



# SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

Dec 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**  
**Portland, ME 04112**  
**[www.smskn.org](http://www.smskn.org)**

### Officers

Michael Charek	President
Dorry Shaw	Treasurer
Jayne Engel	Secretary
Sandra Hodge	Board Member at Large
Sarah Knock	Board Member at Large
Reed Markley	Board Member at Large
Anne Weigel	Board Member at Large

### Newsletter Editor

David Lay

### Membership Committee

Reed Markley	Chairman, Database Mgr.
Susan Payne	
David Lay	

## President's Notes

Mike Charek

Once again, we managed to make it through a grueling campaign season, and seat a new SMSKN Board of Directors. Thank you to John Ropes and Susan Payne, who are both stepping down as Members-at-Large. John will still be paddling with us come summer, but he has other responsibilities that take him to far-off places around the

world. Susan will continue to help us with her Membership Committee work, and will also be available to help us organize some of our educational programs.

The lineup for the upcoming year is: yours truly as President (they wouldn't accept my offer to step aside for new, fresh talent), Jayne Engel returning as Secretary, Chick Carroll staying on as Treasurer, and Reed Markley and Sandra Hodge coming back as Members-at-Large. New Members-at-Large for this year are Anne Weigel and Sarah Knock.

David Lay will continue as Newsletter Editor. Reed Markley will continue as Chair of the Membership Committee, and will be assisted by Membership Committee members Susan Payne and David Lay. They have been managing the membership lists and handling new and renewal applications for membership, and making sure that process runs smoothly.

We have been working on ideas for membership programs for next year, and continue to seek new ideas from you, our members. Please let any of us know of any programs you would like to see at the monthly meetings, or any educational programs we might offer during the year. It is your network, too, and we welcome your thoughts. Let's work together to make 2005 the best year yet!

## Holiday Party

The SMSKN Pot Luck Holiday Party is soon! Call or email Penny and Reed Markley to let them know you are coming to their home in Winthrop on Sunday, December 12 at 2PM. Phone 377-6655. Email [rmarkley@ctel.net](mailto:rmarkley@ctel.net)



# Kayak Photography 101

Bruce Gordon

A sea kayak is a great platform for taking pictures. Think of all the wonderful things you see along the way. The folks you paddle with, wildlife, seascapes, places of historic and aesthetic value, and boats that look like shoes. (OK, the last one was a little bizarre, but I did see one, and have the picture to prove it!)

To get started, all you need is a camera and head out to sea, right?

Kayaking is a water sport. You can't seem to get away from it. It is all around you. Somehow, it seems to make it into the boat, even on the calmest and driest of days. Most cameras don't react very well with water, either. So, the problem becomes how do we keep the camera safe from hazards, and have it easily available to us when that Kodak moment arrives.

The best of all worlds would be to have a camera that we could attach to ourselves or to the deck of the boat so it is available, and be waterproof. There are several types of cameras that fall into this category. Everything from a divers camera (read: "expensive") to those waterproof, pocket disposable cameras (read: "least expensive"). Waterproof, or underwater, cameras are good choice, especially if you are planning on being out in rough conditions where it will be constantly doused by water. The disposables need to be handled carefully. The protective case can crack allowing water to get in, ruining the film. (It happened to me. Took some pictures of a sea turtle on the Great Barrier Reef, and when I got out of the water the camera was full of water, the film was ruined.) Diver's cameras need some maintenance. They seal with O-rings. These O-rings must be kept greased, and when the camera is not in use, the O-rings should be removed to avoid compression. Also, inspect them regularly and replace them if they show any signs of wear.

There are also weatherproof cameras. Weatherproof cameras will take a splash, rain, or a quick submergence, but are not meant to be exposed to water for extended periods. These cameras are great for the average paddler that will head out on a sunny day, and won't go looking for adverse conditions. I.E. the boat will stay upright all day. The cameras are designed to stand up well in rain. If you do find yourself out in less than perfect conditions, the camera will be fine.

What about using a camera that is not waterproof or weatherproof? It can still be done. You will have to take a little more care, that's all. First of all, don't use a dry bag to store your equipment. Dry bags will trap moisture inside that is potentially bad for electronics, as well as metal parts. (Almost all cameras have electronics these days.)

There is something you can do to reduce moisture. There is a product called *desiccant*, most often made of silica gel. This comes in packets that can be put inside a container with your camera or other electronic items to protect them from moisture. The product works by attracting and absorbing moisture. It can get saturated, but the good news is it can be dried and reused. You can find out more at <http://members.aol.com/foodsave/desiccan.htm>. (Most electronics, radios, VHS recorders, even cameras, are packed with silica gel to protect them from the factory to you home, so start collecting them.)

A better way to protect the equipment is to pack it in a Pelican box. These boxes are water and air tight. Most come with foam that can be customized to hold the camera, lenses or other accessories securely. A desiccant packet should be put inside the box. There are other boxes on the market. Find one that will except your camera and hold it securely.

All cameras can, and should, be cleaned. Do this at least once a year. A reputable camera shop will probably charge about \$50 to clean and check the camera.

Now, ...about shooting from the boat. A kayak can be difficult to shoot from. ...being tossed around by the wave action ....spray from the water breaking over the boat. Many conditions require that both hands be kept on the paddle.

Using a waterproof or a weatherproof camera allows you to put the paddle down, shoot, and get back to paddling quickly. If the camera is packed away, it takes time to get it out to take the shot and more time to get it back in place. There is also the problem of losing sense of balance while looking through the viewfinder. The best thing to do is to get someone to stabilize the boat for you. Rafting allows you to break out the camera without having to worry about losing balance.

There are many challenges around composing and framing the shot. One thing you can do to give the photo perspective and interest, is to include the bow of the boat in the picture. When paddling with friends, paddle out in front, turn, and shoot into group, head on. Try to shoot with the sun behind you.

Take a number of shots. If the camera settings can be adjusted, bracket the shots. This means to adjust the f/stop (opening in the lens) or the shutter speed plus and minus a setting or two. Professional photographers use this technique and record the camera settings for each frame in a notepad. This allows them to look over the results and understand how their camera and film work in different light conditions.

Over frame the shot. By getting extra in on the top, bottom, left and right, you won't cutoff part of the picture. Of course, if the water is completely flat, there is little need to

account for this. The picture can always be blown up and the extra cropped or cut off.

Well, there you go. A few tips to help keep the equipment ready to go, protected from the elements, and getting the shots.

By the way, on the water I use a Nikon Nikonos V, around the neck with a plastic carabiner attached to the PFD through the strap to keep it from falling off, and either a Nikon N70 or Canon AE-1 with a couple lenses, packed in Pelican boxes.

*Bruce is one of our friends in the Boston Sea Kayaking Club who many of you may have seen on the water with us. Bruce's article has previously appeared in the BSKC newsletter. Check out the website at [bskc.org](http://bskc.org).*

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## Cathance River, Bowdoinham

Carolyn Welch

12 paddlers, 10 boats: Rich Sousa and Linda Gerlach; Lucy Wendell-thorp and Ron Himmelstein, tandem. Dave Lanman, Patricia Berry, Ed Bossom, David Oberton, Sara Oberton, Tina Madore, Frank Hillary, and Carolyn Welch, kayaks. Joint trip with the AMC.

We met at the Bowdoinham Town Landing on route 24 at 9:30. Free parking and an outhouse, with an easy all-tide boat launch. We left at 10:00, paddling upstream with a slight tide (high tide in Harpswell Harbor was 10:10). After we went under the route 24 bridge, we left civilization behind, paddling up the meandering marshy river. There were many redwing blackbirds and lots of bright red cardinal flowers along the way. An eagle was spotted soaring on river right. We reached the waterfall at Cathance Rd. about 11:45, and had lunch on a small rocky beach just beyond the waterfall. After lunch we paddled back to the town landing on the slack tide, arriving about 2:00, about 8 miles round trip.

Weather was sunny, very hot and humid. The water was pleasantly cool. A very nice day on the river. After loading the boats back on our cars, 5 of us went on to Sea Dog's at the bridge in Topsham for cold drinks and snacks on the veranda under the awning overlooking the Androscoggin. Ah..... summer.

## Making a Greenland Paddle

David Lay

I have been using a Greenland paddle now for several years. I found that, after I had developed tendonitis in my left shoulder after a particularly aggressive day on the water, I was having trouble paddling. That was the case until I switched to the Greenland paddle. I have had much better success since, and have now given in fully to using only a Greenland paddle.

I bought my Greenland paddle from Superior Kayaks through their website ([www.superiorkayaks.com](http://www.superiorkayaks.com)). There was an article in Sea Kayaker some time ago (Issue 70, 6/99, by David Anderson) that reviewed Greenland paddles, and the author thought that Superior made one of the best. My pine Superior Kayak paddle has worked out very well for me. Other SMSKN members have bought the Kevlar version of this paddle and also seem to be doing well with theirs.

That success aside, I wanted to make a Greenland paddle since I am a hobbyist woodworker. It seemed easily within the realm of my abilities to try. Following an article written by Chuck Holst ([www.qajaqusa.org/QK/makegreen2.pdf](http://www.qajaqusa.org/QK/makegreen2.pdf)), I laid out my new paddle on a 2x4 piece of straight-grained cedar which I picked up at Hillside Lumber in Westbrook for about \$20. I followed Chuck's instructions using a band saw for the rough-out cuts. For the bevels, I was not comfortable with a draw knife and so chose to use a spokeshave. A spokeshave has a knife edge like a draw knife, but with a throat to limit the maximum cut. I needed this additional control and found that I could proceed cautiously with the spokeshave where the drawknife might have dug in too deeply in my inexperienced hands. I also used rough files for some detail shaping, particularly at the edges of the paddle. I used a belt sander and orbital sander to cut the tip radii and to smooth the paddle. I found that Chuck's description of the layout and procedures to follow was excellent, guiding me step by step through rough-out and smoothing without much chance for error.



To finish the paddle, I chose to use linseed oil. I have seen many others with no finish on their paddles, and understand the benefit of being able to fine-tune the shape of the paddle after a few trials on the water. I appreciate this benefit particularly since I subsequently removed most of the finish first applied when I undertook to reshape my paddle. I was timid about leaving a thin edge to the paddle for fear of its fragility, but found my beefy paddle end created lots of splash when it entered the water. Since I have reshaped the paddle, its performance is much improved. It is lighter than my pine paddle, and has a nice wood texture which is good for gripping.

If you are considering using a Greenland paddle, and are willing to make some sawdust, I suggest that you try making your own. The price is low, and worth the chance of failure. Making your own paddle will allow you to experiment before making the investment in a manufactured paddle. You may even decide that your own work is as good as you need.

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## Upcoming Events

**12/12/2004 Sunday**

### **SMSKN Christmas Party**

The SMSKN Pot Luck Christmas Party will be held at the home of Reed and Penny Markley, 67 Pinewood Drive, Winthrop, Maine, Phone 377-6655, on Sunday, December 12, 2004, between the hours of 2 PM and 6 PM. We will supply a ham, sodas, ice, plates, glasses, eating utensils and napkins. Bring any stronger beverages of your choice. People with last names starting with A - D please bring the hor's d'oeuvres, E - K please bring a salad or a vegetable, L - P please bring a starch, i.e. bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, etc, Q - Y please bring desert. If anyone has a specialty they really want to bring that is not in their assigned category, that is OK. Please RSVP by phone or email at rmarkley@ctel.net and indicate what you will bring. Directions: Go to Augusta, go west toward Winthrop on Route 202. Route 135 comes in from left. Just beyond, Route 135 leaves on right. At that point, turn right on Rt 135. Take the first left, which is Metcalf Rd. Follow this up a steep hill until you pass the Bearce Road. Pinewood Drive is the next right. It is about 100 yards beyond the Bearce Road and has a row of mailboxes just before it. Our driveway is the sixth on the right. The house is a gray cape set back in the woods facing the garage. A map showing the way from Route 202 to our house will be emailed to all who RSVP. . Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Other; Location: Winthrop, Maine; Meet: 2 PM, Winthrop, Maine; Limit: unlimited; Leader: Reed and Penny Markley, 207-377-6655, rmarkley@ctel.net.

**1/20/2005 Thursday**

### **Membership Meeting**

January Membership Meeting. Topic and speaker to be announced later.

As usual, some of us will be stopping at Ricetta's Pizzeria 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 Memorial 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 Memorial Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556, president@smskn.org.

**2/17/2005 Thursday**

### **Membership Meeting**

February Membership Meeting. Topic and speaker to be announced later.

As usual, some of us will be stopping at Ricetta's Pizzeria 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 Memorial 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 Memorial Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556, president@smskn.org.

**3/17/2005 Thursday**

### **Membership Meeting**

March Membership Meeting. Topic and speaker to be announced later.

As usual, some of us will be stopping at Ricetta's Pizzeria 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 Memorial Library where we are meeting, is at the corner of Depot & Lunt Roads, about 100 yards west of Ricetta's. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Other; Location: Falmouth, Maine; Meet: 7:00 PM, Falmouth Memorial Library; Limit: None; Leader: Michael Charek, 761-0556, president@smskn.org.



## Viet Nam Paddle

Bob Arledge gave a great slide presentation of his trip to Viet Nam at our last meeting. Though he was restricted to day trips for his paddles, the images brought home were great.





# Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network

## Paddling Tips

When loading your kayak, keep slightly more weight in the rear than the front. A bow that is heavier than the stern will make for a kayak that's difficult to control, particularly in strong winds.

A wet kayak will slide much more easily on kayak saddles than a dry kayak.

Beware of using your cockpit cover while transporting your kayak on the top of your car or truck. The wind can sometimes blow a cover off. You can stitch a strap or cord to your cockpit cover to cinch it around your boat as a safety strap.

Use the off-season to check and maintain any metal fittings on your boat. The metal will gradually corrode from any salt without regular maintenance. Salt residue from seawater is hygroscopic and so will absorb moisture from the air if it is humid, promoting corrosion even where you thought it would be dry. Rinse any steel items after each paddle. Even stainless steel will corrode in seawater, depending upon the alloy.

Practice rolling and wet exits in a pool or in a warm pond before going out on the sea. You need the ability to get out of your kayak while upside down without analysis. Once you are upside down, it might be too late to think about what comes next. Practice getting back into your boat as well.

When nearing land, look for breaking waves far from shore. They usually indicate a rock just below the surface.

Take a weather radio, particularly on an overnight trip. The weather can change quickly and the Weather Service can often give you the advance warning you need to get back to shore before it's too late, or to know that it is too risky to try. Most VHF two-way marine radios can receive the National Weather Service broadcast, making them an ideal paddle safety item.

For easier navigation, mark your chart with lines parallel to magnetic north. Know how to use a compass. Always know your position on your chart.

When you're ready to try eskimo rolling, you can use a paddle float in the early stages to practice how to maneuver your body without worrying about paddle blade position. Better yet, work with a friend to spot you as you practice and pull you up when needed to let you get a breath prior to trying again.

A paddle float can double as a pillow on overnight trips.

Carry a gallon of fresh water in your vehicle and use it to wash the salt water from your kayak before loading it up onto your rack.

Try a pair of wool socks inside Gore-Tex oversocks for toasty warm feet in the spring or autumn. Neoprene socks are also available.

A chemical glow-stick can help you assure that you will be seen while night paddling, and will last as long as 8 hours. Get them at outfitters or at marine suppliers such as West Marine or Hamilton Marine.

A 5 liter wine bag in a box can have a second life as a flexible water container. When the wine is gone, take the bag out of the box, rinse it out; and make a cloth cover with a handle for it. If you use dark-colored cloth, the container can be heated in the sun.