

SOUTHERN MAINE

SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 4794 Portland, Maine 04112 January 1998

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network is an association of paddlers interested in connecting with others who enjoy the sport of sea kayaking. Our purpose is to promote safe and responsible practices and, at the same time, have fun.

**EXPAND
YOUR
KAYAKING
HORIZONS**

Notes from El Presidente

by Lee Bumsted

With the new year just underway, there's still time to formulate some kayak-specific New Year's resolutions! Perhaps you'll resolve to go on more paddling trips in 1998. Maybe you'll vow to paddle those stretches of the coast you keep missing, and meet some new paddling partners. You might decide you are finally going to practice those self-rescue skills in a warm pool. Guess what? The Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network can help you meet those resolutions!

Turn to the back page to see what's in the works for the next couple of months. We've got a wonderful slide show by noted instructor Ken Fink, a kayak repair workshop by Sandy Martin, a potluck get-together at Marcia and Bob's house, and two pool sessions coming up.

We're hoping to fill our summer calendar with plenty of kayaking events as

well. We'd like to continue our "first Sunday of the month" and Wednesday evening paddles, and schedule a full complement of day and overnight trips. These trips are coordinated by fellow network members. And there's the catch: members need to set them up. Now is a good time to start thinking about trips you'd like to coordinate. What special spots would you delight in sharing with friends from SMSKN? What trips do you remember participating in last year that you'd like to coordinate this year, so others can enjoy them the way you did?

Volunteers to lead or coordinate trips are critical to the vitality of our club. Particularly if you've been a member for a few years, consider the possibility that it's your turn to help newer members explore our coast. If you have questions about leading a trip, talk to one of the board members or someone else who has

led trips before; we can help you organize or co-lead a trip if you'd like. If you're ready to sign up to coordinate a trip, let one of the board members know where and when!

Coming up in April will be the election of new officers and members-at-large. If you'd like to volunteer to guide the network as president, secretary, treasurer, or a member-at-large, please let me know. You may nominate others as well. We will begin taking nominations at the February general meeting. Please consider contributing to the club by accepting a nomination for a one-year term. We welcome the new ideas and energy of people who have not served on the board previously.

To our members who paddle throughout the year, enjoy the rare calm, sunny days. To the rest of us, take heart, spring is just a few months away. A safe and happy new year to everyone.!

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Letter From the Editor

Seems like here in New England there is always something going on. If it isn't a great paddle out along the Maine coast it could be an ice storm in the middle of January!!!

Rather than sit home and moan about the weather, Bill and I decided to go ahead and do what we had planned for the weekend of the 10th. We headed over to Pinkham Notch, N.H. to climb Mt. Washington!!!

The trees were thick with ice...up to an inch and a half in some places. Many trees were bent over to the ground, even the tall evergreens. The Tuckerman's Ravine Trail was so strewn with branches and trees we couldn't hike it (not to mention the branches still falling!). We, instead hiked the John Sherbourne Trail up to Hermit's Lake Hut. From there we cut over to the Lion's Head winter trail. At that height, the ice was nonexistent so the branches and trees were intact with no "blow downs". The trail up from that point on was packed and a bit icy. Crampons helped us to ascend the steep places.

Did we make it to the summit??? Have *you* ever been on Mt. Washington in January? Well, we nearly got to the top of tree line. The sky, which had been blue and clear, clouded over and snow started coming down. I stopped before my brave partner did, but with the weather turning stormy, he too decided to turn around before much longer. For those who have never ventured up Washington, the weather can get dangerous quickly and it is best not to press one's luck in those conditions.

We were down in a couple of hours, but not before stopping on the ski trail just to take in the wonder of Mother Nature's winter garb. The sun was out again although it continued to snow! The ice on the trees was full of rainbow colors.

Maybe you are sitting home, waiting for a summer of paddling. I hope this newsletter will entertain and inspire you. But, maybe you are like Bill and me and have discovered there are *many* playgrounds to be explored. It's an adventure out there no matter what the season, you just need to look around and use your imagination.

Thanks to all of you who have sent in contributions to this edition, it's great to see so many of you pitching in!

Until next time.....



Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network Officers May 97-98

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The newsline is available
24 hours a day.

Call for updates on events.

Secretary's Report

by Mark Daniele

The last membership meeting was held in November at the Falmouth town library. Those attending were treated to slides and prints of kayaking exploits and coastal scenes brought in by various members. Of course snacks were consumed as well.

In December we held the holiday potluck at Mark Daniele's house in Freeport. The dish of choice seemed to be dessert, which was plentiful to the exclusion of main courses. A trip to the local Thai restaurant for take-out solved this tasty problem and dinner was followed by a PBS special on Maine lighthouses.

My Friends & I Make a Splash (a story in 4 parts)

by Todd

I was sitting around the cottage one day, sipping iced cappuccino and reading poetry, aloud, with my good friends Buffy, Brad and Tiffany.

Sometimes, when we were in particularly feisty moods, we would address Tiffany as Tiff. It was always in good fun and generally produced the most amusing reaction in Tiff (Tiffany). But here I am, just starting my story and already I digress.

So, there I was right in the middle of giving Brad a foot massage, when he looks up at me and asks "Todd, gosh hasn't it been an awfully long time since we've done something truly exciting? What say we scour our minds and see if we can come up with something really exciting to do?"

Buffy was the first to respond with, "Golly yes, capital idea."

We considered some of the things we'd done for excitement in past: birding...observing a rousing chess match...extensive debates as to which Elvis (old or young) we thought should be on the Elvis postage stamp... Well, just reciting the list was causing my heart to pound wildly as the adrenaline rose up in me.

It was just when we were close to settling on going to the park and watch them mow the grass that Tiffany (Tiff) offered a stunning suggestion.

"Let's try kayaking!"

Brad's wonderfully tanned face went instantly pale as his eyes bulged in their sockets. When his state of shock abated he finally stumbled out the words "You must be mad!! Are you suggesting we go out in those skinny little boats

which come no more than a few inches above the water? I was thinking exciting, not dangerous!"

With that, Tiff (Tiffany) produced a brochure from the paper recycling bin. It was from "The store that knows the outdoors" and had likely been sent to us because we buy so many of our clothes there. Not that I'm suggesting we buy only clothes there.

One time Buffy bought a survival knife from the "Double L" for our occasional picnics in the park. I couldn't begin to count the number of occasions that twelve inches of cold, razor-sharp steel came in handy, and of course there was the feeling of security having that compass in the handle gave us.

Sensing the danger in what Tiffany (Tiff) was suggesting, we nonetheless gathered round to inspect this glossy little packet the descendants of Leon Leonwood had gone through all this trouble to send us.

We were at once taken by the sight of some wonderful looking people, wearing designer wetsuits which accented the fine features of their slender bodies which would be no more pleasurable to gaze upon were they sculpted by an artist. One of these mariners was holding a wooden paddle which had a primitive beauty which words could not describe well enough for anybody who hadn't seen it to appreciate.

All around them were the sexiest water craft this good boy had ever seen. It seemed these boats could be had in any color of the rainbow.

I could see this sport had something for everybody. The stylish selections were enough to

satisfy a man's sensitive side, while the neoprene gave a sense of danger, appealing to that macho tinge all we real men harbor.

But there were still some very real concerns, the risk involved in being out on the water, in these unstable-looking little boats, with the salt spray mussing up my hair.

Wouldn't you know it; it was Buffy who volunteered having knowledge on the subject. She had been attracted by the sight of these people on the brochure and leafed through it before placing it in the recycling bin. She informed us of L.L. Bean having a safety instruction class for people who were interested in partaking of this glorious sport. And how about that, they were offering a class that afternoon. We promptly placed a call to our friends at the "Double L" to learn they had exactly four openings, which they would be most happy to let us have. There was just enough time for me to get on my freshly dry-cleaned outfit and head off for what promised to be a very stimulating couple of hours of class, I just hoped the classroom was well lighted and comfortable. We knew it would have a good view, as the directions they gave us were to bring us right down to the ocean.

We followed the directions, which brought us to the beach, but we were puzzled when we arrived, as there didn't appear to be a building suitable to holding a class to be seen. We did see a group of people, wearing neoprene, milling around on the beach. These people didn't look as fabulous as the ones in the brochure and certainly weren't as whole-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

somely good looking as we. There were boats lined up along the water's edge, and as with the people, they didn't resemble the brochure except for their being long skinny boats.

We walked up to the fellow who appeared to be in control of this motley group, and to the collective surprise of all of us, he turned out to be the instructor. Not only did this guy not appear to be tailored to his wet suit, his hair wasn't even permed.

We informed him that we were last minute sign-ons for his class and asked for our books as well as the break schedule.

The instructor paused for a moment as he looked us over briefly. This wasn't too much of a surprise, as we are a smart looking bunch; I was just surprised at how obvious he was about it.

After that rather embarrassing once over, he asked "Didn't they tell you to wear appropriate attire?"

With that I assumed we had embarrassed him by out-dressing him. Again, this wasn't new to us, as we generally dress better than everybody around us; it was his forwardness which seemed odd. To avoid further embarrassing him, we just told him to not worry.

Then the instruction started! NOBODY TOLD US WE'D BE GETTING WET!!!

The first thing we were expected to do was practice falling out of these wretched boats, and then use some archaic system of inflatable bag and paddle to re-enter them.

We considered dropping out right then, but figured we'd not likely get a refund on what we put up to take this course.

After all that time in the Atlantic Ocean we were so cold, except for a stop to purchase some hot chocolate, we went straight home and jumped in the Jacuzzi.

That would have been our last experience with this wretched sport, except we figured, having spent the money and time to go through the training, we should participate in it at least a little.

So, three days later we got out of the Jacuzzi, grabbed the charge card, went up to the "Double L" and for the second time ever, didn't go into the clothing section.

Several thousand dollars later, we each owned the prettiest boats we could find, with lovely wooden paddles and all the safety gear our instructor had told us we needed.

To be continued . . .

Paddling Trips to the Far North: Labrador, Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, and Iceland.

Our February slide show will be presented by Ken Fink. Here are some of his comments about his trips to the far north in the 1980's:

There is nothing like paddling terrain where trees never block your view, and there's always the chance to see wolves, caribou, polar bears, and musk oxen -- although we never saw any of these. But we did see seabirds galore, paddled with many whales, and encountered more seals than I knew existed.

These were month-long, unsupported trips in which we endured endless rain, wind, and waves and experienced bottomless hospitality. The essential difference between daytrips and an expedition, is that an expedition takes all that the ocean throws at you; you don't always have the luxury of waiting out storms.

The subboreal Northern coast is among the least-visited and wildest areas on earth. If you really want to get away from it all, consider paddling where the coast is still rising out of the sea after our last glaciation and you go to bed and wake up in the light no matter what time of day it is.

SCANDINAVIA

Sea Kayaking Expeditions

in the land of the midnight sun



1-800-572-8747

www.mcn.net/~crosslat

CROSSING LATITUDES

"The world belongs
to the energetic."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Catch from the 'Net

caught by Bill Ridlon

Twelve Signs You May Have Made A Poor Choice Selecting a Kayak Guide Service

- >12. When you bring in your trip deposit, the clerk yells, "Score!" and begins to high five co-workers.
- >11. Your guide arrives at the launch site still wearing a Pizza Hut delivery uniform.
- >10. Company policy requires you sign a new liability waiver before each meal.
- >9. Tattered PFD's have a faded Titanic logo stenciled across the back.
- >8. Self-rescue training consists of practice swimming a capsized boat to the shallows and getting back in when you can stand up.
- >7. Staff keeps referring to former clients as "the plaintiffs."
- >6. Guides insist you tow them through all open water crossings.
- >5. Leader has a blood-red tattoo with a devilish looking kayak and the motto "Born to Run Sponsons".
- >4. Staff demonstrates how to fill empty beer cans with water so they won't float and ruin the pristine view when you toss them overboard.
- >3. Guides check themselves for signs of chafing just a little too frequently.
- >2. Temperatures plummet and angry storm clouds become visible through the spray of breaking swells. You hear the trip leader mumbling, "What would the Donner Party have done on a day like this?"
- >1. The camp cook paddles by in Dalmer IV and it finally dawns on you; each kayak in the party is named after a different serial killer.

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- >Wave~Length Paddling Mailing List
 - >Submissions: wavelength@lists.intelnet.net
 - >Subscriptions: wavelength-request@lists.intelnet.net
 - >World Wide Web: <http://www.wie.com/~wavenet/>
-

Sea Kayaker's Deep Trouble

a book review by Bill Ridlon

Deep Trouble, by Matt Broze and George Gronseth, is the book to read after you're fully immersed into the thrill, joy, and wonder of sea kayaking. It will definitely provide some sobering thoughts to offset the memories of gentle seas and warm breezes.

It's a book of true stories of kayakers in trouble. The truly sobering thought is that many of the incidents could happen to any of us if we're not careful, observant, and prepared.

The real value of the book, though, is the many "lessons learned" from these incidents. Fortunately, for most of us, the stories you read here have happened to others, not us. Thus, we have the benefit of also reading about what the participants should have done so that if we are in, or about to be in, a similar situation, we can react differently and have a better outcome.

The various stories and incidents take place in the seas off Washington state, Vancouver, Alaska, New York City, and San Francisco. There is some comfort in the fact that all of the incidents have been far from here although we have had our share of "deep trouble" here in Maine as well. "Our" incidents can be read about in "Atlantic Coastal Kayaker."

My recommendation? Buy the book, read it, and reread it every spring before starting a new season.



Nominations

FOR OFFICERS ARE NEEDED

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING AS
PRESIDENT, TREASURER, SECRETARY, OR MEMBER-AT-LARGE
OF THE NETWORK, CONTACT ANY CURRENT OFFICER

OR MAIL THE NOMINATION TO:

SMSKN, P O Box 4794, PORTLAND, MAINE 04112-4794

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 31, 1998

Winter Kayaking in Key Largo

Two room, furnished apartment. Inexpensive, great location, easy access to The Keys, The Everglades, Key West, Miami, and all parks and beaches in and near the Keys.

Full kitchen with pots, pans, utensils, and dishes. Washer/dryer, full size bed with bedding. Apartment is secluded with separate entrance, plenty of room for vehicles, RV's, boats, kayaks, etc.

Great area for kayaking and access to both the ocean side and Florida Bay side. There's a great Park a block away for putting in/taking out. My folks live upstairs year round. We rent the bottom apartment.

\$400/wk summer, or \$70/night.

<http://members.aol.com/JeffreyLL/FloridaHouse/floridahouse.htm>

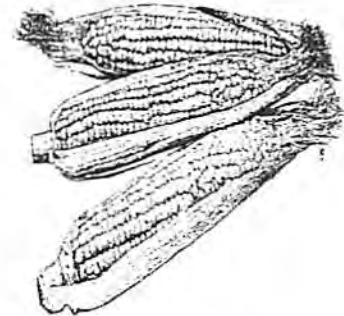
Or call Jeff Langley at (978) 749-9011



Potato/Corn/Bacon Chowder

contributed by Jeff Langley

- 2 ears of corn on the cob (Or a can of corn)
- 4-6 strips of fried bacon (Optional. Bacon Bits are an adequate substitute)
- 3 medium size red bliss potatoes
- 1 can of evaporated milk
- 1 stalk of celery
- 2 tablespoons of butter or margarine
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 1-2 cloves of chopped garlic
- black pepper



Cube potatoes without peeling. Boil until almost soft. Make sure pan is at least 1/3 full of water. Add bouillon cube to hot water.

In another pan, (or set potato mixture aside and use same pan), start heating the butter, garlic and bacon.

Shuck corn, then with a knife shave the kernels from the corn cob into the mixture. Scrape the bare cob with knife edge to get left-over kernels into pan. This helps give the chowder consistency. Cut up the celery and add both celery & corn to the pan with the bacon/butter/garlic. Cook for 2-3 minutes.

Add the potatoes and cooking water. Continue to heat for another 5 minutes. When mixture is hot, add the can of evaporated milk. Add pepper to taste. Enjoy.

Let's Become Our Own Resource People

by Jon Cons

Few paddlers in this area were more sorry to see the closing of Nourmbega Outfitters than I was. Jeff and Steve not only provided first rate equipment, but also a quality service to paddlers in this part of the state. This leaves us with a vacuum of sorts which Lee has mentioned we can fill in part. (The service part, anyway.)

Here's a suggestion about something we can do about the equipment part. No, I'm not suggesting we invest in some molds and go into kayak production, but there is a veritable mound of other gear that we all take with us. Most paddlers these days are used to finding it at our local kayak store, but not too long ago, there was no local kayak store and we had to find useful gear wherever we could, or make it ourselves. I would like to suggest that future issues of this newsletter contain a review of some of our own paddling equipment including our experiences with it, what was good or bad, and where we got it. This should not take much writing time, if we all pitch in, and Debra will have lots of interesting copy to fill out the newsletter.

I will be happy to start the ball rolling. As a matter of fact, I will be happy to serve as SMSKN's equipment editor and turn this into a regular column if you want to send me your reports using the following format:

EQUIPMENT REPORT

Item name:

Model: (if known)

Dimensions:

Retail Sources:

Current price range:

Your Experiences

How long have you used it?

What do you like?

What do you dislike?

Comparison with other similar products.

Personal context: (what type of paddler are you, experience level)

Other related comments:

For the protection of everyone involved, all product reports will have the following suffix added:

"This report represents the opinion of the contributor, and does to reflect the opinion of the Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network. It should not be interpreted as either an endorsement or lack of endorsement by this organization or its officers. Personal judgment is the most important factor in kayaking safely."

Here is an example:

EQUIPMENT REPORT

Item name: Lightning 2 piece fiberglass touring paddle.

Length and weight: Available by preference. I use a 218 cm.

Availability: Lightning paddles (directly), Poseidon Kayak Imports (Ken Fink), Mariner Kayaks (by mail).

Price Range: Competitive with other good paddles

My Experience: I am an experienced kayaker (22 years). I tend to use my equipment hard and it takes a beating over time. I wanted a paddle which would survive the stresses of a long trip in a loaded boat (I have broken other paddles before) but not weigh a ton.

In the four years I have had it, the Lightning has stood up to every abuse I have thrown at it. In addition, it is a joy to use. Its light weight and short length make it quick to accelerate the boat. In use, it has a good deal of flex to it which I like since I feel it absorbs some of the stress one's joints are subjected to over a long trip.

Lightning also makes a carbon fiber paddle which is amazingly light, but stiffer when paddling. Some people like this better, however everyone who has tried my paddle feels that it is light enough for normal use.

The blade is asymmetrical

but quite round. It is flat in profile with no pronounced dihedral shape. While wider than a Camano's blade, it is shorter and I would guess the total blade area is about equal. I prefer a relatively small-bladed paddle like this. It is not tiring to use all day, but still provides plenty of surface area for bracing. I think paddle blades with a dihedral shape are more prone to diving when you roll. Perhaps the lack of dihedral shape is why this is an easy paddle to roll with. Lightning also makes smaller bladed paddles, as well as big shovels for racing.

Lightning says it makes the lightest paddles available. This is lighter than any other fiberglass paddle I have ever seen. It is rugged, moderately priced, and easy to live with. I am also a strong advocate of two-piece paddles for a number of reasons which I won't go into here. Unless you need the ultimate in lightness (in which case you should consider a carbon fiber Lightning) I would recommend the standard lightning two-piece touring paddle without hesitation.

Jon Cons

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Editor's Note: This is a great start on a worthwhile project. Hope more of you will have contributions to this section of the



Winter Dreams...information from "The Box"

collected by Steve Winter

Good Tidings for Next Season from "The Box"

'Tis the season for sea kayakers to either take a trip to a lower latitude (does wonders for your attitude) or start pondering next summer's trips (puts a smile on your lips). OK, I won't try any more rhymes. Anyway, the Box (where all that miscellaneous mail to the club goes) has a few suggestions. Even if you choose not to go with an outfitter ... some of their brochures offer excellent suggestions.

Florida Bay Outfitters Kayak & Canoe Center out of Key Largo, Florida has a large variety of warm suggestions ranging from a half day skills improver to week-long trips through the Everglades or the Keys. One option includes a moving base camp aboard a 52' plush houseboat which allows exploration of remote areas without an arduous travail getting to the area. "At a relaxing pace we will paddle and explore the emerald blue-green waters, the mangrove islands, and the wildlife inhabitants of this unique area." There are also opportunities for wildlife research excursions where you can join Miami Museum of Science biologists in the field. Phone: 305-451-3018 Web: www.pennekamp.com/fbout

Slickrock Adventures Inc. offers trips in Belize and Honduras. "Although the underwater world is virtually the same, there are differences between our Belize and Honduras sea kayak trips. Glover's Reef is a remote atoll on which tiny islands formed, while the Bay Islands are submerged mountain tops that offer a much more dramatic locale. Our island in Belize provides a comfortable and exotic setting from which to more intimately explore the reef, which allows ample time for snorkeling, fishing, and relaxing. In Honduras we travel along rugged coastline, camping en route, and thus spend more time in the kayaks. While we do enjoy the luxury of a private hacienda, due to the exposed conditions and its self-support nature, our Honduras trip is a more rugged adventure while the Glover's Reef trip provides an active vacation, along with the option of greater relaxation and freedom within the schedule. Phone: 800-390-5715 Web: www.slickrock.com

Crossing Latitudes is devoted to promoting the enjoyment of sea kayaking while instilling an appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles. It offers 7-12 day expeditions north of the Arctic Circle in Norway, along the ancient shores of Bohuslan in Sweden and in the archipelago of Stockholm. ... maybe wait 'til summertime. Phone: 800-572-8747 Web: www.mcn.net/~crosslat

Tsunami Rangers based in Moss Beach, California offers EXTREME (it had to happen) sea kayaking videos and workshops for EXPERIENCED sea kayakers. Video topics include storm kayaking and the biggest white water on Earth (this is not on a river but on the ocean in a sea kayak ... so don't let your river buddies belittle you ... they would not want to be out in it ... nor would I). Address: Tsunami Rangers, PO Box 339, Moss Beach, CA 94038 Phone: 650-728-5118

Shahowis is a classic lodge on Barkley Sound, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, north of Victoria. A stay there includes unlimited kayak usage and all the islands, red cedar, and Sitka spruce that you could care to see. Address: Shahowis, 1407 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1Z1, Canada Phone: 250-388-6515

Bay Point Sports in Georgetown, Maine is a new kayak dealer in the area that you might call for a good deal on boats. Phone: 207-371-2690

"The BOX" is the SMSKN resource of mailings ... trips to everywhere and miscellaneous. Call Steve (207-443-3623) to rummage the BOX. Remember that with planning you can probably do these trips yourselves and save some \$\$ or just spend them and let someone else do the planning. Sweet dreams.