



SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK NEWSLETTER

August 2003

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, to have fun.

Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network
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Officers

President Bob Arledge
Secretary Lee Bumsted
Treasurer Dorry Shaw

Membership Chairs

Bill Ridon/Lyn Suggs

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Bob Collins, Susan Payne, David Lay,
Dave Boyle

Newsletter Editor Michael Charek

A message from your editor

By Michael Charek

SMSKN News is always looking for new material for the next issue. Trip reports, kayak-related bits, photos, whatever you think might deserve exposure...send it to me at mcharek1@maine.rr.com. Your material should at least be peripherally related to kayaking in Maine. Who knows? You might see your name in print.

- SPECIAL NOTICE -

The September SMSKN Meeting is Rescheduled to August 26th

By Bob Arledge

Oops, I've fouled things up again! The program for the August SMSKN membership meeting is a panel discussion about "When Bad Things Happen to Good Paddlers." I was in charge of organizing the panel and running the meeting. However, the trip that Mike Marino, Dave Boyle, Shyril O'Steen and I are doing up the coast of Maine has been pushed back a week and I will still be paddling on the 21st of August. I was unable to find anyone who wanted to take on my job, so we are going to have to move the meeting back to the following week. I have reserved the Falmouth Library meeting room for Tuesday, August the 26th, at the usual meeting time of 7:00 pm. One advantage of waiting until our crew gets back from the paddle is that we are bound to have some examples of things gone awry. If you have found yourself in a "bad" situation and survived, please plan on sharing your experience with your fellow paddlers and let us know what you learned. If you did not survive I would ask you not participate in this panel discussion, but join us for the discussion on "Kayaking and Metaphysics."

Elections are coming!

by Lee Bumsted

Hear ye, hear ye, the SMSKN elections are coming! As much as the network's board members enjoy the great prestige and honor that come with our positions, we would be more than happy to let other people take a turn; in fact, we are requesting that you do so! Here's your chance to contribute to the smooth operation of your favorite paddling club.

Your board of directors is comprised of seven volunteers. Three people are officers: the president, the treasurer, and the secretary. Four others are members-at-large. Board members meet for two or three hours one evening each month to plan upcoming events and address club policy questions. If you think you might like to be on the ballot in October, please contact Bob Arledge, Lee Bumsted, or any of the other current board members. We can tell you more about the perks of being a board member!



A DAY LATE AND A PADDLE SHORT

by Dave Boyle

On Saturday, June 7, I paddled with Bob Arledge around Sebascodegan Island. Despite the calm conditions, only two of us showed up for this club trip. Bob's good planning meant that we had the tide helping us most of the way, so the somewhat long distance was easily covered. We saw seals, ospreys, eider chicks, and a pair of magnificent eagles. Two women from Manhattan were paddling with a local guide from Seaspray Kayaking when we came upon them at Cundy's Harbor, and we enjoyed discussing the 36-mile trip around Manhattan Island that some people do by kayak. A few people even swim around the island.

Laziness on Saturday led to an easy decision to go paddle again on Sunday – my boat and gear were still not unloaded from the car. This time four of us met Bob at Land's End, intending to paddle to Jewell Island to help with the semiannual MITA volunteer island cleanup.

As I loaded gear into my boat, there was a moment of alarm when I couldn't find my spare paddle. This turned to a rush of panic when I realized my regular paddle, spray skirt, and PFD were also gone! All safely tucked away back in the garage. I now recalled, after being conscientiously rinsed with the

hose yesterday. Well it didn't look like I was going to paddle today after all, but I consoled myself with the thought of escaping work out on Jewell!

Unexpectedly, this wasn't to be the case, thanks to Beth, who provided an extra paddle and spray skirt, and to Bob, who supplied an extra one of those funky inflatable PFDs. At least now I'd get out of working on that porch restoration at home!

It was probably the first time any of us made the trip to Jewell from Land's End by a direct route outside the ledges in the vicinity of West Brown Cow. With only a slight swell and no wind, we had some great views of sea birds and seals along the way, and seemed to arrive on Jewell Island in no time. We met MITA's Jewell Island caretakers on the beach at the Punchbowl. They told us the cleanup had been the day before! This we found quite comical (although our trip

coordinator found it less so, and he felt MITA deserved the credit for the communication breakdown during the early planning). In any case, there was still useful work waiting to be done. We spent a couple of hours hauling storm-wrecked wire lobster traps and other debris across the island for pickup, and rounding up rocks for rebuilding eroded steps to one of the campsites.

For a while, Shyril and I did an unexpected exploration of the south end of the island amongst the mosquitoes while trying to locate the rest of our group. (This island is a gem, with beautiful, lush woods covering the interior.) Eventually we found everyone back at the Punchbowl, where we all engaged in a leisurely lunch. For a certain member of the group this was sushi eaten with chopsticks, accompanied by white wine, of course.

Back in our boats, we spent a few moments playing in some small waves, and then set a course through the mist for Eagle Island. The Peary summer home/museum had just

opened for the season, and we took our time enjoying its various treasures and curiosities and the great views. We also grilled the head caretaker about whether she thought Peary actually made it to the North Pole (she presented a strong case in favor, but can you have her job and not?!).

Before the trip ended, we enjoyed a little excitement

when we decided to stop briefly on another nearby island, since this necessitated an interesting surf landing on the rocks. More interesting gymnastics followed upon reentering our boats. During the paddle back to the take-out, a beautiful late afternoon light developed, rounding out a satisfying day with a sense of peace.

Thanks to Bob Arledge, Beth Bordowitz, Shyril O'Green, and Jon Swan for an enjoyable (and possible) trip. It really did beat working on that porch back home!

Note: For some interesting background on Peary and his summer home on Eagle Island check the following web site: <http://www.pearyeagleisland.org/introduction.htm>



Spot Light on Safety Lights

Susan Payne

I was recently on a SMSKN evening paddle and had a great time. Although each one of us had a light, as the group coordinator had requested, I noticed that the lights weren't very effective. Most of them could only be seen from one direction, and very few of them were visible from more than about 10 feet away.

I decided it wasn't enough to have a light; we needed to have more effective lights.

Based on my experience, I asked Network members to send me tips on lights and lighting systems that work for them. I've compiled their responses here, as well as tips from the Coast Guard and some criteria for effective kayak lighting.

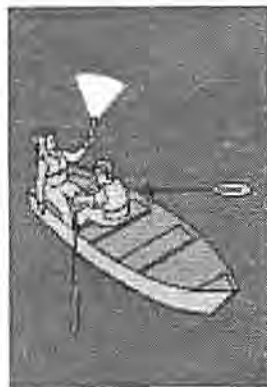
These are some of the suggestions I've gotten from other kayakers:

- A small light to attach to the PFD. Some are specially designed to be visible from the back and from both sides. Waterproof LED flashlights that use 4 AA batteries and can be tied to the PFD are especially useful.
- A headlamp to attach to a hat or to a head band.
- A flashlight attached to the kayak paddle and about two feet from the paddle, pointing toward the paddle. When lit while paddling, it will illuminate the paddle. The movement of the paddle makes the light easier for others to see. The flashlight can easily be pointed toward an oncoming boat or obstacle while still on the paddle. If you use a quick release, such as a Velcro strap, you can quickly release it for other uses or to wave at someone.
- Light sticks or glow sticks, such as the green neon tubes sold to kids at fairs and festivals. One type, Cyalume Lightstick, can be bought at Hamilton Marine. They can be given out to group members for evening paddles. They remain unlit until activated by twisting and will last up to 12 hours after activation.
- A mast light that can be attached to a short aluminum pole, about three feet high, by a suction cup. This is attached to the stern of the boat and can serve to give the kayak greater visibility, which is especially important in heavy boat traffic or swells.

Notes from the U S Coast Guard: U S Coast Guard regulations calls for recreational boats that are manually powered – and what is more manually powered than a kayak? – to have night signals or navigational lights when operating from sunset to sunrise and in or near areas of reduced visibility.

Remember that strobe lights are considered by the Coast Guard to indicate extreme distress. The Coast Guard must try to rescue you if they see your strobe light flashing. Only a strobe light only if you need to be rescued!

The Coast Guard website offers useful tips on lights and other navigational safety devices: http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/fed_reqs/equ_vds.htm.



Criteria for effective kayak lights: I've concluded that lighting devices for kayakers should be:

- Visible from several angles
- Light weight
- Unobtrusive to the paddler, so that they don't blind us or interfere with night vision
- Long-lasting
- Waterproof
- Dependable

I plan to get some more effective kayak lights and to use them as I would my car headlights – at night, at dusk or dawn, and whenever I want an extra degree of safety, such as when crossing a busy channel, when there is heavy boat traffic, or when the kayak is partially hidden due to swells.

I found enough in the Coast Guard web site to do a future article on visual and sound-producing distress signals. Send me your tips on flares and whistles that work for you and I'll compile them in another article. You can contact me at 207-799-4048 (until 10 PM and on week-end days).



Trip Planning Meeting and Event List

At the July club meeting about 25 members got together and planned a number of trips for the rest of this paddling season. The goal, as before, was to have at least one trip on the calendar for every Wednesday evening and every Saturday and Sunday for the entire season. Quite a few trips were planned; a number of trip coordinators have posted their trips on the SMSKN website Event List. A number of days are still available, so please feel free to post your trip if you have not already done so. Refer to the website often to check on new additions to the Event List: www.smskn.org.

8/8/2003 Friday – Kennebunkport Rocks & Ledges

We will paddle northeast from the Kennebunk River, past the Bush estate toward Cape Porpoise along the rocks and ledges. It may be a little choppy, so spray skirts and intermediate paddling skills are necessary. The swirly water among the rocks is fun to paddle, if you plan to play along the rocks be sure to wear your helmet. . Difficulty: 2 - Moderate; Category: Day Paddle; Location: Kennebunkport, Meet: 6 pm, Call for details; Leader: Bob Collins, Home 985-4900 / Cell 590-2923, bob4collins@gwi.net.

8/9/2003 Saturday – North Casco Bay Island Overnight

Cancelled unfortunately – parking and island use limitations arose. Difficulty: 2 - Moderate; Category: Overnight Paddle; Location: Phippsburg, Maine; Meet: 10:00 AM, call leader; Limit: 12; Leader: Steve Winter, 443-9634, swinter@blazenetme.net.

8/10/2003 Sunday – Rescue Practice

Practice self and group rescues in a warm pond. Last time, some people practiced their rolls. Peer instruction for all techniques. Pack a lunch in your boat. We eat during intermission. A wet suit helps cushion and avoid bruising while climbing over deck fittings. Range Pond State Park is about 30 miles from Portland. Take Rt. 26 from Gray to a right on Rt. 122. The state park entrance is about 1 mile on left, past Poland Spring bottling plant. \$3 entrance fee. Difficulty: 1 - Easy; Category: Day Paddle; Location: Poland, ME; Meet: 11 AM, Boat Ramp, Range Pond State Park; Limit: