



# SOUTHERN MAINE SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

September 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**  
**P.O. Box 4794**  
**Portland, ME 04112**  
**[www.smskn.org](http://www.smskn.org)**

### Officers

Reed Markley	President
David Lay	Treasurer
Amy Schrag	Secretary
Fred Randall	Board Member at Large
Sarah Knock	Board Member at Large
Peter Roderick	Board Member at Large
Jon Swan	Board Member at Large

### Newsletter Editors

Ed Lawson and David Lay

### Librarian

Lee Bumsted

### Bookkeeper

Mike Charek



## From the President's Desk

*Reed Markley*

I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable paddling season, but it's not over yet. There is still time for a few Fall Paddles. Anyone wanting some company while they do a bit of foliage viewing from their kayak should feel free to post their trips on the Event List. Trips posted as late as the Thursday before a weekend trip will often garner quite a few paddlers.

The membership meetings this Fall have been quite interesting. In August, Nance Trueworthy and David A. Tyler gave a slide show on Maine's Casco Bay Islands. In September, club member Fred Randall discussed and demonstrated the construction of skin on frame kayaks. In October, members Bob Arledge and David Boyle will give a slide presentation on their trip to Belize. Information about this meeting will be posted in the Event List. In November we will have our photo contest, info to be posted. December will bring the usual potluck Christmas party.

Nominations are currently open for the SMSKN Board of Directors. The following were nominated at the September Membership meeting: Reed Markley – President, Mike Charek – Treasurer, Secretary – open position, At Large Members – Peggy Bensinger, Ed Lawson, David Lay, Tom McKinney, and Fred Randall. The Bylaws require 7 Board members: 3 officers and 4 At Large members. Currently the Secretary position is vacant. Nominations for the Board will remain open until the October Membership meeting on October 16, 2008. On that date, the elections will occur. Anyone willing to serve on the Board, please send me an email, and I will see that you are nominated at the October meeting.

The Membership meeting format has been changed to the following: call to order, welcome to old and new members, trip reports of paddles the previous month, a call for new trips to be announced and posted on the Event List, Library discussion by Lee Bumsted regarding new books, a period of about 15-20 minutes of membership socializing with refreshments, and then the main presentation of the evening. This new format, especially the socializing, has been well received, and will continue.

I would like to try posting short trip reports on the SMSKN website. To that end, I would appreciate a brief text write-

up and a few photos, in jpeg format, regarding club trips. The text should appropriately reference the photos, so they can be inserted into the write-up in the proper places.

See you at the next meeting, and don't forget the premeeting dinner 5:30 PM at Ricetta's.

Keep the open side up,  
Reed Markley  
SMSKN President



Isle au Haut

## Do You Keep a Logbook?

*Ed Lawson*

Even Capt. Kirk of the Enterprise kept a log, so it must not be a historical oddity, but why would a kayaker keep a log? For as many reasons as there are varying interests. Perhaps the most important reason regardless of the contents of the log is that it provides a historical record that enables a paddler to relive moments good and bad, as an aid in planning future trips, to measure how paddling performance has increased or not, and to record what worked and what didn't.

What to log and how to log are matters of personal preference. Some may prefer to maintain a computer log by using a spreadsheet or text files. Others may prefer a diary kept at home, and others may prefer a small notebook carried on paddles to record events as they occur. As to what to log, some may wish to keep on data such as distance and speed and weather. Others may want to log impressions of trips and highlights, or observations of how the tide ran in certain areas or other navigational notes that could be helpful later, or maybe even sketches of routes or objects. During trips what foods were good or not as well as what gear was found wanting or helpful might be logged. In other words, logs can be used to record any number of things that can help make future trips more pleasant, provide a source of information to benefit others, and to provide enjoyable reading and reflection upon past events. So while it may seem odd for a kayaker to carry on something that

might seem to be an archaic tradition of the sea, you may find it a rewarding activity that expands and retains your paddling activities.



The Goslings near Harpswell

## Product Review - Tidelog

*Ed Lawson*

With so many sources of tide information available on-line and via software, the need for usefulness of tide chart books is doubtless less than it was. Especially larger books which cover areas which are unlikely to be visited. However, I still like having a book to peruse anywhere that provides tide and astronomical information. Over the past two seasons I have used a publication called Tidelog published by Pacific Publishers and have found it very useful and handy. It is a small, spiral bound book which makes it easy to carry and easy to use as the pages fold out flat. The pages are arranged so that Monday-Thursday are on the left page and Friday-Sunday are on the right page so you see a week at a glance. For each day there is a graphical representation of the tide for that day along with the times and heights of high and low tide for Boston and Portland. I find it easier to plan paddles using the graphical representation than a numerical table. For each day it provides the times of dawn, sunrise, sunset, dark, moon rise and fall. It also gives the current velocity, times of slack, and max ebb and flood for Boston and Portsmouth. Finally, it shows the phase of the moon and the approximate location and times of the major planets. So you can see a good deal of info very quickly for any given day given the logical and graphical nature of the layout.

At the back of the book are current and tide correction tables which may not be as complete as some sources, but adequate. The Tidelog has good summary at the beginning which explains the features/information provided for each day and how they are organized. Last, but not least, Tidelogs are published for relatively small geographical areas. The one published for Northern New England covers just the Maine, NH and Massachusetts coasts so you never

need to leaf through stuff for Florida or Delaware to get to what you want, nor do you need to wade through pages of information about other stuff. Tidelog does one thing and only one thing; it gives you tide and astronomical information. For me it does it well, and it has become my favorite reference book for this information.



Isle au Haut

## What About ..?

*David Lay*

On what seemed the first break in the rains this summer, I took my neighbor out for a paddle. It was his first time ever. Fortunately, it was a glorious day, with some puffy clouds, and a perfect breeze. We had to start late so did not travel far, choosing Cousin's Island as our starting point. I did not know how far we would go, so we headed out to find out what we could do.

I had not gone out with a first-time paddler in some time, and so had to think of what the issues to cover should be. "Can you swim?" "Yes.", etc. We quickly covered the important topics, like what to do if..... We practiced spray skirt removal on the beach, how to get in, and how to swim out. I remembered the news of the gentleman who drowned a few years back his first time out and was careful to bring my tired "easy-off" spray skirt. I also brought a very stable boat for my friend. Things were going good! We were past the paddling intro by the time we cleared the power plant.

The familiar questions were a good reminder for me of all I had learned since my first trip. Aside from the obvious questions of how does one paddle and how does one get back in after swimming out of the boat, there were many others.

- Do you go out in fog? Not intentionally, but you need to be able to deal with it if the fog comes in. Bring and know how to use a chart and compass.
- Which boat has the right-of-way with kayaks and other ships? Is it the same as with motorboats? No, its best to assume that no one sees you as a kayaker and to avoid other boats. Radar does not usually show a kayak either.

- How do you avoid conflicts with other boats? Paddle in groups rather than separated. Paddle close to land and out of the marked channels as much as possible when near lots of boat traffic. Wear a bright PFD and use a brightly colored kayak. Carry flares, a fog horn, a whistle, and a light and have them handy for quick access. Carry a VHF radio. Consider what you want on your person just in case you are separated from your boat.
- How is a river kayak different from a sea kayak? Sea kayaks are long so that they can keep to a straight line, and they usually have a rudder or skeg to help in that regard. Sea kayaks are paddled across the water, and river kayaks ride the water. River kayaks are easy to turn to help maneuver river hazards and not at all good for paddling across the water.
- What is the difference between a fiberglass and plastic boat? Fiberglass costs more, is faster, is lighter, but scratches easily. Plastic is economical, heavier, but nearly impervious to damage.
- What is better about a rudder or skeg? A skeg only helps you go straight, but has few moving parts and is fully concealed when retracted. A rudder has foot pegs and cables to allow you to steer, but the rudder can be an obstacle when you are trying to get back in your boat. You should know how to steer your boat without a rudder in case it breaks. A rudder can make a big difference if a boat is sensitive to the wind turning it. Some boats have hull features which preclude the need for a drop-down skeg, and which have neither a skeg nor rudder.
- What is it like to paddle in big waves? It can be very challenging, possibly life threatening if you are not able to handle the situation. Paddling heading into waves is easiest, but if the wind is blowing very hard you may not progress much. Following waves tend to turn your kayak and this can be disconcerting, sometimes causing a paddler to capsize. Side waves are usually the biggest challenge since they tip the boat from side to side and threaten to capsize it. Always know the wind forecast before heading out. Find shelter if the weather changes and becomes hazardous to your survival.
- If a wave comes at you from the side, do you lean away from it? No, you lean into it and brace with your paddle on the face of the rising wave.
- Is that a wetsuit? Yes. It is good to have gear with you to help you stay warm, or to help you get warm should you need to. Wetsuits are popular for use by kayakers, particularly in the spring when the water is still very cold.
- What is all of this other gear in your boat? I bring enough gear to allow me to wait out a windstorm on an island. I don't want to place myself in a situation where I feel compelled to risk a dangerous paddle in order to get home for warmth or food.

The weather stayed perfect the entire time we were out. It was a very good day to introduce a friend to kayaking!