

# SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 4794 Portland, Maine 04112

May 2001

## 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.

[www.smskn.org](http://www.smskn.org)

EXPAND  
YOUR  
KAYAKING  
HORIZONS

## An Amazon Rainforest Adventure

By Lucy Wendell-Thorpe

Travelling the waterways and lagoons of the Amazon rainforest in a dugout canoe, or a kayak if I preferred, was one of the greatest adventures of my life, so far. Last February, I spent a week at a lodge, Kapawi, in Ecuador, deep in the jungle near the Peruvian border. From our canoe, we saw caimen, brightly colored parrots and other exotic birds, and Achuar indian people fishing and gathering plants for medicinal use or food. We saw a mother standing in her dugout gathering plants while her two children nonchalantly looked on. It seems that no one besides me and the other tourists finds them particularly tippy. I was assured that they really don't tip over very easily. Although, I do have all my SMSKN wet-exit skills nicely honed, the idea of losing all my expensive camera equipment to the river wasn't one I wanted to contemplate any too closely!

Other times we trekked the jungle finding an amazing array of enormous trees whose roots, alone, grow as high as a three-story house. We stopped to examine a parade of leaf-cutter ants bringing bits of green leaves to the nest for food. A baby monkey caught our eye. Then we stopped to eat an incredibly sweet, ripe Zapote fruit from the jungle floor, and some ants from a lemon tree that tasted just like lemon!

We visited a couple of Achuar communities and learned of their lifestyle. The people introduced me to their ancient culture and to a small bit of their vast knowledge of jungle medicinal plants, as well as the birds, animals and insects of the area. Today, although they wear modern dress, they still live as they have for hundreds of years, in palm-thatched huts, often without walls. For them, there is little boundary between their home and the

jungle. They flow in and out, living in and off the jungle as much as under the cover of their houses. Far from being ignorant or primitive, however, they have a social structure as distinct and involved as any we know in our culture. It's just very, very different! Though blow guns with darts tipped with curare seem a long way from nuclear



All photos by Lucy Wendell-Thorpe

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## Rainforest Adventure *continued*

missiles, the Achuar are far more in tune with their surroundings than we in our "civilization." They also have a very cohesive political structure with other communities and the Indian society of the country.

Throughout my time there, my primary guide, Juan Carrasco, ably directed my tour. His fluency in English, Spanish, and the native Achuar language and his comprehensive knowledge of the area and natural history made the sometimes peaceful, sometimes intimidating and dangerous jungle feel safe. Also a photographer, he guided me to the best shots and gave me super tips on lenses and exposures, as well as answering my many questions. I am impressed with his knowledge, his competency as a guide, and his kindness to me in some embarrassing or difficult situations.

Juan has just formed his own adventure company called Ecuadorian Expeditions. The company leads all sorts of tours throughout Ecuador including sea kayak trips on the rivers and the ocean, mountain climbing in the Andes, trekking to active and extinct volcanos and on the Inca trail, bird-watching, camping and four-wheel-drive expeditions, nature trips, photography and ethnographical

trips. He's designed them to be of varying difficulties to accommodate different age groups and physical strength. I hope to go on more trips with him in the future and would be glad to answer any questions if any of you are interested. Or, one could contact him directly at his website: [www.ecuadorianexpeditions.com](http://www.ecuadorianexpeditions.com). His e-mail address is [ecuexpeditions@andinanet.net](mailto:ecuexpeditions@andinanet.net).



Walter, Achuar Indian guide



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## SMSKN heads to Stonington

Roll out of bed in an oceanfront house, pack a lunch, and carry your kayak just a few feet down the beach to the water. Head out for a great day of paddling with friends amongst the many islands of the Deer Isle archipelago. Sound good? If so, there may still be room for one or two more people at a Stonington house rental this June. Since the three houses that members of the club rented for June 23-30 are full, we are hoping to add another week onto our rental of a house on Spruce Harbor. If you are interested in joining us June 16-23 at the aptly named "Playhouse," please call Lee Bumsted at 799-1855 ASAP. (The house comes with a ping-pong table, a huge porch overlooking lupines and the ocean, and a saltwater pool.) Half-week shares may be possible. Also, if you would like to be put on a waiting list for June 23-30, call Lee; we'll contact you if someone planning to come is unable to do so.

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## SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

Bob Murray 846-3997

### SECRETARY

Lee Bumsted 799-1855

### TREASURER

Dorry Shaw 798-7915

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Laura Blutstein 775-4431

Bob Collins 985-4900

Berry Manter 773-0790

Kristen Woodberry 775-5480

### MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Bill Ridlon 799-5161  
[outdoors@gwi.net](mailto:outdoors@gwi.net)

### NEWSLINE

874-2640

THE NEWSLINE IS

AVAILABLE

24 HOURS A DAY

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### NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

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

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

Wendy Allen,  
45 Woodbury Street  
Keene, NH 03431

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## SMSKN Board

Your board of directors has been very busy since February. We've been meeting each month to plan events and direction for the club this year. Improved communications continues to be a high priority area. Thanks to our Webmaster, Bob Arledge, our web site ([www.smskn.org](http://www.smskn.org)) has come a long way since last year in providing a place for members to list events, a calendar, and links to other kayaking related sites. In addition a lot of work goes into producing the Newsletter. We are looking for a news editor to help out with this very important work. Call Bob Murray @ 846-3997 if you are interested in discussing it.

We started the season with three well attended pool sessions organized by Mark Daniele. We will be following this up with on the water training sessions, a navigation course, a CPR course, and two programs sponsored by the Coast guard. This is part of our ongoing effort to make kayaking a more enjoyable and safer sport. We would like to continue to expand this effort and welcome your input.

We are interested in what it is that paddlers new to the sport are interested in. We have many events each year which only appears to meet the needs of a portion of our 200 members. Let us know what you would like to see for future events.

We are exploring ways to recognize member contributions to our club. Our success as a club is dependent on the many volunteers who organize events, lead trips, identify meeting guests/topics, and publish our newsletter to name a few. At the end of the year we will have a drawing and prizes for those who have volunteered during the year.

We will continue throughout the rest of the year developing events and activities to improve and expand our club. At the end of the season we will have elections, which is an opportunity for you to have a hand at helping set the direction of the club.

Bob Murray  
Club President

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## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!!

Our webmaster, Bob Arledge, has been hard at work this past winter, polishing and improving our website. Watch the CALENDAR and EVENTS list for updated trips, and spontaneous paddling adventures. Check out the PHOTOS page (add yours), and the LINKS page for kayaking-related information. The WEATHER and WEATHER BUOY links, can provide latest forecasts and conditions. It's all at <<http://www.smskn.org>>[www.smskn.org](http://www.smskn.org) Check us out!!

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## 2001 Kayaking Season Begins!

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Contact</b>
May 17	7:00 PM	General Meeting - Falmouth Library - Coast Guard Safety Presentation	1	Bob Murray @ 846-3997
May 18	6:00 to 9:00 PM	Friends of Casco Bay Auction Portland Yacht Services 58 Fore St. Portland - Web site for more info. is www.cascobay.org	0	Tom Quimby @799-0106
May 20	Call	Stroke Clinic - East End Beach - Phil Daligan instructor - \$15/person max 10		Bob Murray @ 846-3997 rmurray@spire.com
May 23	5:30 to 9:00	CPR Course by Red Cross held at Maine Medical Center, Danna Education Center (call to confirm attendance) \$43/person	0	Bob Murray @846-3997 rmurray@spire.com
May 26	10:30 AM	Fort Gorges Picnic Paddle	1	Scott Lowicki @ 784-8716
May 26 to May 28	Call	Port Clyde to Black	2	Ken Friedman @ 865-0688 Ken_friedman@att.net
May 27	Call	Westport	1	Ray Houlihan @ 882-6505
June 3	Call	Lookout Pt. Harpswell State Boat ramp	2	Jon Swan @ 777-3626 Jonswan@gwi.net
June 6	6:00 PM	East End Beach	2	Bob Arledge @442-9730
June 8	6:00 PM	Fort Williams	2	Mike Marino @ 767-2995
June 9	Call	New Harbor/Muscungus Bay	2	David Lay @ 829-4747 Ray Houlihan @ 882-6505
June 10	Call	Bethel Point, Trip to our newly adopted island, Little Snow		Lee Bumstead @ 799-1855 Lbumsted@cs.com
June 13	6:00 PM	Winslow Park	2	Mark Daniele @865-9558
June 19	6:00 PM	Fort Williams	?	Mike Marino @ 767-2995
June 20	6:00 PM	Royal River - N. Elm St - Royal River Park	1	Howard Kessler @ 865-3694
June 23	Call	Richmond Island Trip	2	Diana Lee Brown @ 799-6117
June 27	6:00 PM	East End Beach	2	Kristen Woodberry @775-5480
June 28	6:00 PM	Bustin Island from bridge before Wolfsneck Farms (3-4) miles	1	Sandy Martin @ 846-4555
June 29 -July 1	All Day Events	Maine Island Kayak Co. Annual Paddlefest - race around Peaks on July 1		766-2373 www.maineislandkayak.com
July 8	11:00 AM	Androscoggin Fun Race	1	Faye Brown @353-2728 BFayeray@aol.com
July 14	Call	Muscle Ridge	2	David Lay @ 829-4747 Ray Houlihan @ 882-6505
July 15	Call	Merrymeeting Bay Brunswick, 10 miles among the islands	1 to 2	Carolyn Welch @ 725-8178
July 21	10:30 AM	Winslow Park, S. Freeport	1	Erin Avallone @ 799-1776
July 22	Call	Little Whaleboat from Cousins, Sand Beach	2	Bob Murray @846-3997 rmurray@spire.com
July 29	Call	Muscle ridge Day paddle (12-15 miles)	2	Kristen Woodberry @775-5480
Aug 12	Call	fort Popham to Sequin	2	Alice McKenna @647-2251
Aug 17-19	Call	Mooselookmegutic - Student Island Camping	1-2	Mark Daniele@865-9588
Sep 1-3	11:00 AM	Stonington Area - Call for further details	2-3	Jon Swan @ 777-3626 Jonswan@gwi.net

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## Some Trip Coordinator Tips

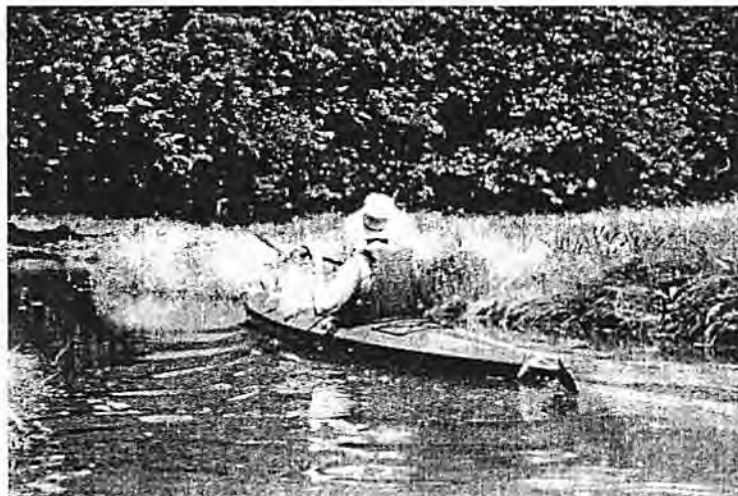
### Ahead of time:

- Get disclaimer forms from Lee Bumsted.
- Optional: Borrow group safety gear (a flare gun set, a waist-belt tow rope, and first aid kit). Contact the last trip coordinator or Mark Daniele.
- Optional: Give trip members directions to put-in, encourage car-pooling.
- In case of stormy or windy weather, postpone/cancel trip or switch trip to more sheltered area.

### Just prior to departure

- Ask everyone to sign the waiver form and collect forms. (Return to Lee Bumsted at your convenience.)
- Gather everyone at the shore and review the float plan. Talk about trip destination and duration, and review your route on a chart.
- Review the marine weather forecast, what wind and wave conditions may be expected.
- Check if anyone has time limits, skill concerns, medical concerns.
- Discuss assumptions on paddling as one group, in pods, etc. Indicate who is the one to follow (this doesn't have to be the trip coordinator). Decide if there will be sweep boaters and let members know who the sweeps are.
- Ask that members stay within auditory range, or visual range. Consider a whistle or hand signal convention. Ask that members inform you if they are leaving the group to paddle alone or in a newly-created pod.
- Note that everyone is responsible for themselves and for providing their own appropriate equipment, i.e., PFD's, proper boat flotation, lights for evening paddling trips, wetsuits/drysuits if needed, etc.
- Determine who has special safety gear. Identify members who have tow ropes, VHF, GPS, etc.

stctips.sam 5/5/99



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## Classification of Trips

This rating scale was designed to provide paddlers with some idea of trip difficulty and the level of paddling proficiency they should have to go on trips. Trip coordinators will try to give the most accurate rating to a trip that they can. Actual trip difficulty may differ from the rated level as a result of changing conditions (weather, waves, currents, boat traffic etc.). Remember that trip coordinators are just organizing the trip and are not paid guides. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to determine whether your level of expertise and your equipment are sufficient for a given trip. The trip coordinator does however have the right to exclude you from a trip if he/she does not believe for that given day that you meet the club's guidelines for the conditions/trip

### Level 1:

A paddle for the member that has the minimal experience or someone who wishes to do a short easy paddle. The length of the trip should be less than 5 miles at a leisurely pace. It would be expected to be in a sheltered area without a long open crossing. The person needs to have experienced a wet exit and can with assistance get back in his or her boat.

### Level 2:

A paddle for the member who has sufficient experience to paddle 10 miles in the ocean with waves and wind. This is typical of club paddles that are scheduled during the year. The participant should feel comfortable with assisting in a rescue of a fellow paddler or themselves.

### Level 3:

A paddle that is up to 20 miles with potentially long open crossings (greater than 2 miles) with an opportunity to be exposed to high winds and waves. An example would be a trip to Monhegan Island or paddling in areas with known strong currents. This is a paddle for very experienced paddler with a strong and practiced set of paddling and rescue skills. Self rescue skills are very important at this level.

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## New Adopted Island: Little Snow

This year, SMSKN has decided to adopt a Maine Island Trail Association island closer to home than the one we had been watching over in Muscongus Bay. We are going to help take care of Little Snow Island, in Quahog Bay. From the Bethel Point launch ramp near Cundy's Harbor, it is a two-mile paddle to Little Snow. As island adopters, we can help clean the shoreline of washed-up debris and report back to MITA on the island's condition and usage.

We have a club paddle planned for June 10th which will include a visit to Little Snow. (The island is owned by Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands, so you don't have to be a MITA member to land there.) If you'd like to help do a little "spring cleaning," pack a trash bag in your kayak and join us! Call Lee Bumsted (799-1855) for more information about the trip. If you'd like to know more about the Maine Island Trail Association and their stewardship programs, check out [www.mita.org](http://www.mita.org) or call them at 761-8225.

### Help wanted!

If you would like to help mail out the next newsletter, and you live in the Greater Portland area, please let Lee Bumsted (799-1855) or another board member know of your interest.

Thank you.