



# SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

February 2006

## 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](http://www.smskn.org)**

### Officers

Ted Davis	President
David Lay	Treasurer
Jayne Leiner	Secretary
Sandra Hodge	Board Member at Large
Sarah Knock	Board Member at Large
Reed Markley	Board Member at Large
Jon Swan	Board Member at Large

### Newsletter Editor

David Lay

### Membership Committee

Reed Markley	Chairman, Database Mgr.
Susan Payne	
David Lay	

### Librarian

Lee Bumsted

## President's Notes

*Ted Davis*

It's the start of a new season of kayaking. Shortly we will be splashing our boats down in the pool of the Bath, YMCA. Last year at pool time the weather was cold and raining, but the water was warm. This is always a great opportunity to awake your "in the water skills." Practicing your wet entries and your rusty rolls is always a good idea.

This year we have a few changes to our Board of Directors. Jayne Leiner, Reed Markley, Sarah Knock and Sandra Hodge are back for another year to donate their time for the good of the club. Taking the place of Anne Weigel, who did an outstanding job, will be Jonathan Swan. David Lay, who was on the membership committee, will now be our new Treasurer, with Chick Carroll helping with his prior experience. Rounding out the Board will be the new president, Ted Davis.

David Lay is one of our outstanding members who keeps taking on more responsibilities. In addition to being the club's treasurer, Dave is also our newsletter editor. To help David out with the newsletter I encourage all members to send David bits of news and articles. David would also be interested in hearing about your kayaking adventures with the club. If you have discovered a special splash down spot, perhaps you could share it with us. Photos are always welcomed they make the newsletter more lively. Show off your talents and send Dave a kayaking photo.

I would like to invite volunteers to act as our "Go To Person" for interested or new members who attend our meetings. Members familiar with Network activities will welcome new members and offer novices suggestions of where to look for equipment or to find competent instruction. They will also explain how the club works and which outings might best match a prospective or new members described abilities. If you are willing to help, please see me, David Lay, or another board member at the start of the meetings. The Network thrives only with your help!



## SMSKN Membership Forum

David Lay

As you saw in our last Newsletter, the Network held a membership forum last fall to try to refocus the efforts of those who do volunteer to do all of the things that make this Network possible. At issue was, and is, the need for the Network to expend the time of those who volunteer only on tasks that are valued, and the need for the Network to have the help of additional volunteers. If you can help by presenting your kayak experiences in a slide show to the members, by offering good photos or articles to the newsletter, by posting events that you would like to do with others in the Network, by being a member of the Board, or by helping in any other way, please let any member of the Board know.

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## SMSKN Video Collection is Growing

Lee Bumsted, Network Librarian

What started as a lending library for kayaking books has been evolving. SMSKN members now have a choice of seven videotapes and six DVD's in addition to 44 books. These items may be checked out at club meetings.

Since most of our kayaks are indoors hiding from the snow and ice, this is a good time to get inspiration or paddling tips from one of our newest DVD's. Justine Curgenvén delivers some amazing action footage of sea kayak surfing and touring in "This is the Sea" and "This is the Sea Two." Included in the first DVD is the tale of her kayak adventures in Russia. In the second, video of Curgenvén's circumnavigation of Tasmania with two other women is one of the highlights. To help prepare for pool sessions, how about "Practical Kayaking" or "1st Roll: Eskimo Roll for Sea Kayakers?"

Special thanks go to Ed Lawson, one of our New Hampshire members, for donating "1st Roll" and "This is the Sea Two." If anyone has books or videos they'd like to donate to the club, please bring them to an upcoming meeting or contact me.

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## Reflections from the Cockpit: What do you Want from a Trip?

Wayne Horodowich

This article was taken with permission from the University of Sea Kayaking web site's Reflections page at [www.useakayak.org](http://www.useakayak.org)

When you get a call from one of your friends and they say "let's go for a paddle" what does that mean to you? Also, what does that mean to the rest of the folks going on that same trip? During my symposium lecture on "What is Good Judgment", I review some paddling scenarios. One scenario lends itself to the topic of this article. I randomly ask five people in the audience why they are going on today's trip. Their responses cover a wide range of desires. Sometimes a few members of the group have similar desires but more often than not their primary reasons for going out on the water differs. Here are some of the desires expressed by the audience:

- I want the camaraderie of my friends
- I want a good workout
- I enjoy being out in nature
- I want to get away from the noise
- I want to see marine life
- My spouse wants me to go
- I want to play in the surf
- I like to paddle a lot of miles
- I want to meander along the coast and look at birds
- It's the last chance I have to paddle for two months
- I want to practice a few skills
- I need to find the leak in my kayak
- I want to try out my new drysuit

I am sure you can add some reasons to this list. As I review this list the question that comes to my mind is, "can one trip meet everyone's primary reason for going on the trip?" Some of the above motivations can easily coexist on a trip. However, there are others that are on opposite ends of the spectrum. As a result a group of paddlers goes out and some of them have their needs met while others may feel a bit let down at the end of the day (or week) because they did not get what they wanted from the paddle.

I am not trying to make a mountain out of a molehill. The bumper sticker I had in my office for years read "I'd rather be upside down in my kayak rather than upright behind my desk." There is a T-shirt that says, "my worst day in my kayak is better than my best day at work." I believe it is hard to have a really bad day on the water. Even in horrendous conditions I am learning and ultimately enjoying myself. The point I want to focus on is being aware of why you want to go paddling and then expressing that to the others in the group. When asked do you want to go out for a

paddle it would be a good idea to ask a few questions. Some things I would like to know before committing to the paddle are:

- Where?
- How long?
- Expected pace?
- Expected conditions?
- Degree of difficulty?
- Is there a theme for the trip? (Sightsee, stroke training, practicing recoveries, rolling practice, etc...)
- Who else is going?
- What do you/they want from the trip? (Meaning the others going)

After I get more info I should be able to decide if I want to go on this trip and if my desires for going out will be met. Here is one of many possible examples how the call can go. If the caller says it is a sightseeing trip I could say I want to practice a few recovery techniques along the way. Will that be OK with you and the rest of the group? Then your desire is on the table for discussion and will hopefully be addressed before you go on the trip. I would rather know before going out than finding out the group just wanted to sightsee and not take time to stop and practice recoveries. You may also find out that a few others in the group want to practice with you. My point is, you never know what others are thinking until you ask the right questions.

The longer the trip (the number of days) the more important this communication becomes. Since time is precious we usually want to make the most of our time. Each of us has our own definition of making the most of our time. I recall being frustrated because my paddling partner wanted to go back to camp and read a book instead of continuing the days paddle together. I wanted us to paddle together. I didn't understand her desire to rest against a tree and just read a book. Later that day she explained to me how precious her time off from work is to her and it is a luxury for her to be in such a beautiful place with the opportunity to rest against a tree and read. The rest of the year she works behind a desk. My unspoken desire for the trip was to show her all the cool things in this area even it meant paddling all day long (my way of saying paddling until we drop). We did not have a discussion before the trip about what each of us wanted from the trip. This particular trip has become a presentation topic at symposiums called "He Kayaks/She Kayaks". It is a review of the same trip as seen through Hadley's eyes and my eyes. The trip was still a good trip but we both learned a lot about expressing what we want from a trip. It must have been a good experience for us because we ended up getting married.

I am not suggesting everyone can articulate what he or she wants or is even willing to state what he or she wants. We all have friends who never speak up for themselves. However, the more you and your paddling partners have these discussions you will see a greater comfort level in this

type of dialog. This process does not have to become a ten-page survey before you go on the water. Just a few simple questions and the willingness to tell others what you would like to do is all that is needed. As I said above, the longer trips become more critical because when we finally have a chance to get away for a block of time we all envision what we would like to do with that time. It would be nice if you and the others share these desires in the planning stages of the trip rather than feeling like you missed out after the trip is over.

In the early 1990's I had the opportunity to get a month off from work to travel to Scotland as a member of the US Surf Kayak Team. We were going to the World championships. During the long flight to London I realized I wanted to do certain things in the UK when we were not competing. I also realized I was sharing a car with three and four teammates who probably had their own list of things to do. I went to my teammates and told them to make a list of the top five things they wanted to do (in priority order) while we would be in the UK. I told them it would be nice if we could all get our number one priority item met and hopefully our second and third. After getting the lists I made a master list and we then agreed to plan our travel around the list. We all got to do our first and second priorities and some even got their third. There was some overlap and others joined in enjoying the dreams of their teammates. For the record my first desire was to roll my kayak in Loch Ness. Three of us can now say we did it and Dan can say he sacrificed his new sunglasses to Nessie. (Loch Ness was cold and the rolls were fast.) If I had not expressed these desires to the group we probably all would have missed out in experiencing some dreams or desires. We accomplished a lot because it was planned out in advance. It could not have just happened with the tight schedule we had.

Every member of the group has an equal right in having their needs met. It really comes down to how you want to spend your time and what you wish to experience. If you know what you want put it out to the group and see if your needs and the needs of the others can be met. How does one get what they want? Is it by stating what they want or keeping it inside and hoping for it? What do YOU want from the trip?

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## Navigation at Sea

*Reported by David Lay*

Ted gave a great presentation of the rules of the sea for boaters at our last meeting. Ted's perspective as a long-time sailor gives him a bit of a different view of the fit of kayaks into ocean traffic. Though some of his stories of sailing adventure were hard to transfer to the kayaking experience with our low draft and slow speed, those lessons of how we are viewed by others at sea were very helpful.

As you might expect, most other craft assume that it is the job of the kayaker to look out for him or herself, and get out of the way of larger ships. You will sometimes see other boats slow down for kayaks, but that kind of consideration is not the rule. Larger craft will generally stick to the fast lane, traveling within the channel when close to shore, and making a bee-line to a destination otherwise. Ships under sail are generally given the right of way, but larger ships may sometimes take precedence if their choice of paths is limited due to their size.

Ships at sea typically have four lights: a red light on the port (left) bow, a green light on the starboard bow (right), and a white light on a mast or pole facing sideways and to the rear, and a white stern light. Thus, if you see a red light and a white light, the ship you see should be traveling towards your left. If you see a green light and a white light, the ship you see should be traveling towards your right. If you see only white lights, the ship you see should be traveling away from you. If you see green on the left, red on the right, and white overhead, you are in the path of the ship you see, and time to move. Kayaks are required to have a light according to the Coast Guard, to be used as an emergency signal device. A flashing light is generally thought to be a distress signal. The Coast Guard advises that you always have a light lit while out at night, and that you do what you can to help other craft see you. Start by illuminating your boat or each other. Flashing a bright light into the eyes of other seamen is not desirable as it causes them to be temporarily blinded, but might be used as a last resort.

Ted offered the following prose from the Elridge Tide and Pilot book:

### The Rules of the Road

When all three lights I see ahead,  
I turn to Starboard and show my Red;  
Green to Green, Red to Red,  
Perfect Safety – Go Ahead.

But if to Starboard Red appear,  
It is my duty to keep clear –  
To act as judgment says is proper:  
To Port or Starboard, Back or Stop her.

And if upon my Port is seen  
A Steamer's Starboard light of Green,  
I hold my course and watch to see:  
That Green to Port keeps Clear of me.

Both in safety and in doubt  
Always keep a good look out.  
In danger, with no room to turn,  
Ease her, Stop her, Go Astern.

Ted also identified the placement of buoys and simplified methods of navigation. Buoys typically mark a channel or a risk. The channel is marked by red buoys/nuns to the right

of the channel and green (or black) buoys/cans to the left as one returns from the sea. Hazards are typically marked in white/red. The important thing to consider as a kayaker, is that larger vessels will follow the buoy marked channels, so that is most likely where you as a kayaker do not want to be.

In fog, knowing where you are and which way is which are essential. By the use of a compass and a chart, you can accomplish this. Paddle towards monuments that you think you can hit if you must set out in fog. Once you find the point (or island) that you are charting for, you can paddle along it to your next spring point. Obviously, knowing how to read your chart and use your compass are essential. Though Ted covered these topics, I will refer you here to our great Network Library for further reading. Ted also noted that in a fog, it is beneficial to have a horn. Some Network members reported using the Kazoo type horn, and others the compressed air type.



## Event List

### **3/16/2006 Thursday Membership Meeting**

Our March meeting will be at the Great Lost Bear restaurant in Portland. We will have two hours of eating and maybe a beer or two. This will be your chance to get to know your friends when they are not wearing a wetsuit and life jacket. See how they look without that white stuff on their nose. Difficulty: 0 - Effortless; Category: Meeting; Location: 540 Forest Avenue, Portland, Maine; Meet: 6:30 PM, Great Lost Bear Restaurant; Limit: None; Organizer: Ted Davis, 207-443-1424, [vagus32@gwi.net](mailto:vagus32@gwi.net).

### **4/8/2006 Saturday Pool Session**

Once again the Bath YMCA has consented to have us back for four pool sessions this spring. We will sign people up for the first three sessions, then the fourth will in effect become the overflow session. This is your opportunity to tune up your assisted-rescue, self-rescue, bracing and rolling skills in the luxury of a heated pool before you head back out into the cold coastal Maine waters. Practicing your self-rescues and customizing yourself to being out of your boat and getting yourself back in enhances your confidence and your safety. This is peer-to-peer coaching event; there will be no formal instruction provided.

We have the pool from 12:00 to 2:00. You will want to be there about 11:30 to unload your boat, wash it out and carry it into the pool. Your boat will have to be scrupulously clean, outside and inside, before it can go into the YMCA pool. The YMCA is located at 303 Centre Street in Bath. After the pool sessions everyone who is interested can meet