you may gain some orientation from sounds of beach surf, bells, fog horns, etc., as well as from steady wave and wind direction.

B. CURRENT

You will encounter two principal types of current on the sea: reversing tidal current and continuous ocean current.

Strong current can aggravate conditions caused by adverse weather, particularly when current and wind are opposing.

They can also cause difficult eddy and wave conditions even on utterly still days, from the sheer force of the flow.

Precautions:

1. Read your chart to help identify danger points.

2. Use any available information to estimate slack or favorable current and time your passage or crossing for that period.

3. Paddle in current under controlled conditions to familiarize yourself with its effect.

4. Exercise caution when the current and wind direction oppose each other.

C. TOPOGRAPHY

Topography affects wind and water conditions in shallows, beach surf, headlands, cliffs and river mouths.

Shallows: Waves steepen and break heavily on shallows. Avoid those areas when waves are large or strong currents are forced to flow over them.

