



SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

February 2008

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

Reed Markley	President
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David Lay

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President's Notes

Reed Markley

The Membership Meeting on January 17, 2008 was a digital slide show by Hal Levine of paddling in Minos, Greece. The clear, warm water and sunny skies made many of us want to go paddling there. We have another interesting talk, by Bob Myron on February 21 on "Simplified Navigation for the Coastal Kayaker." Please view the Event List for details on future meeting topics. The events scheduled so far this year are presented on the Event List, and also summarized in following articles in this Newsletter. Please attend the Trip Planning meeting on April 17, to schedule a paddle to that place you have always wanted to visit. On this subject, we could perhaps look into scheduling more point to point paddles, with the associated car spotting.

This Newsletter will take the place of the monthly membership update that I have been emailing to members.

The Board is grappling with the problem of making the Board meetings more accessible to the membership without having two meetings a month in different locations. The general membership is invited to attend and participate, but must adhere to the scheduled agenda. When there is a resolution, the membership will be informed.

There is going to be a kayaking event in Castine this year, The Castine Kayak Symposium on July 11-13. For additional information on this, see the posting on the SMSKN Message Board. If anyone wants to get involved in this, and help promote SMSKN, please let someone on the Board know.

If anyone has ideas for a meeting subject, or knows someone who goes on good trips, please contact someone on the Board



Spring?

The days are getting longer, it's light after work now, spring is coming! Thinking about getting into shape for the coming season? We remember how fit and athletic we were, how fast, flexible, and agile we were. In our heads that does not change. However, the physical body moves to a different clock than our imagined or remembered physical achievements of past days.

Inactivity does no one any favors, in fact it's about the worst thing you can do to your body. After the age of 20, we lose an average of 10 ounces of lean body mass (mostly in the form of muscle tissue) and gain one pound of body fat every year. This occurs almost unnoticed. The loss of muscle strength and the accompanying gain of body fat will, if gone unchecked, cripple good athletic performance among other things, many other things. The good news is strength training will increase muscle mass, muscle strength, and reduce weight gain. This can be accomplished without looking like a body builder. Consistency and a careful plan are all that's needed along with a few inexpensive items to use at home or a membership at the local gym. There are many good books at the local bookstore that can help with a basic overall plan for getting back into the workout routine.

Our sense of balance gets a little out of kilter as the years go by, and this is can be easily practiced at home and markedly improved with a few minutes of focused daily practice. Can you stand on first one leg, then the other with your eyes closed for 60 seconds without having to stabilize yourself? Stand up and try it! A sharpened sense of balance will go a long way in maintaining relaxed stability and an upright boat when the wind and waves kick up and the ride becomes sort of like riding a young horse. Try it on a balance disc, a soft inflated pod, that requires ankle strength and a good bit of concentration. Focus on something in front of you, breath regularly, and try to maintain your balance on one foot for 30 seconds. Switch to the other foot, and do it again. Repeat. Within a couple of days of doing this, you will notice an improvement. Then do it for 60 seconds, then do it with your eyes closed. Try sitting on the disc with legs raised and arms outstretched. Try a wobble board, again standing, squatting, sitting. In many ways, these simple exercise replicate sitting in a moving kayak in the lumpy stuff.

A balance ball is another good piece of equipment to have at home that has more uses than you could probably ever discover! One use is to practice the torso rotation used in the forward stroke. Sit on the ball with your legs spread hip-width apart and feet resting on the floor. Hold a medicine ball (or something that weighs a few pounds, a can of soup, a bag of potatoes) out in front of you with arms outstretched but slightly bent at the elbows, and rotate slowly 180 degrees (like you do in a forward stroke), first to the right, then to the left, keeping the ball or bag or whatever you're holding level. Keep a balanced position as you sit on the floor letting your hips move with the rotation

of your torso. How many rotations can you do? Try for 10, 25, then 50. This exercise will strengthen your core muscles as well as sharpen your of balance.



Castine Symposium

Karen Francoeur

CASTINE KAYAK ADVENTURES

We are still working out some of the details of the schedule but will be offering a series of ACA level awards and a leadership training track that might be very beneficial to some of your club members. The Castine Kayak Symposium is July 11-13. I'll look forward to meeting you!



Membership Chairman's Notes

Reed Markley

I am using email to keep members aware of their membership status, since the email newsletters, so far, do not provide the membership expiration date.

You must be a member in good standing to go on club trips, receive club mailings, electronic and snail, and take part in club activities such as the Pool Sessions. I have been contacting members who have not paid their membership fee, and thus are no longer members in good standing by email, and have had only limited success. If you have received one of these emails, are planning on sending in your membership fee, but are just procrastinating, please send in your signed Membership form and fee. I will make a mailing using the postal service, otherwise known as snail mail, to those who have not responded. If I still get no response, I will regretfully have to remove those names from the active membership.

Winter Paddling Tips

Kayaking in the winter may not sound like fun, but it can be very rewarding and the shore and islands are beautiful in a different way. However, paddling in the winter involves several risks which need to be considered. Most appreciate the dangers of hypothermia caused by cold air and water and will dress appropriately and likely will carry extra gear, extra clothes, a small shelter, extra high energy food, and a thermos of warm fluids.

However, protection against cold shock is even more critical. Cold shock describes the various physiological changes that can occur when a person is immersed in water below 50°F., specifically when the head and neck are immersed. These changes include a very rapid increase in heart rate and blood pressure which can cause cardiac arrest. It also can result in an involuntary gasp reflex that results in cold water getting into the lungs. Both of these events can cause death without prompt medical attention so avoiding them is to be desired. The February 2008 issue of *Sea Kayaker Magazine* has a good article which explains in more detail the dangers of cold shock and involuntary gasp reflex.

The primary defenses against these dangers are judgment, experience, and paddling skills, but given the potential harm it is also prudent to wear additional protective clothing just in case. Aside from regular cold water clothing, a hood that also insulates the neck and covers much of the head should be worn. These are usually made of at least 3mm neoprene with a relatively small and tight sealing opening for the face. Some kayak shops regularly have them. Dive shops have them as well. Look for a hood whose fit is snug, but comfortable and covers the neck. If you don't like

constantly wearing the hood on your head when conditions are modest, you can pull the hood back so the head is uncovered, but the neck will remain protected.

Another cold water problem can be the imbalance caused by cold water getting in the ears which adversely affects the inner ear that plays an important role in our sense of balance. When this happens, some find themselves dizzy and unstable after they roll up in cold water, which can lead to further capsizes and difficult rescue situations. While a hood protects against this, ear plugs are an even better protective measure. Some ear plugs are water tight, but do not significantly impact hearing and can routinely be worn when paddling in cold water.

Having hands that are functional is also a safety issue, but keeping the hands warm is often not easy. Some like poggies, some like gloves, and some like mittens. Each has some strengths and weaknesses and personal preference/style causes paddlers to prefer one over the other. Another alternative is the three fingered gloves some paddle and dive shops carry. These are neoprene gloves which have a thumb, a fore-finger and a single space for the remaining three fingers. This provides good compromise between the manual dexterity of gloves and the advantage of mittens in keeping the fingers together for warmth.



One last tip. When you stop for a break during a winter paddle and take your gloves off, they tend to be wet, will get very cold, and it will not be easy to re-warm your hands when you put them back on. Having additional pairs to use is one solution. Another is to always have an extra thermos with hot water and fill the gloves or mittens with hot water, let them warm a bit, then put them on and your hands will at least start off after the break nice and cozy.

