



SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

May 2004

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
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www.smskn.org

Officers

Michael Charek	President
Dorry Shaw	Treasurer
Jayne Engel	Secretary
Sandra Hodge	Board Member at Large
Reed Markley	Board Member at Large
Susan Payne	Board Member at Large
John Ropes	Board Member at Large

Newsletter Editor

David Lay

Membership Committee

Reed Markley	Chairman, Database Mgr.
Susan Payne	
David Lay	

President's Notes

Mike Charek

We had a very successful trip planning meeting on April 22, putting some 34 trips up on the calendar! A great start to the season. Now if only the weather would cooperate...

Our bulk emailing system seems to be working, wherein I

get to play the part of the "evil spammer", sending hundreds of emails into the mailboxes of unsuspecting victims. I hope my periodic "SMSKN Updates" are proving useful. We (the SMSKN Board) see these updates as a way to remind the membership of upcoming events and inform you of breaking news.

I'm going to give a little plug now for the Gulf of Maine Sea Kayak Symposium (GOMSKS), which will be taking place in Castine, July 9-11. I've been involved with helping to publicize the event through the updated website, and other avenues such as this one. GOMSKS presents a wonderful opportunity to meet other paddlers from near and far, and to listen to and learn from some of the "stars" of the sea kayaking world.

As an example of the folks who will be coming, we just received word that Michael Powers, a member of the Tsunami Rangers, a photographer and filmmaker who has paddled in some far-off and challenging places, and co-author of the book "Extreme Sea Kayaking," will be coming to GOMSKS to show slides and talk about his upcoming book. There will be demonstrations and classes taught by Nigel Foster, Doug Van Doren, and Wayne Horodowich, along with Tom Bergh, Ken Fink, Keith Attenborough, Sandy Martin, and others.

In addition to the presentations and classes, of course, will be the opportunity to see and try out a wide variety of boats, paddles, and other gear on the beach and in the field house. There will also be informative, educational talks on the history of the islands of the Gulf of Maine.

Last but not least, GOMKS was organized with the goal of "building the kayak community". Ken Fink's letter, which I excerpted at some length in my last Update, outlines how this might be done at the level of the paddling clubs of New England. Ken envisions the clubs coming together to share ideas and goals, and possibly developing a force which can have an impact on the paddling industry and on local and state regulations.

A local example of regulations affecting our sport was noted by Al Koldji at the last SMSKN meeting. The Freeport Harbormaster is planning to introduce regulations at a Town Council meeting to ban kayaks from the Freeport Town Landing. Connecticut already has very limited water access for kayakers; although we are a long way from having those kinds of problems in Maine, this kind of thing gradually

builds, one landing or town after another until you'd need to own your own waterfront property in order to be able to launch your boat. Well maybe not that bad, but you get the idea. Ken Fink believes that some sort of organization of paddling clubs may help affect the course of events such as the Freeport town landing issue.

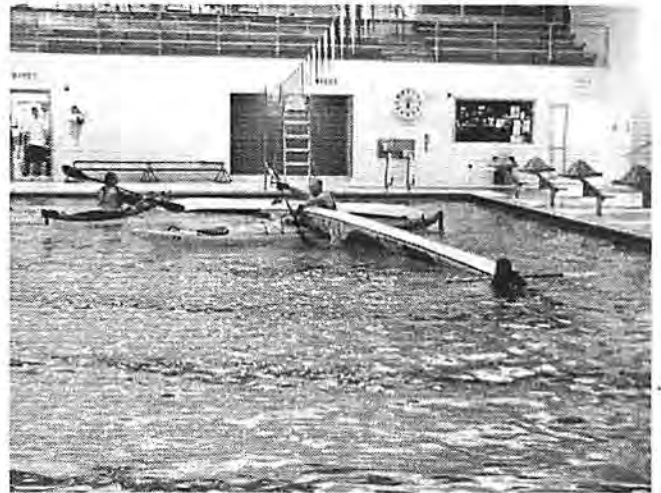
I've gone on long enough here. Anyway, check out the website, www.kayaksymposium.org. Send me an email at president@smskn.org or call me at 761-0556 if you'd like to know more about the Symposium, or wanted to become involved in Ken's vision, or if you have anything about SMSKN you'd like to discuss.

Member List

Please help us make sure that you are receiving club notices by email by checking the member list issued in the last newsletter to assure that your email address is correctly listed. We have had quite a few messages coming back as not being valid and would like to keep you informed. Email any corrections to Reed Markley at rmarkley@ctel.net

Pool Sessions

The club pool sessions were popular this year with four Saturday events held. Members had the opportunity to practice rescue methods and stationary paddle skills. The YMCA offered a warm, clear-water opportunity to practice.



Coast Guard Flare Event

David Lay

Susan Payne coordinated this event with the Coast Guard for members to discuss safety and to try several types of emergency flares. We were encouraged to be prepared for the conditions in which we paddle, and to keep several items with us in case of emergency. As a minimum, three non-expired pyrotechnic signal devices are required. These may be hand flares, smoke signal flares, pocket rockets, pistol flares, or parachute flares. Each of these flare types was tried on the beach after the instruction session.



Each has its use, but with limitations.

- Hand flares may be difficult to use while in the water as they must be held for them while they burn, and because they drip hot material.
- Smoke signal canister flares provide a good long signal, and because they float can be launched and allowed to burn without being distracting to you.
- Pocket rockets also provide a good signal though they do require both hands to launch. They fit nicely in a vest pocket, so you can be assured of not being separated from them if separated from your boat.
- Pistol flares are similar to pocket rockets and allow one to carry quite a few flares due to their light weight and small size.
- Parachute flares provide an excellent and long lasting signal, but because of the amount of material in the rocket, were recommended against. The Coast Guard reported that these could self ignite if allowed to become heated in a car or hatch.



Hand flares.

Other equipment was also recommended. The Coast Guard representative recommended that a whistle, a signal mirror, and a flashlight be carried by all kayakers.

- A whistle provides an acoustic warning to other vessels, will carry further, and can be maintained longer than shouting. This will be very important should a paddler find that fog has developed.
- A signal mirror has great effectiveness for its light weight if the sun is out and so is worth having on board.
- A flashlight is necessary for night paddling as all boats must have a light on them when on the water in the dark.

For best effect, pyrotechnic flares should be used when they are most likely to be seen. If in a populated area, this will be any time as people are out and looking across the water. Dusk provides a particularly good signal time. When in an isolated area, flares should be used when a boat or house is visible for best effect. Expired flares may be kept on-board and used as back-up devices.



Smoke flare. (Smoke is red.)



Typical pocket flares.

Treasurer Needed

Dorry has asked that another be found to help by being SMSKN treasurer. Dorry has served many years for the Network and is currently overwhelmed with other efforts. Please, if you are interested in helping, please call or email Mike Charek.

Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network

Trip Coordinator's Responsibilities:

1. Set date, pre-paddle meeting time, place, difficulty level, route for paddle, and likely paddle duration (Float Plan). Notify members by posting on the Website.
2. Receive calls from interested members and keep participant list with contact phone numbers.
3. Confirm that late forecasts for weather, wind, and wave conditions are consistent with planned difficulty level, and if not, revise difficulty level, revise Float Plan, or cancel paddle.
4. Meet participants for pre-paddle meeting and seek consensus on the float plan. Leave a copy of float plan in car. Encourage identification of any special concerns by any participant.
5. Remind everyone that trip safety is everyone's responsibility and encourage all to look after one another and to paddle together. Ask participants to notify others of any changes in their own intentions and of any difficulties.
6. Have everyone sign the SMSKN Waiver of Liability form and leave them in your car. After the trip the forms should be sent to the SMSKN Secretary to be filed.

Paddler's Responsibilities:

1. Understand and accept that SMSKN has no pre-qualification criteria of any kind for participants, and that anyone who has volunteered to help on a paddle may be less experienced than you. SMSKN events are every member's opportunity to learn!
2. Let the trip coordinator know you intend to participate and share your phone number with the coordinator to permit communication of trip changes. If weather conditions are questionable, confirm trip status with trip leader prior to leaving home.
3. Practice wet exits and rescues prior to paddling. Know that you can get back into your boat on your own.
4. Know your limits! Be responsible for yourself. It is each paddler's decision to go or not go on any paddle based upon his or her evaluation of the conditions of the day and his or her abilities. Do not assume that someone else will be able to save you when you get in trouble. Do not follow where you are not comfortable going.
5. Let other paddlers know of any limiting health conditions or other concerns that you may have.
6. File a Float Plan. Let someone at home know where you are going, and when you are to be back so that if you are not back when expected, help may be sought.
7. Arrive at paddle meeting place with time to prepare prior to the meeting.
8. Arrive with ocean-ready kayak, spray skirt, PFD, paddles, suitable clothing, sunscreen, food, water, chart, compass, flares, paddle float, pump, etc.
9. Know where you are at all times on the water. Know where you plan to go. Know how to get back.
10. Stay with the group. Everyone is safer when paddling with others. Help each other stay safe.
11. Keep track of other paddlers; let the rest of the group know if someone is falling behind.
12. Keep watch for hazards including changes in weather, waves, other boats, etc.
13. Help others in need of assistance to the extent possible when needed. Anyone's life may depend upon the help of a friend if conditions change unexpectedly.