



SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK NEWSLETTER

November 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
P.O. Box 4794
Portland, ME 04112
www.smskn.org

2003 Officers

President	Bob Arledge
Secretary	Lee Bumsted
Treasurer	Dorry Shaw
Members at Large	
	Bob Collins, Susan Payne, David Lay, Dave Boyle
Membership Chairs	
	Bill Ridlon/Lyn Suggs
Newsletter Editor	Michael Charek

A message from your editor

By Michael Charek

This will be my last issue as editor of SMSKN News. Duty has called me to assume the post of President for 2004, so I must pass the baton (or is it paddle?) to my worthy successor, David Lay. Please contact David at drlay@gte.net with any story ideas, actual stories, photos, or other kayaking-related material for the newsletter. Thank you.

Election News

The annual election of SMSKN officers was held at the October meeting. Using the time-honored Soviet system of one candidate per office, the following new board members and officers won by a landslide with 28 votes cast: President, Michael Charek; Secretary, Jayne Engel; Members at Large, John Ropes, Reed Markley, and Sandy Hodge. Returning for another year of service, with similar spectacular election returns, are Treasurer Dorry Shaw and Member at Large Susan Payne.

Thanks for a job well done to outgoing Board members: President Bob Arledge, Secretary Lee Bumsted, and Members at Large Bob Collins, David Lay, and David Boyle.



September Photo Contest

This image is one of the prize-winning photos from our September photo contest at the Great Lost Bear. It was taken by Lee Bumsted, and comes from an island off the coast of Stonington. Good job, Lee!

Rounding out the top three spots were a shot by Penny Markley, and a second Stonington-area photo by Lee Bumsted. Good job to everyone who entered!

Trips for 2004

by John Ropes

Over the winter months your club officers and board members will be setting up programs for next year. Education and training will be stressed. Meeting content will be planned with the goal of having interesting and fun meetings. Another big part of the planning process is encouraging members to set up paddling trips.

As a new member of the club and a newly elected Board member-at-large my experience is admittedly limited. Paddling on a number of club trips has been fun. Even more rewarding was personally setting up and organizing a trip. The weather was clear, and eight people had a nice day paddling out the Saco River around Wood Island and back. My first year as a member of SMSKN was rewarding and fun.

Many club members enjoy paddling on club trips. A number of members, however, do not participate in club paddles. Possibly we need more trips to meet more member needs. Many of our members like an easy pace. Some like more distance and a faster pace. Some like challenges such as ledges, currents, and surf.

Location of trips is important to some. At our last meeting Stonington seemed to be many paddlers' favorite. Most of us have a "home" area that we know well. There are a number of books that describe in detail many fine trips.

Day trips are the most common. There are possibilities of overnight trips with or without camping. Some members would like us to have more multi-day trips. Weekend trips are favored but a number of us are retired and would welcome mid-week trips. The crowds are smaller too.

Every member can participate in the trip planning process. If you do not want to organize would you be willing to be co-leader and give tips and route and tide recommendations to a leader? To summarize;

- We would like to have more trips this year.
- Tell us what type of trip are you looking for.
- What types of challenges?
- How far do you like to paddle?
- What is your favorite area?
- What area would you like to try?
- Do you want to camp?
- Do you want some multi-day trips?
- Would you like some mid-week trips?
- Would you be a leader?
- Would you be a co-leader?

Your board needs feedback. Click on Contact Us at the bottom of the www.SMSKN.org homepage to send us email. With your help we will have a great trip season in 2004.



Mike Marino Leaving Kittery
photo by Bob Arledge

A Trip to the Saguenay Fiord

by Chick Carroll

In early September, Ann and I decided we wanted a complete change for a short vacation. Both Bob Arledge and Steve Ward had told me about the whales of the Saint Lawrence River, in the region where it is joined by the Saguenay River. Having just moved into a new house, which we have been building ourselves, we were ready for a break. We have become great fans of Quebec, so the choice was easy. Head north!

So, on September 5, we loaded the car with camping and paddling gear, including dry suits, and turned north. (We also brought our rusty French with us, although we were to learn it wasn't strictly necessary.) There are two ways to get to the region. One is up through Skowhegan and Jackman to Quebec City, then three hours north from there...a total of about eight hours. The other, more scenic but longer, is up to Fort Kent, and then to Riviere du Loup, Quebec for an hour ferry ride across the Saint Lawrence. We took this route on our trip north, and the shorter route on our way home.

We were unprepared for the scale of the Saint Lawrence; it was about 15 miles wide where we ferried across, and gets much wider as it flows northeast to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. There are dramatic mountains on the north shore; commercial vessels head up the river, bound for Montreal and the Great Lakes; and there are more whales than you can count. On arrival on the north shore we drove about 30 minutes northeast to Tadoussac, a small, pretty town which is the shopping center of the region. From there we continued to Les Bergeronnes, and the campground Paradis Marins, which Bob and Steve had mentioned. We arrived around dark and set up camp, not really knowing what it was like. Climbing out of the tent the next morning, a clear sunny day, I could see whales lazily feeding within a long stone's throw of our tent. Every morning and evening was like that—whales and more whales seen from our tent site. They were mostly Minkes, although I thought I saw one humpback.

As I understand it, the confluence of the relatively warm Saguenay and the frigid Saint Lawrence creates optimum conditions for whales to feed. Also, the Saint Lawrence becomes hundreds of feet deep there, making it still more whale friendly. Thirteen different species have been seen there, including sperm whales and the largest whale in the world—the blue whale.

There is a kayak outfitter there (with some good equipment), and plenty of paddlers from beginner to expert. It is a paddlers' and divers' campground. We put in after breakfast and headed upriver. We didn't wear dry suits that day, but I wished I had, as I could feel the temperature of the water through my hull. The divers told me it was four degrees centigrade; whatever it was, it was cold, even though the days were sunny and warm.

Truth to tell, we didn't encounter whales while actually paddling, because we didn't get going until mid morning. Both Bob and Steve told me they did paddle among whales. However, we saw so many from our campsite that it didn't make much difference to us. Also, truth to tell, the paddling is not fabulous, since there are no islands. There is only the shore, which admittedly is scenic, but after a summer of



*Saint Lawrence views
photos by Chick Carroll*

paddling on the Maine coast, we get spoiled. We paddled two days, the second one with dry suits in rougher conditions.

Where we spent most of our time was on the Saguenay itself. This isn't just scenic; it's spectacular!...a fiord 40 or 50 miles long, with real mountains coming right down to the water. Picture-book villages sit on both sides of the river, and trails run along both shores. We took easy walks on a couple of occasions, seeing Beluga whales up close each time, and we hiked a demanding eight-mile trail one day. And we napped in the sun a lot. We used the Paradis Marins campground as a base for our explorations, and most of our meals there, preferring to cook our own food.

During the latter part of the trip, we crossed over the Saguenay to the west side and stayed the night at a funky hostel, Auberge Chez Monika, in the beautiful village of L'Anse St. Jean, which overlooks the Saguenay. All told, we spent six nights in the region—paddling, walking, hiking, sightseeing, and doing nothing. And we could have spent several more. We found ourselves wanting to go further east along the Saint Lawrence to explore the wild regions there, but the distances are long and our time was short. We hope next year to paddle the Mingan Archipelago, a couple hundred miles to the east.

Our last 24 hours were spent in Quebec City, where we have stayed before, much to our delight. I would not

recommend, however, taking two kayaks into the old city. Only due to the kindness of a friend who loaned us space in a private garage for our kayaks were we able to sleep soundly that night without worrying about the boats.

We arrived home after an eight-day trip that was everything we hoped for—spectacular scenery, whales, paddling, hiking, a different culture, time and weather to relax, and, thanks to the Canadian dollar and our camping, very economical as well. Thanks to Bob and Steve for their help to us in planning it.



What Should I Wear??

by David Lay

I am generally a conservative paddler, preferring not to be out in tight tall waves. I have been unexpectedly out of my boat, and I do not like it. For that reason, I tend to choose my days to paddle somewhat carefully. I also practice rolling. The sea is unpredictable, however, and so inversion and immersion are inevitable.

In Maine, we have a challenge in the fact that the waters are quite cool even in mid-summer. Some suggest that we should always dress for immersion. This is an option, but difficult if the result is hyperthermia when air temperatures reach 85 degrees with humidity. Our friends at H2Outfitters have suggested that when air and water temperatures sum to less than 100 degrees, it is probably time to wear a wet suit. This criterion is a good one, but even better if each paddler decides the sum which suits them best. I like 120 degrees (50 degree water on a 70 degree day or 55 degree water on a 65 degree day). I wear a wetsuit if the sum of air and water temperatures is 120 degrees or less.

I have several wetsuit options. I have a Farmer John wetsuit for cool days. I have a shortie with short sleeves which I have found to be uncomfortable to paddle in because of those sleeves. (I only wear it when I know I will be in the water practicing, and not for paddling.) For the days in-between the Farmer John and no wetsuit, I now have a zipper wetsuit vest. This option is my favorite transitional garb because it is very flexible. I can zip or unzip it as my comfort level changes. I can also put it on or off without giving the



Dry Suit



Farmer John



Dry Top



Paddling Jacket



Wetsuit Vest

appearance of undressing in public. Since I also have wetsuit shorts, I can combine shorts and vest when needed to provide equal protection to a shortie.

My recommendation is to buy gear which allows you to adapt to the conditions in which you paddle with as much flexibility as possible. Though our gear is sometimes purchased from diving shops, we are more like hikers than divers in the variety of conditions we may experience on an outing. By dressing in layers, or in clothing which provides options, we are better able to adapt to what we experience.

This is my guide:

- Winter Conditions: (80 degrees air plus water) Dry suit, booties, gloves, plus as much fleece as appropriate to conditions. (I do not have a dry suit, and so do not go out at these temperatures.)

- Cold Water /Cool Air: (100 degrees air plus water) Farmer John, tall boots, pogies or gloves, dry top, plus a fleece if really cool.

- Cool Water /Warm Air: (120 degrees air plus water) Wet suit vest, shorts (possibly neoprene), booties, paddle jacket. (The paddle jacket acts as a windbreaker, particularly if you get wet. Put on or take off to control comfort.)

- Warm Water /Hot Air (140 degrees air plus water) Shirt, shorts, neoprene slippers.

I always wear my PFD and spray skirt. I always have extra clothing, including rain gear, on board. Conditions change, so I bring layer components that I can don as needed. I always wear a hat and sun protection. I never wear cotton.

Remember to consider what your clothing will do when you are in the water. You may find that you have to remove a fleece jacket or tall boots if you cannot swim in them. Think, too, of how difficult your layers will make it for you to "answer the call of nature."

Everyone is different!! Some people like swimming in 60-degree water; others would not even consider it. Find what works best for you. If you do not have the right gear to go out, postpone your paddle or stick to a narrow river where you know safety is a matter of standing up or a very short swim!

Down East by Paddle Power

Dave Boyle

(Photos for this story by Bob Arledge and Dave Boyle)

Bob Arledge and Mike Marino had been conspiring for at least a year to sea kayak the entire Maine coast from the New Hampshire border at Kittery to the Canadian border at Lubec. They were kind enough to invite me along. Unfortunately, when we set off on August 2nd this summer, fog and showers were forecast for the next nine days! Bob had only three weeks before needing to return to work, so we were setting ourselves up for an ambitious task. Our friend Shyril O'Steen was also going to join us for the last week. If Mike hadn't broken three ribs falling off his mountain bike (and he's 59 years old mind you!) we would have started one week sooner.

For the first three days we navigated by dead reckoning in



Bob Leaving Kittery

fog to get to Mike's house in Cape Elizabeth. As we attempted to make a surf landing on the first day, Mike was caught by a wave, broke his paddle, capsized, and came out of his boat. After rescuing him, we had to paddle 11 more miles to a camping spot, completing a 29-mile day. Intense bugs gave us no rest, driving us into our tents after a very hasty dinner of soup. Only one day out, and I'm wondering how many more



Wood Island off Biddeford



we'll survive if they're all like this! It was a constant challenge to keep clothing, sleeping bags, and food dry in all the fog and drizzle, and by the time we got to Mike's house we sure were glad for the luxury of a clothes dryer, not to mention real beds and the steak dinner that his wife Nancy fixed!

After two days of paddling with Bob's spare Greenland style paddle, Mike was more than happy to replace it with a fancy new Euro paddle bought at Maine Island Kayak. We maintained a fairly fast pace, and only one day was needed to cross Casco Bay, another to cross Muscongus Bay, and yet one more to get all the way across Penobscot Bay to Stonington in a long 30-mile push past Vinalhaven (our longest day). Some of the roughest water of the trip was encountered in this stretch. During the passage to Seguin Island we were dipping out of sight of each other in the seas; and when we paddled by the mouth of the Kennebec River several miles offshore, the influence of the current was impressive as it produced four- to seven-foot cresting waves. We also indulged in a traditional lobster bake on one of the islands where we camped along the way, after Mike and Bob bought lobsters from a boat pulling traps. They lamented not having wine with the seafood!

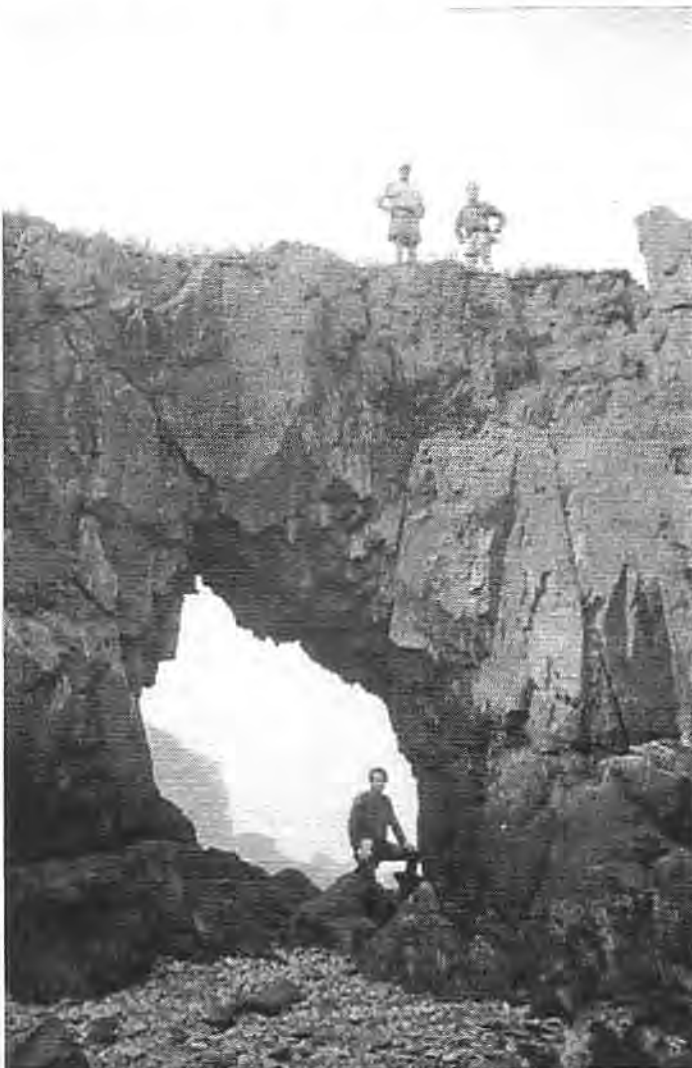
From the start, our plan was to eat in restaurants as

much as possible. Often we could find a convenient place for lunch, sometimes dinner. It was odd to combine eating good food with wearing wet paddling gear (no sense putting on dry clothes only to get them wet in mist on the way there). We always dried off our chairs with paper towels when we left, but the booth with fabric seats at the Fisherman's Inn in Winter Harbor must have been a surprise to the next party!

Ahead of schedule after the first week, we had to slow down before meeting Shyrl. So we took a rest day in Stonington, spent a day exploring Swans Island, and visited the remote community of Frenchboro on Long Island near Swans. On Swans, our friend Iver gave us an island tour and entertained us with insider's insights. There aren't any practical places for kayakers to camp around Mount Desert Island, so we were forced to endure a luxurious new B&B and gourmet dining in Southwest Harbor. From there, our crossing of Frenchman Bay in fog had us dodging "The Cat," the high-speed (55 mph) catamaran that goes between Nova Scotia and Bar Harbor, and when we landed for a rest on Egg Rock we became an attraction for tourists on a large whale-watching tour boat.

After we met Shyrl at the fishing village of Corea, the sun finally came out (she took credit!), and we began the remote and interesting "Down East" section of the coast. There was some excitement at Shipstern Island, with its 90-foot cliffs. The water is always choppy on the seaward side, and when we paddled around Shyrl got in too close, and was caught by a breaking wave that capsized her. After a few tense moments a rescue was accomplished, and we landed on a nearby island and broke out the stove to help Shyrl warm up with hot boullion (she also wanted chocolate!). Much to the Bob's and my delight, Mike complained that HE didn't get that treatment from us after HIS capsized!

After 18 days we rounded West Quoddy Head (ironically,



Jordan's Deight



Shyrl Playing in the Rocks

the easternmost point in the U.S.), and soon arrived (illegally) on the Canadian shore at Campobello Island. We got a little silly celebrating with glasses of wine at a bar in Lubec, and that night camped at Sunset Point Campground overlooking Cobscook Bay. Surprisingly, we had no plan in place for getting home. Extra time allowed for a kayak side-trip to

explore Eastport. Eventually we were able to get through by phone to the bottle redemption center in Machias that also serves as the U-Haul rental office, and a one-way rental of a 24-foot truck was arranged, which is what got both us and our gear home.

We paddled approximately 320 miles, and it was foggy for the first 12 days! Seeing the entire Maine coast in one continuous trip was a wonderful opportunity to observe how much it changes from one end to the other. We felt it won't be possible to do this trip in the same way ten years from now, as the coast continues changing at a rapid rate.

Special thanks are offered to all those who helped us; Velma Reilly in New Harbor for letting us camp in her yard; Cynde Clark for unintentional hospitality at her beautiful Stonington house, and her neighbor John Beasley for letting us leave boats on his shore and carry gear across his yard; Terry at Central House Inn B&B for finding us on the waterfront at Southwest Harbor and driving us to the inn; Iver and Maili on Swans Island for the great dinner and island insights; Peter and Cindy Caveny at Jonesport for the great dinner and conversation, and a place to stay; and Joanne and the staff at Sunset Point Campground in Lubec for their good natured help and the ride to Machias to get the U-Haul truck.

Event List

11/20/2003 Thursday – November Membership Meeting

Our November membership meeting will be a "Photo Potluck." Members are encouraged to bring a dozen photos or so to share with the group. Photos should be digital images or slides. A laptop and digital projector will be available, along with an "analog" slide projector. Please arrange to send your digital images by email or on CD to Bob Arledge ahead of time. If you have a carousel for your slides bring that, or just bring the slides to the meeting to put into the carousel. 35mm slides only. If you have prints you would like scanned call Mike Charek at 761-0556 to make arrangements. Please check back here for further details as they develop. Hope to see you there! As usual, some of us will be stopping at Ricetta's Pizza at 5:30 pm for dinner before the meeting; please join us. Ricetta's is in the Shops at Falmouth Village shopping center (look for Staples.) The Falmouth Library, where we are meeting, is at the corner of Depot & Lunt Roads, about 100 yards west of Ricetta's. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Meeting; Location: Falmouth, Maine; Meet: 7:00 PM, Falmouth Public Library; Limit: None; Leader: Bob Arledge, 415-1567, bob@arledge.cc.

12/13/2003 Saturday – December Holiday Party

Mike and Nancy Marino have graciously agreed to host our party once again. December 13, 2-5 pm. This will be a potluck affair; additional details to follow. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Other; Location: Cape Elizabeth, Maine; Meet: 2:00 PM, Marino Residence; Leader: Bob Arledge, 415-1567, bob@arledge.cc.

1/15/2004 Thursday – January Membership Meeting

Meeting topic to be announced. Please check back later. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Meeting; Location: Falmouth, Maine; Meet: 7:00 PM, Falmouth Public Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556

2/19/2004 Thursday – February Membership Meeting

Meeting topic to be announced. Please check back later. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Meeting; Location: Falmouth, Maine; Meet: 7:00 PM, Falmouth Public Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556

3/18/2004 Thursday – March Membership Meeting

Meeting topic to be announced. Please check back later. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Meeting; Location: Falmouth, Maine; Meet: 7:00 PM, Falmouth Public Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556

4/15/2004 Thursday – April Membership Meeting

This will be our annual trip planning meeting. Please check back later for more details. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Meeting; Location: Falmouth, Maine; Meet: 7:00 PM, Falmouth Public Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556



Lubec at Last!

