

SOUTHERN MAINE

SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 4794 · Portland, Maine 04112 · August 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

Trials & Tribulations of a Yakking Wannabe

by Clyde Sisler

Saturday morning things were pretty foggy so I decided to go across Maquoit Bay from Little Flying Point Island in Freeport, ME and 3 miles up to the head of Harpswell Neck. From there I would travel its 8 mile length to the end in hopes the fog would be gone by the time I got there.

The fog lightened up some around 11a.m. and I could see Whaleboat Island running parallel to the tip of Harpswell Neck. When I'm about 100 yards from the tip I think, "Gee, too bad the fog's lifted or I could plot a course and navigate in the fog like a real navigator". I paddle another 50 yards and glance at the island again and it's gone. It's like God heard me and said "You want fog, you got fog". Oops! Be careful what you wish for.

Whaleboat is about half a mile out and about a mile long. How can I miss that? Then I decide to try and hit the tip of that sucker dead on. I had plotted a course of 285° the night

before so got ready to paddle out into the unknown. When I lined up on the compass I saw my bow wasn't aiming in the direction where I now thought the island should be. I think about that for a second and then look up to the heavens and tell God, "Ha, ha! Good one!" So who am I gonna believe? The numbers I carefully

No problem here. I always hang out in the fog around loud, clangy thingies.

plotted last night or my instincts? Knowing the trouble I've gotten into trusting my outdoors instincts in the past, I opted for the numbers and blindly headed out into the fog.

The island is about half a mile away and I should get there in 10 minutes or so. I'm heading into a little chop and my bow is bouncing around throwing me off course, first one way and then the other, plus I keep forgetting to watch the compass.

Paddle, paddle. Ten minutes and no island. A lobster boat materializes out of the fog and

we wave at each other. No problem here. I like paddling in the fog. Paddle, paddle. Fifteen minutes and no island. Uh oh! I knew I shoulda trusted my instincts.

Paddle, paddle. A red nun #10 appears. There's a nun at the tip of Whaleboat. Alright! Dead on! But where's the island? I look at the chart and see it's not a nun but a flashing light that's supposed to be on the tip of the island. Then what's with this nun? Oh, I get it, it's a nun from God. He's still joking with me.

I finally find nun #10 on the chart and see I've drifted just a little off course. So with full confidence I point off to 285° again and head off into the fog. Paddle, paddle. Nothing. Uh, oh! Maybe I should have recalculated the course from nun #10. I'm probably in deep doggie doo now.

Paddle, paddle. And then another red nun appears. Oh, it's not a nun, it's one of those clangy things and then I finally hear it clang. While I'm sitting there wondering if I should tie up to the clanger and wait for

(Continued on page 3)

Notes from El Presidente*by Lee Bumsted*

Happy Summer! That time of year we sea kayakers dream of is here! I hope you've been able to join the Network on some of the many paddling trips our members have volunteered to coordinate this summer. Coming up in August and September are some more great trips; take a moment to look over the enclosed calendars. We've got day trips departing from a variety of points along the southern Maine coast (and even one across the border in New Hampshire). We've got some overnight trips, too, to allow you to explore some wonderful new spots or revisit old favorites.

Our ranks have continued to grow; there are now 144 members of the Network! As we become a more populous group, I hope the veteran members will make a special effort to make the newer folks feel welcome. And you new members, please feel free to call any of us if you have a question about an upcoming event, or even a general kayaking question. As the saying goes, there are no stupid questions (although there are sometimes stupid answers!).

How do people find out about the Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network? Our membership guru, Bill Ridlon, did a tally of your answers to that question on the membership form. The results point out what a great job our members are doing getting the word out to others. In 39 cases, members named a specific current or past member as their source of information about us, and in another 24 instances they mentioned they'd heard of us from a "friend," a "member," or a "kayaker." Magazines, newspapers, and the internet were the sources cited by 48 people. Twenty-seven people heard of SMSKN through stores or outfitters, with 18 of those coming to us through Norumbega. Eight people were referred to us by the Maine Island Trail Association.

Thanks again to all the members who are helping coordinate events this summer! I hope to see you on the water!



"Power your boat with
carbohydrates,
not hydrocarbons."

Hal, Wilton, NH
Paddlewise

Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network Officers May 97-98

President

LEE BUMSTED 799-1855

Secretary

JON SWAN 777-3626

Treasurer

DORRY SHAW 798-7915

Members At Large

CYNDE CLARK 865-3603

BOB MURRAY 846-3997

MARK DANIELE 865-9558

Membership Chairman

BILL RIDLON 799-5161

Newsletter Editor

DEBRA NICHOLS 985-4111

finelines@juno.com

Newslines

874-2640

The newslines are available
24 hours a day.
Call for updates on events.

Deadline for
next newsletter:
October 7, 1998

(Continued from page 1)

the fog to lift, a sailboat comes motoring into sight. We wave at each other as he passes by. No problem here. I always hang out in the fog around loud clanging things.

This time I recalculate my course and with some trepidation head off into the fog one more time. Paddle, paddle. And then the sun breaks out directly overhead and shines down on me. I look up and see blue sky (kinda). Then I look around me. Everything within 150 feet of me is perfectly clear. Beyond that is total fog. What is this, a joke? God is surely up there laughing his butt off at me. The sun goes away and I start off again, mumbling to myself.

Paddle, paddle. A pile of rocks finally appears and on top of that is a little tower thing with some reflectors on it. Looking at the chart again, it says flashing every 6 seconds, 47 feet in the air and visible for 6 miles. Yeah, right! The 47 feet might be close but the rest of it.....

I decide to have lunch and see if the fog will clear any. Half an hour later, 90% of the fog is gone. It's a good thing because Great Chebeague Island, my next target, is over a mile and a half away.

I get over to Great Chebeague with no problem and decide to head back to camp and set course for French Island, another mile and a half away. As I'm paddling along I come to another nun near Green Island Ledges, below French Island. I casually glance at the nun as I pass by. #10? What? Two #10 nuns within 2 miles of each other. Look at the darn chart. That's what it shows and that's what I saw. No wonder I'm confused so much of the time out there.

When the skies get dark and I hear a couple of boomers I change course to keep an island nearby. A recent discussion on lightening conjures up a mental image of me and my orange Looksha IV looking like burnt toast and marmalade. I get to the last island adjacent to where I'm camped and stop to determine if I really want to make a mad dash across a mile of open water. I finally decide to go for it and dig in real hard to get some momentum going and scare up a bald eagle with all the noise I am making.

In case you're wondering, I didn't die and I did make it across okay. It didn't even rain that night.



Library Additions

by Lee Bumsted

I'm pleased to report that we have some new titles in our library. Berry Manter donated an excellent video called *Performance Sea Kayaking: The Basics and Beyond*; we've shown excerpts at recent meetings. Mark Daniele donated a copy of *Derek C. Hutchinson's Guide to Sea Kayaking* as well as *The Basic Essentials of Sea Kayaking* by Mike Wyatt. We've recently purchased two books for our collection. One is *Sea Kayaker's Deep Trouble* by Matt Broze and George Gronseth, a fascinating book that reconstructs kayaking accidents and looks at how they might have been prevented. The other is *Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak: One Woman's Journey Through the Northwest Passage*, by Victoria Jason, an account of the four summers she spent paddling in harsh but beautiful conditions in the Canadian Arctic. ("Kabloona" is the Inuit word for "stranger.")

Members are welcome to check out up to 3 items for 2 months from the library. Look for our selection of over 40 books, videos, and magazines at meetings, or call me at 799-1855 if there's a title that interests you.



The Cliffs of Monhegan Island

At Note From 'Ms. Ed'

How very much like summer is this issue. . . so much to pack into such a little space! How many of you are saying, "I can't believe it's already August!"?

Bill and I are spending as much time outdoors as possible, packing in as many hikes & paddles as our schedules will allow. If you happen to notice this newsletter is a little late, blame it on the weather. It's just too beautiful these days to be indoors more than is absolutely necessary.

Fourth of July weekend we headed up to Muscongus Bay to watch the fireworks from Black Island. Our put-in destination was the Audubon Society in Bremen. I called and received permission from someone who works

there, to use the facility. We were surprised, upon our arrival, to be told by the caretaker, that paddlers had been taking advantage of this private boat launch and that she was not happy about the attitude displayed by some of these folks. The upshot of the whole event was my promise to let all of the SMSKN members know that paddlers should call ahead before planning to use this boat launch and they should ask for Lynn Saunders. The number is 207-529-5828. Beyond that one encounter, the weekend was great.

Thanks to all of you who pitched in with this issue.

Debra Nichols

What's Happening?

Call the newsline anytime for updates: 874-2640.

Refer to the calendars for August and September for a complete schedule of events with contact names and phone numbers. Here are some upcoming events which required more space to describe.

WARM-WATER RESCUE PRACTICE & PICNIC: Sunday, August 16, 10 AM-5PM. Rescue practice, picnic, paddle, and swim at Range Ponds State Park in Poland. Peer coaching on individual and group rescues, with some games! A great practice spot, with warm water! Call Cynde Clark FMI 865-3603.

MEETINGS: To make it easier to plan your summer, for the next two meetings (August & September), we'll get together at the Fal-mouth Memorial Library on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. (Directions: Take Route 1 south from Shaws. Just past Classic Oldsmobile, take a right at the traffic light onto Depot Road, follow 2/10 mile and the library is on the right.) FMI call Lee Bumsted 799-1855.

Our next **General Membership Meeting** will be Tuesday, August 18, 7:00-9:00 PM. We'll talk about upcoming trips and then have a slide presentation. Whitney Smith, of H2Outfitters on Orr's Island, will show us slides of kayaking trips on the east coast of the U.S. and Canada, as well as shots of some adventures in Japan!

In September, our **General Membership Meeting** will be Tuesday, September 15, 7:00-9:00 PM. SMSKN member Kristen Woodberry will show slides of her recent paddling trip in the San Juan Islands, in Puget Sound, Washington. We'll also have time to swap paddling tales.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS:

We have several camping trips planned for this summer. Please call the contact person for details.

- Saturday, August 22 - Sunday August 23. **Muscongus Bay.** Bill Ridlon (799-5161) is coordinating this camping trip southeast of Damariscotta, 1.5 hour drive from Portland.
- Saturday, September 5 - Monday, September 7. **Deer Isle.** Call Jon Swan for more information (777-3626) on this camp-out in eastern Penobscot Bay.
- Saturday, September 5 - Monday, September 7. **Western Branch of the Penobscot River.** Call Sandy Martin (865-0455 days) for details on this northern inland trip.
- Saturday, September 19 - Sunday, September 20. **Jewell Island Camping Trip.** Call Bill Ridlon (799-5161) about this trip in Casco Bay.

The "Monhegan Who's" Take a Paddle

by Bill Ridlon

We left Portland at 7:00 AM and got to Port Clyde by 8:45. It seemed a little early for a 10:00 put-in but there was a lot to do before we could set off. This was the "annual" SMSKN Monhegan trip. As we got the boats ready to go, the various participants appeared. There was Chuck, Mike, the two Peters, Dan, Shawna, the two Karens, Kim, Bob, the two Daves, Jon, Dorry, Debra, Jim, Helen, Kristen, and myself. In addition, there were the 9 friends, relatives, and others that joined us on Monhegan but traveled by ferry. Whew! Twenty-eight people. One of the largest Network trips to date. By the time we were ready to go there were 19 of us in 17 boats.

Before leaving we loaded the boats, did a last pit stop, paid for parking, moved the cars and trucks to a remote parking lot, and got a ride back to the launching area. That ate up enough time where we didn't get on the water until 10:30. As we paddled away, our ferry friends had the task of explaining to others on the ferry why we were pad-

dling all the way to Monhegan rather than taking the ferry. Jill, Chuck's wife, told us she explained that we liked the challenge of it, but I think she really told them that we were crazy.

The first portion of the trip was to the last inner island for a lunch stop. It was windy with very confused seas. It made for a challenging passage. It was a fine break after 90 minutes of paddling, though somewhat cool with the breeze.

We returned to the water at about 1:00 and started the 7½ mile open water passage. By the time we had passed the last island the swells had grown to 4 feet and the wind to about 20 knots. We split into 3 groups: the fast group that included the two double kayaks, the middle group, and then the last group.

It was amazing to see paddlers out a little ahead bobbing up and down. Sometimes it looked like they were headed for the sky and other times they disappeared behind the four-foot swells. Our middle group took a break each hour but each one was brief as we lost considerable ground (water) being blown back towards Port Clyde. It took us about 3 hours to cross from Burnt Island, our lunch stop, the last inner island, to Monhegan. The faster group did it in about 2½ hours. The last group took 3½ hours.

Once on the island we carried our gear to our various lodgings: the Monhegan House, the Trailing Yew, and the Hitchcock House. Helen found the Monhegan House at times more dangerous than the seas. As we sat on the front porch, a screen fell from the 3rd floor into Helen's lap. The result was a bruise and a free breakfast.

Saturday dawned bright and blue with not a cloud in the sky. After a hearty breakfast, many of us met at Fish Beach and paddled around the island. Some saw seals, some saw whales. We all saw the impressive cliffs from their

base on the backside of the island with the equally impressive pounding surf. Fortunately, the wind was far less than on the day before. Towards the end of the brief paddle, some chose to also paddle around Manana Island and stop on it to hike about and see the view of Monhegan from a different perspective.

Afternoon found SMSKN members everywhere. Some were out hiking, some were reading, some were touring the art galleries, some were just enjoying the sun on the lawn of the Monhegan House. Kristen was still over on Manana exploring, Karen was over by Blackhead Cliff, doing a beautiful pastel drawing of the impressive scenery, and Chuck and others were down at Fish Beach trying out each other's boats.

On Sunday, another beautiful day, several SMSKN members were up early taking pictures and watching the whales at the south end of the island. After breakfast, the "early group" of 12 paddlers started the trip home at 9:15 while the "late group" departed at 10:05. The paddle was very different from the one coming out. The wind was 2 knots or less, the seas were 1 to 3 feet with 10 seconds or more between the swells. By 1:00 the early group and the first of the late group were at Port Clyde. During the paddle back, a few of the group decided to visit Eastern Egg Rock to catch sight of the puffins. The trip was rewarding in that they saw about 20 puffins and on the way saw 3 or 4 porpoises swimming together.

With all things considered, it was an excellent trip with a variety of sea conditions and fair weather for all three days. Whether you paddle or take the ferry, Monhegan is an island well worth the time and effort to visit.



The Cliffs of Monhegan Island

SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

The Monhegan Trip was not an easy one this year. Last year, despite the NOAA forecast for a "Small Craft Advisory" the conditions were very comfortable to paddle in.

This year was very different. Once everyone arrived at Monhegan and had showered, rested and recovered, I asked the paddlers for their comments about the day's trip.

If you are thinking about making this crossing, realize it is a lot of open water and that the weather radio might not be accurate in describing what you might meet.

Here are some of the things they said:

"It was like paddling nowhere fast. I kept thinking 'I'm on my own here, no one's going to help me. If I don't keep up I'm just going to drift out to sea.' Making it was like a victory."

Dorry

"It was a long, hard trip, the larger waves really made it hard. I hooked up with 2 other people & we stayed together the whole way. When the ferry went by, I didn't expect the wake from the side...the waves were all coming straight at me & the wake hit me from the side...that was the worst!"

Dave

"Pack Dramamine!"

Karen

"If you're going to be sick, do it into your spray-skirt. Don't try to lean over, you're apt to capsize."

Jim

"Some of the waves lift you so high that when you went to paddle the next stroke, there was nothing there!"

David

"It kept being there right in front of us and you still weren't there!"

Peter

"This was challenging! This was not the 5-15 knot winds NOAA predicted, well, occasionally it dropped to 15 knots!"

"There seems to be this noise that kayakers make at the peak of a swell, it's somewhere between pure ecstasy and sheer terror."

Karen

"If it had been a calmer sea, you'd have forgotten the trip in no time."

Dave

"I like water dead calm...I was on this edge where I wondered if I was having a good time or not."

Helen

"As we pulled into the calmer waters around Monhegan, I realized I had a lot of aches & pains I hadn't noticed before!"

Dave

"I was kind of anxious because the sea was so disturbed, but it turned out to be a pretty good paddle. I don't think people should try to do this as their first trip. You need a sense of how your boat's going to behave in rough water."

Mike

"Conditions were not abnormal for this trip. You can usually expect a strong SW wind. Pair up with someone nearby so you're focused on staying with someone, rather than on the conditions."

Peter

"I was kind of surprised no one backed out & that no one tipped over. Everyone got self confidence from doing this trip. It was a real good skills builder!"

Jon

"How do you know if you are capable of doing this trip? You need to have taken seriously the weather conditions & have experience with rough seas."

Peter

Makah Whales

by Steph Dutton & Heidi Tiura <stepheid@ix.netcom.com>

We have worked for two years on In The Path Of Giants, an offshore sea kayak based research and documentary project designed to document and study the life cycle and migration of the California gray whale. We've spent hundreds of hours out there and have paddled about 2000 miles training and getting ready for the final phase of the study. Over the next three years we will follow the whales from the Bering Sea to Baja California and back.

We have operated under a special permit that has allowed us to approach the whales within the 100 meter limit prescribed by federal law. We have learned a lot about the whales already and stand poised to do some revolutionary research that will unlock many of the mysteries about these whales' habits in the open ocean. What has struck me most profoundly about the whales can't, however, be quantified in terms of research data.

The gray whale is the most ancient of the surviving great whales. It has rebounded twice from near extinction at the hands of greedy hunters, in the 1800's and again in the 1930's. Something in this animal, some life force I can only guess at, has driven it to survive and prosper in the face of tremendous odds.

On a very personal level, I have a special connection with these whales. In 1978, as an off-duty firefighter, I stopped to lend aid at a traffic accident on a lonely mountain road near my home. While tending a victim in the road, I was struck by a truck that broke through people flagging traffic. I was thrown into the truck that was in the initial wreck. Knocked unconscious for a few moments, I awoke in a puddle of gasoline and my own spurting blood. My right lower leg was mangled and I had to tourniquet myself to stem the blood loss. I recall thinking, "So this is what it's like to die." Fearing explosion from the gas, I stayed awake to direct my own rescue. I had the unique opportunity that night to make a conscious decision to live. I am a seafarer by heart and by trade, not a warm and fuzzy new age guy who wants to swim naked with the whales. Yet, these animals and I share a tangible bond: staying alive.

That is what keeps me out there on the wintertime Pacific, pounded by El Niño storms, hoping for one last glimpse of an incredible mammal making the longest migration of any mammal in the world,

before heading back to the beach. My wife, Captain Heidi Tiura, and I began this project truly believing that the gray whale was not only fully recovered but would be protected and left alone in the future. You might imagine our shock when we heard that members of the Makah Indian Nation of northwest Washington had gotten approval to begin killing them starting October 1 of this year.

Some people concern themselves with the question that this is a tribal and treaty concern for the Makah and that we have no right to interfere. It's time to reiterate some well documented facts:

-The Makah have hired an Alaskan native whaling captain to direct their efforts in October. The killing will be done by 50 caliber rifles and from outboard powered inflatables. Hardly tribal tradition.

-The Makah Whaling Commission (MWC) was the primary force behind the move to have the gray whale taken off the Endangered Species List.

-The MWC have publicly announced that they will sell the meat if they wish. A Japanese whaling official has set a figure of between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000 per whale that they are willing to pay. The Japanese have no use for gray whale products, considering them inferior. Still, they will pay this to support more indigenous whaling efforts. So what if there's terrible waste?

-The subsistence argument put forth is not valid. There is a wonderfully well stocked and modern supermarket in Neah Bay, home to the Makah.

-14 Canadian tribes are awaiting public reaction to the Makah hunt before they begin their own. Canada is not a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and would not be subject to quotas. Japan and Norway, both pirate whaling nations, have funneled money to a native whaling association in Port Alberni, British Columbia. The U.S. government has funneled over 250,000 taxpayer dollars to the Makah for their efforts to lobby the IWC for permission to start killing. Year after year, the IWC found their claim of subsistence whaling invalid. Last year, the U.S. delegation tied the Makah request to a standing quota given to Russian native whalers. The Russians were given "our" bowhead whales and they gave the Makah "their" gray whales. Arrogant trading of a wonderful and ancient creature. The IWC was powerless to stop it.

-The Makah have been allowed a quota of 4 whales per year for five years. To help them reach that quota, a total of 10 strikes per year are allowed. In essence, this means the probable maiming and/or killing of many more whales than the prescribed kill quota.

-Gray whales, unlike orcas or humpbacks, are practically impossible to identify visually. Once the shooting starts, there will be no way to tell which whales have been hit. A high potential for maiming or "by-kill" exists.

-The MWC has flatly turned down offers from other eco-tour operators to help them build a whale watching industry. Their statement? "We are going to hunt whales."

This list can go on and on. Our positions are simple: Killing? No more non-subsistence killing of whales, by anyone, anytime, anywhere. Subsistence? Subsistence does not mean feeding whale meat to foxes on state run fur farms in Siberia.

Ancient rights? The rights of whales to survive surpass and supersede any nation's or people's perceived rights to kill them. It is time to celebrate these magnificent animals.

Here's what you can do:

1.) Call the Washington State Tourism office at 360-753-5601 and promise them that your ONLY visit to that state will be to draw attention to the slaughter if it is allowed to happen.

2.) Call the Makah tribal office at 360-645-2201 and promise them a visit in October, bringing with you your friends and media contacts to protest. Their e-mail address is: mtcops@makah.com.

3.) Contact your own Congressional representatives and express your outrage.

4.) Make donations to In The Path Of Giants. This will be an expensive effort and we need your help.

Steph Dutton
Team Leader, In The Path Of Giants
25515 Hidden Mesa Road
Monterey, CA. 93940

stepheid@ix.netcom.com
www.graywhale.net



My Friends & I Make a Splash (part 3)

by Todd

When last we met, our four novice paddlers had just been surrounded by an ominous band of kayak paddling seals! Learning to paddle had been Tiffany's idea.

Tiffany (Tiff) had been a military test pilot for several years, routinely pushing supersonic fighters well beyond their design envelopes.

It's hard to imagine somebody with so mild a background could suggest such a dangerous activity to her best friends.

It appeared our best hope at this point was, when they were doing unthinkable things to us, they would preserve our beautiful physiques. The thought of death seemed less of a concern than possibly spending our last remaining hours on this earth with a physical scar, induced by these menacing creatures.

One of the critters began speaking to us in very broken English. He informed us we were their prisoners and we were to follow them around to the other side of the island.

While I'd already grown to hate these animals, I do admit there are two things I can admire about them:

- Their ruthless efficiency, which allowed them to outmaneuver and capture us.
- Their ability to paddle their boats even though they only had these silly, stubby flipper things for arms.

We landed on a spot on the beach they appeared to have set up to receive us. There were bowls labeled "human food" and "human water" on the beach.

I don't know what these creatures thought humans ate, but a couple of bowls of dead fish didn't appeal to any of us in the least.

Their having food out struck me as both good and bad news.

The good news was, if they were putting food out for us, they were likely planning on keeping us alive for a while. The bad news was twofold.

- If they were going to keep us alive, it might be so they could torture us.

▪ They wouldn't be able to keep us alive for too long on this stuff.

A pen was formed of barbed wire, with the open part of the pen facing the water being the only way in and out.

With our eventual escape being on my mind, I immediately considered our options. The clear one was, being we had access to the water, and Tiffany (Tiff) having once qualified to be an Olympic swimmer, sending her out when the guards (all 100+) were distracted.

The other option was making a message describing our situation, placing it in a bottle and tossing it into the ocean; where it would hopefully be picked up by a good Samaritan who would know whom to contact and sending them to rescue us. The first thing we should do is work on finishing off the bottle of 100-year-old brandy we brought as part of our supplies.

As directed, we landed in the confines of the barbed wire and got out of our boats. The commander, accompanied by the only seal who appeared to know English (as poor as it was), pulled up to the beach and began explaining why they had taken us prisoner.

He showed his good nature by apologizing in advance for what promised to be a very tough interrogation.

Brad fainted again.

With Brad lying unconscious at his feet, uh, flippers, he began explaining, in graphic detail, what method he intended to use to extort information.

Brad started to come to, just as the interpreter began describing the most gruesome of the procedures.

Brad fainted again.

Before long, Brad was fully conscious and Buffy was cradling him in her arms, allowing him to sip water from the bowl labeled "human water".

Tiffany (Tiff) looked at the lead seal and thanked him for being straightforward regarding his plans for them. "But," she said, "I need a better understanding as to what type of information you seek."

Their reason for an assault was due

to what they had learned was happening to their brethren up in the Arctic. They had learned, from a seal who escaped the terror in the Arctic, the humans up there were making their boats out of the skins of seals. While they hadn't noticed any of their numbers missing, with the proliferation on kayaks they assumed it was only a matter of time. They planned on dissecting our kayaks and doing some DNA testing to determine who of them was used to make the boats. Just then we heard a sickening crunch as one of the seals, dressed in a white lab coat, used a tool to remove a section of one of our boats. There was a flurry of commotion as one of the lab coated seals came running (waddling) over to the interpreter seal, holding a piece of fiberglass.

Brad yelled, "Oh no, my three-thousand dollar boat!" and fainted.

The interpreter seal looked at us and said, "You petrified them! You petrified our companions before turning them into boats!!!"

I said, "No, no, you don't understand. We don't use seals to make boats, these boats are made of a compound called 'fiberglass', a manmade compound."

I think I was getting through to them. One of the seals in a lab coat ran his finger (as much of a finger as a seal has) over the piece of fiberglass.

I explained to him what fiberglass was, and how it served better than seal skin.

WRONG!! Wrong thing to say!

The lead seal was insulted by this, and said, "Are you suggesting seals aren't good enough to be one of your boats?"

I did a quick retraction, "Sure you're good enough to be a boat!"

"Oh, so you're telling me you are turning us into boats?"

I could see I was losing ground.

Read the exciting conclusion to this story in the next newsletter!!!