



SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 4794 Portland, Maine 04112



June 2000

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

“Paddling with a tongue depressor?”

As Friday night arrived, I found myself trying not to regret my commitment to a seven-hour Greenland-style rolling clinic on Monday. The air was cool for a Memorial Day weekend. The image of repeatedly dunking my head and upper body into cold pond water was drowning out any previous longing for a graceful roll. A dry suit and warm sun on Monday morning brought back my eagerness for instruction in this traditional Inuit style of kayaking. Only half of our class of six had already converted to the skinny, almost flat, Greenland-style paddles (my friend Anna calls them tongue depressors) though more of us paddled Greenland-style boats. I fantasized (ok, I outright teased) that the skeptics among us would finally recognize the superiority of these paddles over the “spoon”, or European paddles most paddlers use, sometimes mistakenly referred to as “traditional”.

My smug attitude enjoyed some play until Pete Thompson, one of two extremely skilled instructors for the day, began demonstrating the many different rolls used by Greenlanders. Humility overcame smugness.

Since Greenland kayakers were tied into their kayaks in a fairly elaborate manner and could not survive a wet exit in arctic waters anyway, it was essential that they be able to right their boats under any imaginable complication. Yes – even with a broken arm, a dislocated shoulder (I can think of at least one person in our club who might find this useful!), a paddle tangled in gear, or no paddle at all! Pete smoothly demonstrated each brace and roll as Hank Andolsek, our second instructor, explained.

It looked easy enough! But I’d spent enough time upside down in my boat to know it wasn’t yet easy for me.

Surprisingly, the water in the pond at Wassamki Spring Campground was warm. With a purposefully small class, we each had our turn at quality 1:1 guidance through the fundamentals. We learned or practiced the art of a “sculling brace”, gradually lowering ourselves into a “balance brace”. That’s basically a chance to lay flat on the water (face up), leaning out from your boat (now tipped on its side), and rest there, enjoying the clouds overhead. All while getting accustomed to the position that will finalize an “extended paddle roll”.

One nifty aspect of a Greenland style paddle is that it can easily be gripped at one end so that the entire paddle length is available for leverage. Just the right angle of the blade swept across the surface of the water, combined with the arching of your upper body back onto your stern deck - and you’re up! OK – there are a few more details, but little muscle needed, and no hip snap. Now, take away the paddle. I didn’t get that far, so you’ll have to ask Mark Daniele to demonstrate his new “hand roll”. (Mark, you did say that you wanted to practice.)

Hank explained the features of some different traditional Greenland style kayak designs, the history and function of design aspects, and the sizing of a paddle to fit a specific paddler. He is a rich resource about the early development of this great sport and the efficiency of Inuit design! So -before you assume that modern technology has improved on the wisdom of Inuit tradition, ask some questions (of someone who knows what they’re talking about, preferably)

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What's Happening?

Fore River Trip – Saturday, June 24, 2000

This is a Level 2 trip that will travel up the Fore River from Portland Harbor. The trip will take place in the afternoon to take advantage of a rising tide. We'll go through the culvert under Outer Congress Street into the Fore River Bird Sanctuary. We'll wind through the bird sanctuary, being careful not to disturb nesting birds. After reaching the point where the boats can't be paddled any further (not far from Congress Street), we'll stop for snacks (bring some for yourself or some to share) and then return along the route we came. Though the route is very protected, total mileage traveled will be about 8 miles, hence the Level 2 designation. To sign up for the paddle, contact Bill Ridlon at outdoors@gwi.net or (207) 799-5161.

Ft Williams Evening Paddle – Wednesday, June 28, 2000

This is a Level 2 paddle that will tour parts of southern Casco Bay while it is still daylight, eventually arriving just off Fort Williams and the Portland Head Light in Cape Elizabeth. The actual date of this paddle will be flexible until it's known when and if the Portland Symphony Orchestra will be playing the Independence Pops at Fort Williams with following fireworks. We'll float offshore slightly, listening to the end of the concert and watching the fireworks above us. We'll return to shore when the fireworks have concluded. Please bring lighting for your boat since we will be out well after sunset. To sign up for the paddle, contact Bill Ridlon at outdoors@gwi.net or (207) 799-5161

Monhegan Three-Day Trip: Friday, July 28 – Sunday, July 30, 2000

This is a Level 3 trip open only to paddlers with open ocean experience or a "Level 0" trip for those who would like to go to Monhegan with the paddlers but would prefer to take the ferry rather than paddle. The trip involves an 8-mile open water crossing to Monhegan with a total trip length of 12+ miles. We leave from Port Clyde in the morning with a stop on an island about 4 miles out to prepare for the next leg of the trip, which is the 8-mile open water crossing. In the past, trip participants have experienced 4-foot seas, 20 knot wind, fog, and small-craft advisories. We've also seen seals, puffins, and Minke whales.

There is no camping on Monhegan. You must make reservations at one of the hotels on the island or at one of the Bed & Breakfasts. If you plan to join the trip, check in early to be sure your skills are commensurate with the trip, if you plan to paddle rather than ride the ferry, and then make reservations. Some possible places for you to stay include:

The Monhegan House 800-599-7983	\$\$	The Trailing Yew	\$
The Island Inn	\$\$\$	The Hitchcock House	\$

If you're planning to take one of the ferries, here are the ferry contact numbers:

From:	Port Clyde:	372-8848
	New Harbor:	800-2-PUFFIN
	Boothbay Harbor:	800-298-2284

To sign up for the trip, contact Chuck Jones at (207) 784-2721 or Bill Ridlon at outdoors@gwi.net or (207) 799-5161

SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK OFFICERS MAY '99 – SEPTEMBER '00

PRESIDENT

Bob Murray 846-3997

SECRETARY

Bob Arledge 442-9730

TREASURER

Dorry Shaw 798-7915

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Esther Coyle 725-4233

Bill Ridlon 799-5161

Kristen Woodberry 775-5480

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Bill Ridlon 799-5161
outdoors@gwi.net

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NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please send articles (as text format) to be included in the Newsletter to:

catamount@top.monad.net
Send photos (and a "sase" if you would like them returned), to:

Wendy Allen,
45 Woodbury Street
Keene, NH 03431

Padding the Web (by Bob Arledge)

The Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network is taking its first tentative step into the information age. Dorry Shaw and I were tasked by the SMSKN Board to look into creating a SMSKN web page. Things were not looking too good until Steve Winter stepped in and gave us an introductory class on website creation and set us up with a prototype site to play around with. Since then we have progressed far enough to post a few items on the Internet and have started to plan a SMSKN site. Steve has registered our domain name, www.smskn.org, and has created an Events List page where members can post information on paddles and other events. Steve is a computer professional and teaches computer science at the University of Maine in Augusta. One would expect to pay thousands of dollars to a website designer for the Events List page Steve gave us. We really want to thank him for it and for all of the assistance he has given us.

At the last Board meeting, we talked about selecting a few people to serve as beta users to try out the site and give us feedback while we develop it. However, since we have Steve's database, a Message Board and the Calendar working, we decided that there is enough utility there to be of use by everyone now. So we invite you to look in at www.smskn.org from time to time to see how we are progressing. We simply ask that you keep your expectations low and your comments constructive while we struggle to get this thing going. Our plan is to start with simple utility and plod toward elegance over time (please note, *toward* indicates a direction, not a destination.)

I should mention at this point that I have been designated as the Webmaster. I am uniquely qualified for the job because I am not burdened with any pre-existing knowledge of creating or running a website and therefore I am not likely to fall into the same ruts as

someone that knows what he is doing. If you have any suggestions or constructive comments, or if you would like to be the Webmaster, you can contact me at bacchus@blazenetme.net or 442-9730.

By the time this newsletter is published, we plan on having a Home Page, the Calendar Page, the Events List and the Discussion Page on our new site. One of the things that the Home Page will do for us is to demonstrate the difference between utilitarian and elegant. The other thing it will do is to provide links to the other pages. We will also probably throw a picture on it just to show that we are heading *toward* elegance.

Right now the Calendar Page is the same calendar that Bob Murray maintains. It is the one that is passed out at club meetings and published in the Newsletter. We have simply converted it into a format that can be published on the website. In order to post an event on the calendar you have to get the information to Bob, he has to type it into the program he is uses to generate the calendar and then send the file to me. I will convert it into an html document and upload it onto the website. This will work all right for official club paddles, but is a little unwieldy for spur of the moment events. This takes us to the Events List.

The Events List is intended for members to post paddles, parties or other events that are not on the calendar. I will try to transcribe information about official paddles into the Events List, but we will have to see how scrupulous I am about getting that done. The way the Events List works is that anyone can post an event. For example, if you plan to paddle off Bailey Island on Sunday and want some company, you can post it on the Events Database. You simply click on the link to the Events List and then click on "Add your Event" and then fill in the blanks. When you post an event you enter a password (you can make up any password you like) and then only you can change the posting. That way you

can add additional information or cancel the paddle if you need to. If you want to know who plans on coming, you can omit the time of the paddle and ask anyone to contact you for specific information.

The Message Board is a "canned" site. A company that displays advertisements on the page provides it to us without any cost. SMSKN does not endorse, recommend, or even care what is being advertised. All we care about is that the site is provided without any cost. We considered having separate boards to post general information, questions and gear for sale, but decided that we are not so large an organization that the amount of postings on the Message Board would necessitate breaking them down into categories. One thing that we ask is that your message has something to do with kayaking or SMSKN and not with Amway sales or your views on the merits of the candidate running for dog catcher in North Berwick.

Soon we hope to add other pages. One of the first will be a page with links to sites that have useful information for kayakers. There are websites with local weather reports, current conditions at the Casco Bay weather buoy, tide tables, nautical charts, safety information, kayak manufacturers, gear suppliers, online kayaking magazines and on and on. There are sites on the web now with pages of links to even more kayaking sites, and we will link to some of these link sites as well.

We will probably have an announcements page with more detailed information about upcoming SMSKN events. We can also create pages with any information the members think would be useful. For example, a page could be created where we compile a list of launch sites with descriptions and directions on how to find them. We could have a page with equipment reviews. Pictures from club paddles would be nice. If you have any thoughts on what would be useful, send them to me.

Another category of things that could be posted on the site might be generally described as documents. This would include newsletters, membership applications, recommended equipment lists, the club bylaws, etc. One way to post this information would probably be as .pdf files, which can be read using *Adobe Reader*. *Adobe Reader* can be downloaded free off the Internet and we can provide a link to the download site, but if you have a slow connection to the Internet it can take a while to download it. We might arrange to provide the program on a disk if *Adobe* does not prohibit it and if there are not too many people that cannot download the program. I think this might be one of those areas where constructive comments would be in order.

Ultimately, I would like to see the membership list maintained on the website. Members would be able to access and edit their own membership information online. This may be a ways down the road primarily because it involves a degree of difficulty that the Webmaster can only cope with in his dreams. Additionally, there is the problem of privacy that will have to be worked out. Some people that do not mind having their phone number and address distributed to other club members in the newsletter may not want that same information published on the World Wide Web. Like many other club websites, ours will not be password protected. Password protection also involves a degree of difficulty beyond our reach at this time. With information being posted on the website, privacy is an issue that we will all have to keep in mind.

Remember that our first priority is paddling the sea and not the web. Therefore, progress on the website will vary inversely with the temperature and the amount of sunshine on the weekends. Hopefully it will have some rough utility immediately and it will mature with age.

Membership Application

I, _____ (printed name) understand that sea kayaking involves significant potential risks to my health and equipment, in part due to cold and/or turbulent water. I agree to assume these risks in their entirety when participating in Network events. I also understand that while others may have skills and/or knowledge greater than mine, they are not responsible for my well-being. I agree to inform my fellow paddlers of any significant aspects of my physical condition or medical history that might increase the risk to myself or others. I give my permission to participants to seek emergency medical treatment for me should I require it during a Network event. I agree to exercise with my skill level, knowledge and experience.

I have read this statement and fully understand its content. I am aware that I am releasing certain rights on behalf of myself and my family in return for being permitted to participate in Network events. I totally and completely release and absolve the Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network, its members, its officers, and all trip/events participants from liability of any sort relating to bodily injury or damaged equipment.

Name: _____ Phone (home): _____

Address: _____ Phone (work): _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Experience level: _____

Comfortable paddling distance for day trip: _____

Type of boat: _____ E-mail: _____

Winter Paddler? _____ Midweek Paddler? _____

Emergency contact: _____ Contact's phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please make checks for \$15.00 payable to: *Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network*
and Mail to: *Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network P.O. Box 4794 Portland, Maine 04112-4794*

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and give a Greenland style paddle a good trial. Pete recommends a couple weeks, minimum, of repeated paddling with one, to truly get the feel of it.

Since those of us who prefer Greenland-style paddles realize that most paddlers secretly wish they were Greenland-style paddlers and may not even know it yet, we may have to offer another class in the fall. I hear that the Surgeon General may soon put out a warning about the addictive quality of paddling with a tongue depressor, so do be cautious!

Thanks to Mark Daniele for organizing this one!

Updates from Past Trips

"The Memorial Day paddle on Saturday 5/27 from Bethel Point turned out great. ~15 of us paddled into Quahog Bay and landed on Snow Island - no swimming this time though! And, believe it or not, it was not too windy!! The B-B-Q afterwards, at Esther's on Orr's Island, was warm and sunny with a terrific view, and it was nice to kick-back and just get to know one another better. Let's do this again later this summer."

"Vinalhaven (7/15 - 7/22) is looking like it might become an annual week for the club just as Stonington has. This is year 2; we've gone from 2 to 3 houses (some different, some the same). The ferry has a new system which has gotten off to a good start and should make car/boat transportation easier. The paddling is varied and plentiful; Lane's preserve is as advertised; the quarries for swimming amazing; hiking; biking... Food opportunities were cheap and excellent AND Vinalhaven truly has an island feel to it. We had a blast and are all looking forward to this year's trip. To find out more information about housing rentals for year 3(?) contact Ray H, Carolyn W, or Esther C."

**SMSKN adopted island:
Crow Island
in Muscongus Bay**

Just a reminder that the Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network has an adopted island: Crow Island in Muscongus Bay. Being an adopter means that we check on the island as often as we can so if you have a chance, paddle on out to see how it's doing. It's a small island and takes only about 20 minutes to get to and another 20 minutes to complete a tour of it, picking up trash as you go. It's also a state-owned island so you can camp overnight on it without being a Maine Island Trail Association member. If you decide to do that, please observe the voluntary overnight use limits.

SMSKN Library Keeps Growing


We'd like to thank Clyde Sisler for his recent donation of several books to our library. He must travel a great deal, since he sent us paddling guides for Nova Scotia, Florida, Belize, the mid-Atlantic Coast, and Mount Desert Island!

Anyone who wishes to check out library books or videos may do so at meetings, or by contacting our librarian, Lee Bumsted, at 799-1855. We have some great instructional material as well as guidebooks and tales of adventure.

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