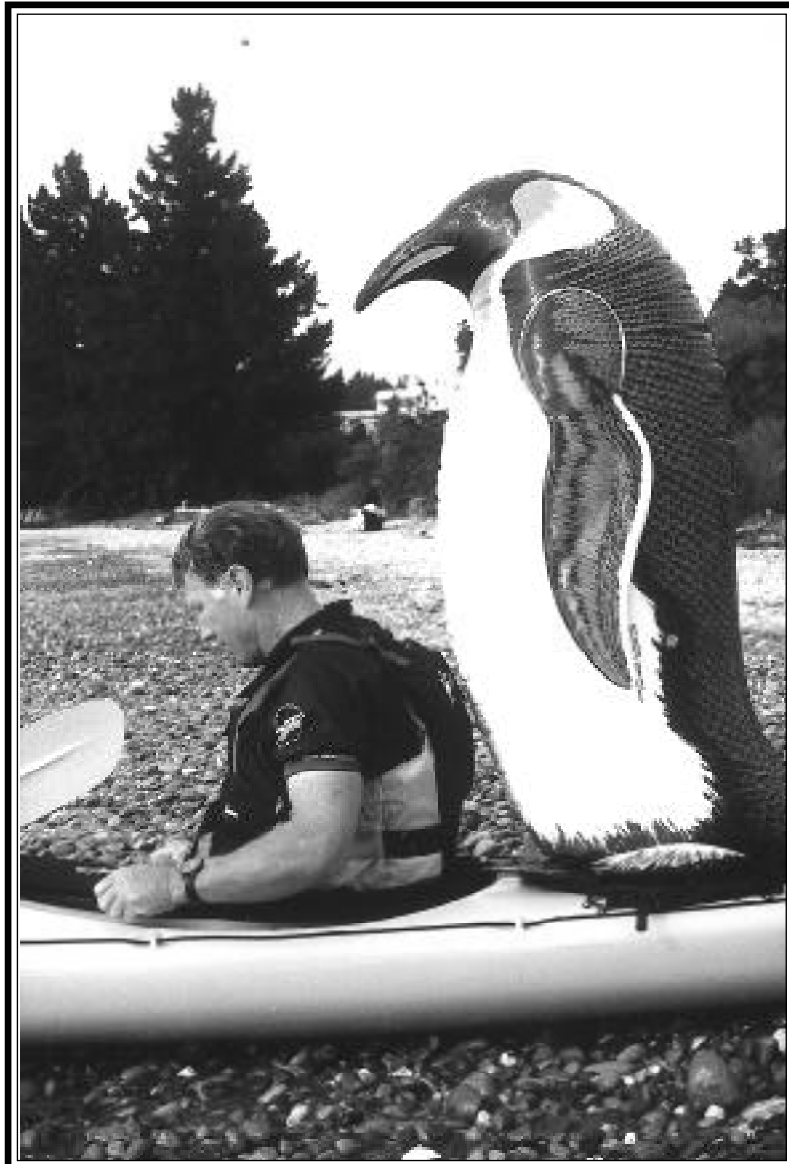


No. 90 December - January 2001

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER



KASK'S esteemed treasurer, Max Grant, with one of his collection of inflatable toys, at a previous KASK Nelson forum.

**The Journal of the Kiwi Association
of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc. - KASK**

KASK

KASK, the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc., a network of New Zealand sea kayakers, has the objectives of:

1. promoting and encouraging the sport of sea kayaking
2. promoting safety standards
3. developing techniques & equipment
4. dealing with issues of coastal access and protection
5. organizing an annual sea kayak forum
6. publishing a bimonthly newsletter.

The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published bimonthly as the official newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc.

Articles, trips reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letter to the editor, and moments when the word 'Bugger!' was said singularly or often {referred to by some as incidents} are sought to enliven the pages of the newsletter.

Send in a plain brown envelope, or via cybermail to:

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KASK Subscriptions are:
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KASK BADGES

Canterbury paddler Rod Banks produced a badge of a paddler and sea kayak from solid sterling silver, with KASK NZ engraved. The badge can be permanently or temporarily affixed to hats T shirts, ties, evening gowns or dress suits but not dry suits. And the badge is appealing to the eye. Size is 23mm long by 11mm high.

Price is \$15 plus \$1 P+P, and available from the KASK Treasurer, Max Grant.

LRB2 - KASK HANDBOOK

For a copy of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact KASK Treasurer:

Max Grant,
71 Salisbury St.
Ashhurst, 5451
Ph: (06) 326 8527 home
Fax: (06) 326 8472
email: Q-KAYAKS@xtra.co.nz

COST:

New members: gratis
Existing members: \$10 + \$1 p&p
Non-members: \$18 + \$1 p&p

Make cheques out to KASK (NZ)Inc
Trade enquiries also to Max Grant.

THE LRB2, or the Little Red Book 2nd. Edition, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:

- Kayak, Paddle & Equipment
- Techniques & Equipment
- The Elements
- Trips and Expeditions
- Places to Go
- Resources

Each section contains up to nine separate chapters. The Resources section, for example has chapters on:

- guide to managing a sea kayak symposium
- Paddling Literature
- Author profiles
- Guides and Rental Operators
- Network Addresses
- Sea Kayaks in NZ listing

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EDITORIAL

Apologies:

Humble apologies to Hugh Canard for changing his surname to Logan in both the editorial and environment article on the Abel Tasman National Park articles in the last newsletter. As Hugh Logan works for DoC, I can see how my confusion with surnames arose, but no excuse really.

Sharks:

The media appears to be in feeding frenzy mode re shark encounters, both here and in Australia. And I was sent email traffic re the yellow plastic kayak that was nibbled in the North Island. (see page 14). In 1977, the Fiordland crayfishermen referred to the colour of our Nordkapps as 'yum yum yellow,' a real confidence booster when they talked about the size of the white pointers off the West Coast.

Readers of 'The Dreamtime Voyage' will be aware of the numerous en-

counters with sharks during the Aussie trip; serious stern bumps from tiger sharks were almost a daily event in the base of the Gulf of Carpentaria. My rationale was that in the shallow murky waters of the gulf, sharks saw the shiny deep draft aluminium rudder as a lovely eating barramundi fish and were carrying out a first pass, taste test.

Many years ago, red and black banded wetsuits were developed for divers as a shark deterrent, a concept that Bevan applied to his Nordapp rudder blade;

he painted horizontal black and white or black and yellow bands, the rationale being a similarity in appearance to the extremely venomous yellow bellied sea snake. To my knowledge, although Bevan fishes frequently from his kayak, he hasn't been bumped by a shark. 'Food for thought!'

Decision Making

The article by Mary McClintock on 'Who's in Charge?' is one of the best discussion documents I have read on decision making and well worth reading and absorbing

KASK SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Kask subs. for the 2001/2 year are due 28 February. Please send your \$20 cheque or folding type money to the treasurer: Max Grant, 71 Salisbury St, Ashhurst, 5451. Make cheques out to KASK(NZ) Inc.

KASK FORUM 2001

Don't forget to register if you are attending the KASK Forum at Cable Bay, near Nelson. Numbers are necessary for the planning committee.

Date: 10 - 12 March 2001.

Cost:\$40

Contacts:

Karen Clark, 213 Annesbrook Drive, Nelson
AJ, Phone (03) 544 6322

The KASK AGM will be held, and Max Grant has a constitution change to make life easier for the treasurer:

Constitution Change:

Number 13. Finance.

Item a) The financial year for the Association shall be from April 1st until March 31st.

To be changed to "August 1st until 31st July".

Reasons:

1. Not enough time between end of the financial year and AGM to do annual balance have books audited. This year the AGM will be held before end of financial year, so will have to table the same accounts as at last AGM!

2. I feel that the financial year should end during our off season. At present people are joining in early summer and have to pay a second subscription after 31st March. It would make my book work easier if the subscriptions were due when there are much fewer new members joining up.

3. At present, our financial year ends right in the middle of our annual forum. This means that we can never show a correct balance for each forum, which is by far our biggest annual event, but instead it shows half of one forum and half of the one held previously. This also applies for our Water Safety Grants, as the money is used during the summer.

Max Grant

TECHNICAL

Sea Kayaking in the Arizona Desert!

By Cathye Haddock

In October of 1999, I attended the Wilderness Risk Management Conference in Sierra Vista, Arizona, USA. I was invited to give a plenary address and run a workshop on my masters research into near misses in the outdoors. I also attended several excellent workshops myself, including a full day sea kayak workshop run by two sea kayak instructors, from NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School).

I was intrigued about how they would conduct a practical sea kayak workshop in the Arizona Desert!! I was in for a pleasant surprise... Whilst other conference delegates were cooped up in windowless rooms for their workshops, the nine sea kayakers and our two presenters sat under the shade of a lovely tree by the hotel swimming pool, which had sea kayaks lined up along one side. The days programme was an excellent revision of knowledge and skills I had learned elsewhere as well as a refreshing look at information and techniques that were new to me.

The flexible morning programme covered common injuries and illnesses in sea kayaking; review of a safety equipment list; group travel structure and communication on the water. The afternoon session was mainly practical in the pool with demonstrations and practice of: **self rescues**: wet exit and re-entry without and with a paddle float; **assisted rescues**: cross cockpit rescue and sling (stirrup) rescue. We also practiced cockpit changes and looked at different towing equipment and systems. Finally, after a late afternoon warm up in the hot tub adjacent to the pool, we reviewed some case studies of sea kayak incidents that have appeared in the *Sea Kayaker Magazine*.

COMMON INJURIES & ILLNESSES (See Table on p.6)

We began with a review of common injuries and illnesses associated with

sea kayaking. The emphasis was on prevention but some treatment techniques were also discussed. Injuries and illnesses fell into four areas: paddling, carrying, environmental and camping. The group discussion is summarised in Table on Page 6.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT LIST

The NOLS instructors presented the group with the following list to review and add to (*italics*). The list was developed for their expedition sea kayaking courses run for several months at a time in places like the Bahamas, Alaska and Patagonia. I believe it is an excellent list for New Zealand sea kayakers to consider, and an especially good list for Networks around the country to consider for their regular paddles. For me, reviewing the list prompted the purchase of a few items on my travels in North America after the conference.

PERSONAL

- Whistle
- Spray skirt
- Flares
- Flashlight (maglite is waterproof)
- Signal mirror
- Binoculars (check out conditions/boats/wildlife)
- Knife
- Matches or lighter

KAYAK

- Bilge pump/bailer/sponge
- Floatation
- Spare split paddle
- Paddle float
- Sea sock
- VHF marine radio
- EPIRB (back up)
- Sea anchor (drogue)
- *Paddle leash*
- *Towing system*
- *Sling*
- *Foghorn*
- *Compass die*

OTHER

- maps and charts
- tide tables
- local knowledge of area and weather
- float plan
- *cell phone*

The NOLS presenters stressed:

- Make sure you know **how to use** all

equipment you carry.

- Make sure it is **accessible**.

GROUP TRAVEL

It was acknowledged that travelling in a group posed some real challenges for sea kayakers. The workshop focussed on two areas, pod structure and communication on the water. This topic was most pertinent for me as a Wellington Regional Sea Kayak Network member, as this was an issue we had been grappling with in 1999. An excellent pod structure was proposed (see Figure 1 below).

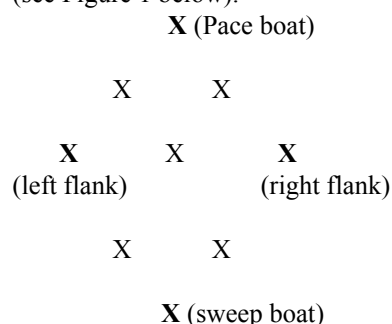


Figure 1 Pod Structure

Pod structure. From their experience of group travel, NOLS instructors believed that having a good structure during group travel improves communication, regulates leader stress levels and ultimately sets the leader and group members free (of much anxiety). They recommended the following:

It is important to give group members positions in the pod structure. When conditions are calm it is okay to spread out, but when conditions change, everyone needs to come in close (whilst maintaining the structure). There are four positions of responsibility within the structure illustrated in Figure 1.

- The *pace* boat is the lead boat and sets the pace for the whole group. It is their responsibility to keep the group from spreading out by paddling at a pace everyone can maintain. No one passes the *pace* boat.

- The *pace* boat should be rotated to give them a break. The *flank* boats keep the outer boundaries of the group. The two flanks should be able to shout to each other to communicate. Other paddlers should not paddle outside the flanks. In hazardous areas, for example a point or rocks, the flank nearest should maintain a safe dis-

tance from the hazard, thereby steering the group clear of it.

- The *sweep* boat brings up the rear. No one goes behind this boat. If someone has problems, the *sweep* helps deal with it, and communicates to the group if they need to wait up. Slow people should be put up near the front of the pod as they tend to pick up a bit more.

The group leader/s or instructor/s take flank or internal positions. They are not in front as they need to see everyone. They are not in the sweep position as it is harder to communicate from the rear and hard to reign people in. As leader, it is good to be able to move around, so better if they are not committed to a position of responsibility so they can go around and check in with everyone.

Communication on the water is ninety per cent there with a good pod structure. It is good if the flanks can communicate, but often the pace and sweep cannot realistically communicate, so a message system needs to be used. The message is basically passed up the line until the right person / people get it.

Although a leader may be identified, it is a good idea to have other leaders supporting the main leader. It is strongly recommended that these folk have some non-verbal (non-paddle) signals worked out ahead of time to use between them. Some suggested signals are:

- tap head = I'm okay
- point to own eye and point to person = keep an eye on that person
- point finger and wave hand in circle around head = turn around signal.

In addition to signals for use between leaders, it is essential to have some that the whole group understands and can respond to. Several blasts on the whistle alerts the group there is an emergency, for example a capsize, so stop and re-group. Following are some paddle signals which may be useful in different circumstances when verbal communication is difficult or impossible.

- Proceed (paddle held vertically)
- Stop (paddle held horizontally over-

head)

- Pod up (paddle pumped up and down in the horizontal position)
- Move left or right (paddle held diagonally across the body pointing in the intended direction of travel)
- Emergency (paddle held vertically then swung side to side in a waving pattern)

These signals can also be relayed with your arms and hands rather than a paddle.

Before the trip, the leader/s should explain that s/he may need to take a directive leadership style in order to avert or deal with an emergency so they need everyone to respect this and **just do it**. The group also needs a capsize plan. It is best to explain this to everyone before the trip and essential to discuss between leaders. A suggested capsize plan is as follows:

- closest leader / instructor go to assist
- other leader/s sweep everyone up and get into safe / stable position, bow into wind or raft up
- wait close by but out of the way and be ready to assist if need to

RESCUE PRACTICE

I have practiced many rescues in my ten plus years of sea kayaking, but I had never practiced a re entry into my boat without any assistance, ie no paddle float and no buddy! This was the first rescue we all had to practice in the pool. All of us took many, many tries before we achieved it. I took over fifteen tries and my buddy (an outward bound instructor of over 20 years) did not manage it (very difficult for a very tall person with big feet!). This experience, although frustrating and embarrassing, was a real challenge and taught me a number of skills. Firstly, it made completing a self-rescue in a swimming pool very challenging and gave me an insight into how exhausted I got after repeatedly failing and trying again and again. It became increasingly hard to heave myself over the rear deck far enough so my boobs didn't get stuck and strand me in the wrong position on the deck. I found practicing this rescue really honed my sense of fine balance and amplified the importance of keeping my centre of gravity low. One millimetre out or any sudden move-

ment and I was back in the drink! What a sense of relief when I finally did it! The most valuable lesson was how important it is to have efficient, well practiced methods of re-entry so I don't end up in the exhausted state I was in, it would be so easy to give up at that point.

All the other rescues we practiced were a piece of cake after that. Quite unrealistic in comparison. The Wellington Sea Kayak Network had a rescue practice day not long after my return to NZ and I tried the unassisted rescue again, in the sea this time. There were mild waves, a steady breeze, and I was feeling a little under the weather that day. But I got in on my second try! I couldn't believe it. Practice makes perfect! I really recommend practicing this technique sometime.

INCIDENT CASE STUDIES

To finish the day off, we were divided into two groups and given an incident report from *Sea Kayaker Magazine* to read and discuss. As a group we had to identify the contributing factors to the incident (death) and come up with ways the group could have prevented getting into that situation. Each group reported their findings to the other group and was asked additional questions relating to safety issues. This was a very worthwhile exercise, providing plenty of food for thought, and reminding us all of situations we have found ourselves in.

The book, *Deep Trouble* was recommended to us and available at the conference. I bought a copy and read it on my travels after the conference. There are tales enough to put anyone off sea kayaking but I came back to NZ keener than ever! The book has been reviewed in this Newsletter in the past and I recommend it as an excellent read and full of lessons from the school of hard knocks.

So ended my day of sea kayaking in the Arizona desert! And yes, there were road runners (birds) and Saguaro cacti in abundance right outside the hotel.

Cathy Haddock

THE 'BUGGER!' FILE.

by Gavin White

Last night I dropped in on the editor. He looked exhausted after a long hard day's work, one of a long run of such days by the sounds of things. Anyway they'd put in an especially big day yesterday because the weather was due to break so it was to be the last day in the field for a few days. Looking buggered after his 12 hours of bouncing around the mountain tops, he lamented that the next issue of the KASK newsletter was due out soon, and that he had received very few contributions toward it from the membership. He doesn't want to resort to filling each issue with his own exploits merely to produce an issue.

Each paddler has their unique experiences, and perspectives which if shared can enrich the group. Since returning to New Zealand for the new year I've been amazed at the number of vehicles sporting sea kayaks this summer. Unless they are the latest fashion accessory then I presume there has been a lot of paddling going on. If you've been out there having fun, write it up, and share with your peers.

The Bugger File.

Paul commented to me that mistakes are good learning material, and that paddling wouldn't be as much fun without a few mistakes. Boring in fact. Well I've made a lot of mistakes. I am only comfortable sharing them because when I last glanced through the KASK membership list I hardly knew anyone else on it. I live overseas so I'm not likely to meet you either. So I think I can get away with minimal embarrassment. Following are the highlights that stick in my mind. They are my mistakes, copyrighted. I hope everyone has as much fun as I've had enroute to making these mistakes. However I also hope that no-one cheats by copying my mistakes, but strives to make their own.

Bugger 1.

The first kayak I bought for sea kay-

aking was a sieve-like fiberglass Olymp. 6 which I picked up for \$60. I knew it was a white water slalom boat, and totally unsuitable for my purpose, but it was all I could afford. I tried patching the many holes with resin and glass, but there always seemed to be more holes, and there wasn't much kayak to stick the patches to, so I finished the job off with sleek tape. By leaking, the repaired boat took 40 minutes to fill in flat water.

Bugger 2.

On a fine day a friend and I went to surf at Makara beach, Wellington. I'd never paddled with this chap before and wasn't sure of his ability. I was a little concerned when he needed help launching. The dumpers were breaking on the shore in a mildly vicious manner, but once going, away he went, out through the main break to safer water beyond. Having watched him to safety I ran up the beach, grabbed my boat, and launched. This took a few minutes due to the fore mentioned mildly vicious dumpers. At first I couldn't see my mate, for the waves I thought, but no I was looking in the wrong direction; he was still heading out into the strait, arms pumping in the distance. It took me a while to catch up. Now you see him, now you don't. He had a head start of four or five ocean swells. By the time I caught up, my boat was full enough. He was intent on overnighting on Arapawa Island, but hadn't told me. It only occurred to him once he was on the water. We turned around after some conversation. It took a while to get back because my friend wasn't comfortable paddling in following seas, and couldn't surf without canning out.

Bugger 3.

Took the same kayak, still leaking, for an excursion in the Marlborough Sounds, and the Abel Tasman. With a wet sleeping bag most nights I had pneumonia, and a collapsed lung after 3 months. This required a month in bed. I lost 17kg and did not regain full strength for several years.

My first boat died that trip on the Anatoki River, Golden Bay. Feeling a greater than normal rush of cold water

whilst negotiating one rapid, I glanced rearward only to see that I was being overtaken by the back half of my boat.

Bugger 4.

Vowing never to make the same mistakes I bought a Dura, one of the first plastic boats sold in New Zealand. It was really heavy, cost several hundred dollars with paddle, and spray skirt. I got it home by manually dragging it several suburbs through the streets of Wellington. Duras were solidly built.

Flatting in Houghton Bay it was natural that I would surf each morning before work. Houghton Bay has a nice wave in moderate conditions, but the undertow can be very strong and worthy of caution. I recall struggling to get my boat out of the undertow one morning. In would come a dumper washing my boat up the beach. Racing after it, and grabbing hold, I'd play a losing battle of tug of war with the undertow until the next dumper washed me and the boat back up the beach. Nothing I did that morning seemed to make any difference. I quite suspected that the boat would still be there in the evening after work if I let it alone. I can't remember how I got it out, but afterwards I used inflated empty wine casks to fill unused space and thus prevent a recurrence.

Bugger 5.

Went surfing in Lyall Bay with a mate at night during a southerly storm. Entering the water after a couple of smokes and a bottle of sparkling we soon split up. It was quite black out, with just the white of the wash showing, lit by the distant street lighting. After catching a few waves I became increasingly paranoid about my mate. Where was he? How do I even begin to find him in these conditions? What if he's in the water out there somewhere? What end of trouble am I going to cause by calling the police now? The worry spoiled the otherwise challenging surfing. I landed to look for him. The task seemed futile. He eventually hove into view, making his way toward our van from the airport end of the bay.

Bugger 6.

1991 found me living in Tokyo but not enjoying city life. I escaped often to the Izu peninsula, which juts into the Pacific, a little south of Tokyo. It's a fun place to visit having great geology, forested mountains, monkeys on the coast, turtles, varied bird life, numerous natural hot springs, incredible fishing, good snorkeling, an interesting culture, and friendly people. Various patterned massive rock cliffs are numerous dotted with caves, and tranquil sandy beached bays.

The Black current (Kuroi Shiou) sweeps up both coasts of Japan as it moves from the Philippines to the Kurile Islands north of Japan. On the east coast the current splits in two, the major current remaining off-shore, whilst a minor flow follows the coast. These two currents meet at an impressive point at the end of the Izu peninsula.

I digress. —The Izu Peninsula also catches some excellent surf, particularly when a typhoon has passed well to the south, perhaps around Okinawa, or Kyushu. The resulting swell is long and gentle in the deep water surrounding the peninsula but builds into a good wave closer to shore.

One glorious day, with a brisk off shore wind blowing, found me on the beach watching the rollers steam in. There was one break, and the wash swept up the beach. The off shore wind held the waves straight and tall, and blew beautiful mare's tails. Smaller waves of 3-4m were breaking to the left quite nicely for the most part with a bit of tube here and there before closing out. The larger waves (5m upward) were dumping evenly straight across the bay in an awesome display of power. They charged up the beach with seemingly no water in front of them as though they would never break. No-one was in the water despite the heat.

After walking in during a lull in the sets and swimming leisurely beyond the break I was alarmed to see that a mass of families were rushing to the water. I didn't time the lull by accident and I could see that most of the kids were going to get smashed by the

next wave. Japanese tend to do what everyone else is doing. A few made it past the impact zone, many were horribly dealt to in the zone, and still others were sucked into the next wave by the undertow. I spent the next 15 minutes pulling people out of the water, mostly children, but several adults too.

After a bit of body surfing I came in for a rest, then went back out in a Dancer. The smaller waves were a fun surf with time for one long ride, and one short one before getting out the back with plenty of time for a rest while the big dumping set rolled in. I got greedy.

Trying for my third ride in a set I was off! Looking down scared me. From the top of the wave I was looking straight down the face, and thought I could see the sand through what little was left of the water in front of the wave. I guessed the height to be 5-6m. Not wanting to go down that face I looked across the wave to pick a line across the face. No way! The whole wave, right down the line was set up just as steep, just as tall! Letting that one go I slide down the back of the wave, which seemed nearly as steep as the front, and watched in awe, and relief, as the wave roared on in trailing a stinging salt spray to dump emphatically right across the bay. Wow, glad I wasn't on that! Turning leisurely around I was astounded by the face of the wave roaring in to greet me. I didn't want to try paddling over it for fear of being near the lip when it broke. I couldn't see a safe way out of the situation and thought that this wave might kill me. I didn't consider outrunning the wave a possibility as the waves were belting in, and the undertow was sucking most of the water back into the wave much faster than I could paddle.

Instead I decided to get myself parallel with the face of the wave such that the wave would break over me. I hoped to miss most of the impact and be able to brace/roll through to the back of the wave. I was rising up the face of the wave higher than I wanted and was desperate for the wave to break before I got too high. I might have been as

much as a third up the face of the wave when it broke, with the lip of the wave passing high above, and across me to land to my left. Phew that wasn't as bad as I feared. Breathing again I looked about in the tube. Then the rest of the wave hit me hard. I felt a big impact on my right, my bracing meant nothing as I was flung through water into the airspace in front of the wash. Between impact and being airborne I felt both shoulders get pulled as I struggled to hold onto the paddle. According to spectators I was then end looped another 4 times. Despite the wash having left me behind it was still some time before I surfaced as the water was considerably aerated and the kayak with me in couldn't float. Once at the surface I rolled, resealed my spray skirt, took one look at the wave breaking behind me, and paddled wildly for the shore. When the wash caught me I was end looped twice, after which I rolled, paddled in close enough to land unimpeded by the undertow, and had a short sprint with the kayak on shoulder to avoid getting caught by the next wash. My shoulders recovered in about 3 months although they were still easily injured for several years later.

Bugger 7.

Having given my wife loose directions as to where I was planning to paddle that day, I dropped her in Nelson, promising to pick her up at 4pm. Putting in at Delaware Inlet on an outgoing tide, I rode the tidal stream toward Croseilles Harbour. My plan was to paddle outward, lunch, and return on the flood tide. It was a lovely winter's day and I spent much time sitting watching the sea birds feeding. Lunch beckoning, I decided to land before a headland, climb the hill, and enjoy my lunch with the view. Having gained a ridge above the bay, after a bit of a scramble up a steep incline of scattered scree, I wasn't looking forward to returning by the same route. Looking down I realized that I'd left my kayak below the high tide line and that I'd better return before it was carried off. I had visions of injuring myself slipping dramatically down the slope, and lying concussed as my boat floated off with the next tide. This would leave any searchers per-

plexed as they probably wouldn't find the boat until the next day by which time it would have drifted variously with two tides.

Reviewing my options I decided to walk down to Hori Bay, then make my way around the headland back to my kayak. Not knowing the coast I assumed a few swims might be involved and so it turned out, the best swim being a short cut through a wee cave.

Bugger 8.

My sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, and most of my dry bags are blue. Bumble bees love blue. So far the only place it mattered was Port Pegasus, Stewart Island. Leave a bag open and there'd be three bumble bees in it next thing you knew, and as for trying to load/unload a kayak with bumble bees hovering around the hatch, and sand flies snapping at any skin showing...

Bugger 9.

Letting Bernie Dunn talk me into loading my kayak with all the weight in the back, 'to keep the nose up through the waves.' Not wrong Bernie, mission accomplished!

I was leaving Port Adventure, Stewart Island for Thule Bay, Peterson Inlet at 5:30am to catch the outgoing tide. It was still dark on the water as I rounded a point with slight swells rolling in from 2 directions. What with it being dark, and the 2 swells, their rebounds, and the multiple peaks, it would have been an interesting paddle anyway if I'd been paddling an evenly laden boat. Having the nose of the boat skyward just made it that little bit more special.

Gavin White.

TRIP REPORTS

Bay of Islands to North

Cape

by Kerry Howe

In the summer of 99/00 I paddled from Auckland to Bay of Islands. This summer I wanted to complete the trip through to North Cape. The immediate psychological context was a sudden onset of big shark fear. A few weeks before I set off, my good seakayaking partner Hugh Oakley-Browne had been paddling at Whananaki when he had to rescue to his companion from a Great White attack (New Zealand Herald, 8 Jan 01).

My son James kindly drove me to Waitangi for my departure. I had planned to skirt around the northern side of the Bay of Islands. But to try to overcome my new fears on open crossings and because the Bay was flat calm early in the morning, I headed directly to Cape Wiwiki. I arrived in some relief, only to have a massive splash and water boil just behind me when I was only feet from the rocks. I hugged the shoreline in terror for the rest of the day and made it to a small cove just south of Takou Bay. A swell smashed onto a tiny, steep sandy beach. I avoided pitching my tent until after the high tide later in the afternoon to make sure I was above high water mark. I was by about a metre. The surf was deafening all night. I kept a particularly wary eye on the next high tide just before daylight.

In a hot early morning I headed to Matauri Bay where I topped up my water bottles at the camp ground, then it was another open water section across Wainui Bay and a brief stop at Tauranga Bay. I had planned to spend a night tucked inside the scenically dramatic Whangaroa Harbour but it was too early in the day to stop. So I did another open water crossing and camped north of Taupo Bay, this time on flat grass well above high water and under a pohutukawa.

Day three took me along particularly rugged coastline. I finally rounded Cape Berghan and headed into Doubt-

less Bay. Ideally I should have paddled directly across to Knuckle Point and by-passed the Bay altogether. But I didn't have the nerve, especially in the 20/25 knot sou'westerly. So I planned a big U-turn around the Bay. This required a long hard paddle straight into the wind to make landfall at Cable Bay where I knew there was a dairy. I topped up my water, guzzled a coke and a triple ice cream, and set off in the hot windy evening along Tokerau Beach. My campsite in the sandhills was a delight. I lay on my back watching the numerous coloured fishing kites against a darkening sky. I couldn't wait to catch the tail wind next morning, and use my sail effectively for the first time on the trip, for the passage back out northern side of the Bay and around the Karikari Peninsula.

But the morning was utterly windless. I cut straight across Doubtless Bay, ducked around Knuckle Point and made it into sheltered Matai Bay. The beach was crowded with holiday makers. I decided to land and top up my water at the campground. Coming ashore on a tiny wave in a few centimetres of water I tipped out in a pathetic spectacle of incompetence. Once I got my bedraggled self to shore someone asked me where I was headed. I said North Cape, and got a withering 'yeah right' look. Rounding rugged and remote Cape Karikari was both exciting and troublesome. It brought me into truly northern waters, but I felt very anxious when I caught site of the distant hills around North Cape, like faint smoke smudges, barely rising over the horizon. I'd never get there. The rest of the afternoon was spent struggling into the by now strong sou'westerly across Karikari Bay. I eventually gave up and camped near the foot of Puheke hill. After setting up camp I was finally able to appreciate the magnificent long stretch of shimmering, untouched white sand.

I took off very early next morning hoping that there would be no wind, but the sou'wester had blown all night and would do so all day. I made painful progress. I had wondered about the tidal rip across the entrance to Rangaunu Harbour but it proved no

bother. I finally made it along another vast beach, East Bay, to Houhora Harbour. I had covered the smallest distance of any day, in about the longest time.

I checked into a proper camp ground, had a hot shower, and an afternoon tea of steak, eggs and onions, plus a milkshake at the local museum restaurant. I went back later for a plate of chips and another milkshake. It was time to face what I saw as my greatest challenge, making it up Great Exhibition Bay and into Parengarenga Harbour. This is open sandy coastline. Any swell of consequence would make landing on or leaving the shore very dangerous, and make entry into Parengarenga with its infamous bar a bit of a problem. Thankfully the forecast was for weakening sou'westerlies and calm seas ('no significant swell').

The morning was beautiful, the coastline along Henderson's Point even more so - rocky headlands, hidden sandy coves, pohutukawa. I landed in the corner of delightful Rarawa Beach, through a surf that was a bit bigger than I would have liked. It was only 10 in the morning. I figured it would take me about another four hours to make it to Parengarenga entrance. The swell seemed manageable if I did have to come ashore somewhere before then. Also a light sea breeze was setting in from the sou'east. That would enable me to use my sail. So I went for it. It was the experience of a lifetime.

The famous silica sand of the peninsula at the south entrance to Parengarenga was below the horizon, yet the sky for miles above it shimmered and sparkled in its reflection. It was like daytime fireworks. The silica sands all along Great Exhibition Bay made the water almost transparent. I could see the shallow, dazzling sea floor for about 100 metres all about me. At first I spied large black stingrays, and dark schools of clustering kahawai, and larger individual shapes of kingfish. After a time, larger black shapes began travelling southwards past me. These first sharks were relatively small, perhaps about four feet. One came in for a look from the side. The closer I got to Parengarenga en-

trance the more numerous they became. I gave up counting, and went into a numb denial. Then a few really big ones went by. Three were nose to tail in a shark train. I switched from denial to buttock clenching fear and hurt my neck watching them pass behind and making sure they did not double back on me. Eventually I came to the entrance, and had to cross the bar on the southern side. The swells were not large, but it was dead low water and the shallow bar was awash with surf. Not far from the entrance lie two sections of wrecked ships. I made a course between them. It was a climactic twenty minutes or so. The sharks were literally pouring out of the empty harbour. Some smaller ones began to attack the kahawai nearby. At one stage I heard jaws snap on a hapless kahawai on the surface after a crazed spiralling chase. The surf was slopping all around. The wrecks looked very ominous. Then I was passed them and into the calm but black water of the main channel. I quickly paddled across it and landed on the beach at the northern side. I set up camp on the silica sand, against a bank and under a small pohutukawa tree. I gazed back down the glistening coast with some satisfaction.

It had been my best day, 24 nautical miles in seven hours. If the weather turned nasty now, I would be relatively safe since I could go into the Harbour. Part of me hoped it would, so I would not have to continue on the open, sharky coast to the Cape.

But the next day, day 7, was hot and still. I had no excuse. I paddled the remaining 8 nautical miles to the Cape quickly. I saw nothing nasty in the water. The coast consisted of magnificent beaches interspersed with dramatic rock cliffs. North Cape is itself a small, high island joined to the mainland by a shingle spit. I tried to find a way up to the lighthouse, but any path was long since obliterated in the era of helicopter serviced lights. I started climbing up a steep slope until I realised that a sprained wrist or worse might not be a good idea. I retreated for lunch and photographs to a shingle beach just opposite the island and overhung with late-January

pohutukawa in full bloom. After an hour or so I paddled back to my campsite at the Parengarenga entrance. I only saw one shark. I could handle that!

I spent the next few days inside the harbour. It was not all that pleasant. It was more tidal than I thought, and there are vast areas of recent mangroves not on the charts. Paddling was possible only within a couple of hours of high tide. The mosquitoes day and night were dreadful. I eventually made it to Waikiti Landing where James dutifully came from Auckland to collect me.

Overall, I covered 140 nautical miles. As with most trips like this, settled weather is the key. You just have to be meteorologically lucky. Parts of this northern coastline would be very unsafe in bad weather.

Communication

Cell phone coverage (021) from Bay of Islands to Doubtless Bay was fairly spotty, and worked best close to holiday locations. Texting positions is potentially an excellent way to let people know where you are. North of Doubtless Bay there is no cell phone coverage. Before my trip I wrote to Houhora Marine Radio and received a most helpful letter from manager, Dick Grimes, who offered every assistance including passing of important phone messages. Houhora Radio covers from Cape Karikari to Three Kings on VHF channel 74. Dick has excellent far north sea area weather reports 0600, 0800, 1400, 1600. He took my daily trip reports, and with more than passing interest, and perhaps concern for a middle-aged solo seakayaker. For example, I reported leaving Parengarenga for North Cape and said I would call on my return. He said 'no, call me from the Cape', which I did. He also made a couple of phone calls for me. A marvellous service! 'Thanks too to Clive Hookham for providing long range weather info when I was able to phone him.'

(see tabled daily statistics on top of page 11)

Stats (GPS derived)

Day 1	Paihia to south of Takou Bay	18.6nm	6hr 11min
Day 2	to north of Taupo Bay	17.9nm	6hr18min
Day 3	to Tokerau Beach	21.3nm	8hr 7min
Day 4	to Karikari Beach	20.3nm	7hr17min
Day 5	to Houhora	12.4nm	7hr 9min
Day 6	to Parengarenga entrance	23.5nm	7hr14min
Day 7	to North Cape/Parengarenga return	16nm	5hr 24min

TRIP REPORT**North Island - Kerikeri to
Coopers Beach
by Dan Hawthorn**

Friday 16th - Saturday 17th. The plan was to start from Kerikeri and go north, idling along, rock gardening along the coast, explore the Cavalis again, look at Whangaroa, do another lot of coast exploration and end up at Mangonui. Six days or so and I have snuck in a map of the Karikari peninsular and Houhora if conditions got spectacularly good. The plan is also for light winds and calm seas.

I leave Auckland stressed and not fully prepared at the end of an overfull year. I have a new Barracuda Expedition (the BE) that I am coming to terms with, I have spent the last seven years paddling a Seabear double as a single so I have come to accept almost total stability as a God given right. However the Seabear is getting too heavy for me to paddle into wind and chop for long periods and my shoulders have been complaining so I went looking for a lighter, faster kayak. Auckland has been throwing 30 knot winds and I have used those to get familiar with the BE, but I do not yet know what she will do in open sea. She is, however, enjoyably fast into the wind.

Up to Kerikeri on Friday 16th December and on Saturday morning parked in the Kerikeri Cruising Club carpark, just before Opito Bay. The carpark is large with a ramp, has overnight security checks and is open to the public. I load the BE beside the van and use my folding trolley to get it to the ramp. At the ramp a bloke says the forecast is for 2 – 3 days SE, I had been hoping for the high to move over sooner than that but I will go out and see how it

looks. I head out across Te Puna inlet towards Poraenui Point aiming for Cape Wiwiki. The wind is light, small waves on the nose and the BE is making good time. The tide is coming in but it does not seem to be affecting things here. There are some clouds but its mainly sunny and I am surrounded by islands, my spirits lift. Round Poraenui Point and I am not quite happy with the trim, the front is burying in the sea more often than seems reasonable. I turn and go into Wairoa Bay which has the Samuel Marsden cross at one end. I stretch and do some repacking to move weight to the rear then set off again with the BE riding over rather than through the waves.

Two more inviting looking bays on my left but I have destination fever and I am on out towards Cape Wiwiki and adventure. I round Howe Point and now I can see Harakeke Island off Cape Wiwiki. The waves are a little larger and I am starting to notice an ocean swell underneath but there is nothing to worry about. With SE winds I am expecting a moderately exposed stretch after I turn around the cape. There is surf breaking on the rocks and the cape is dramatic and exciting, the sea has turned clear blue to say I am clear of harbour waters. Without really thinking about it I go into the gap between Harakeke Island and Cape Wiwiki. Mistake. The tide has turned and is now running out. The wind against tide effect is magnified in the gap between island and cape and in addition the swells are reflected off the shore when they hit so that I am in a patch of clapotic waves with a short steep chop on top of everything. I make rather slow progress.

The trip diary records that paddling became very focused for a while. At times I have to brace in earnest and this is new. In the Seabear bracing

meant real emergency, that things were seriously wrong and it is hard to get over that mind-set. I get through this a bit shaken and turn north aiming for Rocky Point and the Needles about 6 km away. The wind is now 15 – 20 knots and the swells are pounding the coast. I keep a fair way out but even so reflected swells off the cliffs make for a confused sea pattern. The coast looks fascinating, rugged and bleak. This is definitely a trip to repeat in flat calm conditions. I have been warned that this stretch of coast up to Whangaroa has numerous bomboras. I spot several as I scan ahead but even so I misplace one and find myself rising up a 2 m swell that suddenly becomes 3.5 meters and cresting while I look down on a reef maybe 25 m away that has had its covering water sucked back off it. I paddle up, over and off the wave and it breaks behind me. Whew! It is a long 5 km and by the end of it I am worried. There is nothing that is hard to handle but there is a serious question about how much worse conditions can get before I am in trouble. I am working harder to keep upright than I would in the Seabear and do not feel as confident.

At Rocky Point and the Needles I continue north for a bit keeping well clear of the headland conditions before I turn and head west. I rest behind an island just after the point and decide what to do next. I had half intended to carry on to the Cavalis if I was feeling good but I am far too tired for that. I have done four weeks of fairly consistent training two to three hours a night and God help me if I hadn't. I note Paul Caffyn recommends two months of nightly paddles and some weekend trips as a build-up before a serious trip. I decide to make for Taronui Bay which is about at the bottom of the Purerua Peninsular on the north side. My map shows a 1 km deep indentation and I have a vision of a deep pohutakawa fringed cove up which I will glide to a whisper soft landing on a gentle beach. Tiredness does that to your sense of realism. The swell is now behind me, there is a small chop on top of it but things are much easier. It's a following sea but I am too tired to feel comfortable surfing so I ease my paddling and

backpaddle when the BE starts to take off. The coast is mainly rocky and there is what looks like a moderate surf running. I have lost count of the headlands and am not sure which one should open up to give me my magic cove. From the map you look down on a clear profile of coast, headlands and bays, from the sea you look along the coast and get a mass of headlands and false headlands superimposed on each other with little indication of what lies behind each one until you pass it. I have even lost count of islands and have to re-orient myself when I come up to a large set of black Christmas puddings that have to be the Barrel (or Black) rocks. I am ready to stop, I look for the first bay with a decent hook to land behind, I do not really fancy surf landings right now. Here's one, possible camp site, only one unoccupied house at one end. In to the beach behind a small wave and stiffly unwind. Behind the beach, right where I landed is a river estuary, the reality behind the deep sheltered cove of my dreams, I am at Taronui. There are Dotterels and Black Oyster Catchers nesting above the high tide mark.

Talk to the farm manager's wife, set up a camp and then paddle the river in the early evening sun. Oh I like flat water. There are reflections of rock faces, startled young shags, ducks flying ahead of me. The mangroves change into flax, rushes and pohutukawa as I go up stream, then kingfishers and manuka near the top. Spend part of the night awake fretting about safety, my stiff shoulders, is this the end of my kayaking and all the usual chaff of the first night on a solo trip. Knowing it is part of a pattern helps somewhat.

Sunday 18th. Morning and the trolley turns into a plough in the soft estuary sand. By the time I am ready to launch I am a panting sweaty mess. Out through small surf but my hat flips off and vanishes in the foam. Sheer carelessness, I had not fastened the neck strap. After the recent NSW hoo-ha I had at least packed a spare. I head out, gentle well spaced swells 1.5 to 2m and a comfortable hour and 20 to the Cavallis. I head round to the north of the main island looking for a camp

site that I remember, there is a small surf on the beach and a wave breaks just behind me so I come in sideways on a paddle brace. I set up camp and then go over to Matauri Bay and buy water and an iceblock from the motor camp. Today it is near deserted, next week they have 1200 booked! I do a satisfyingly spectacular exit through 5 foot surf with onlookers. Yee-haa and maybe I will come back as a jet-skier. North again from the main island of the Cavallis is a chain of rocky islets. I take the rod and go trolling for kahawai, go through a narrow gap and see two large swells coming in the other direction, cannot go back because of the fishing line, grit my teeth and up and at 'em. The open sea has a swell running, fed now by two days of SE winds. Here on the north side the swells meet shallow ground and rise steeply to about 3 m, they are not breaking but I put the rod away and concentrate, I do not even want to think about playing a fish right here. No fish and back to camp. No people either and I hang wet gear on trees and wander contentedly naked in the last warmth of the evening sun. In the evening light I spotted Mt. Camel, way, way to the north west. I am sleeping on sand with no grass and I wake in the night with painfully stiff shoulders and back. I massage what I can reach and walk in the moonlight watching the lights of a ship disappear and reappear as it passes behind the islets.

Monday 19th. I wake and it is morning, still SE and too rough to explore the Cavallis, I decide to give my shoulders an easy day and cross over to Flat Island and then in towards a sheltered coast and rock hop westwards along to Tauranga Bay. I explore bays, cliffs and caves from close quarters with a feeling of delight. Got to Tauranga Bay at about 10, rested and then, feeling fine, went over to Whangaroa and explored the outer arm, took the only two photos of what is becoming a very two handed trip and have a lovely time watching the mix of cliffs, domes and bush. Found a stream to explore at the NW end and there is a small house tucked up there looking over the water to 500 ft of black cliffs. There is a thin line of white falling down from

the cliff's top center and 150 ft further down the water splashes on a wide dome of rock and you can see the splash zone shifting as the wind moves the fall. Stay at the motor camp back at Tauranga Bay, the camp management enliven my afternoon by deliberately burning an old cabin. It is beside a hill, there is long kaikuyu grass running uphill to the tanks and alkathene pipes that are the camp's water supply and then fairly dry scrub climbs to the top of the dome and goes on for miles. There are no hoses. The hut burns with a spectacular plume of smelly smoke and sparks, the kaikuyu catches and starts burning up the hill. One of the two blokes I am watching with suggests we get in and do something, I reluctantly follow them up the hill. We are all in sandals and shorts and I hate getting burnt. The manager, his off-sider and the three of us do a three stooges version of fire-fighting, cutting alkathene pipes and using them as improvised hoses, finally getting the fire out before it reaches the scrub line or burns all the water pipes. We relax, unburnt, over beers afterwards and I am told the forecast is for more and possibly stronger SE winds. Sleep well, no aches, a ground cover of thick mown kaikuyu is wonderful. There is a red sky and I hope for happy shepherds.

Tuesday 20th. I wake to a gray-pink sky and a feeling of foreboding. I could stay on but it is starting to rain and a day or so in a wet, tiny tent does not appeal. Memo – better tents make for better decision making. Colin and Dave from last nigh help me launch, I am briefly buried in spray to my shoulders as the first wave breaks and then I am out into calm water and away. There is an east facing coast running about 6 km north to Karau Point and the further I get from Tauranga Bay the more exposed this coast gets. There are lines of clouds dumping heavy showers all seemingly headed for the same point I am. I am hoping that with SE winds I will round the point and have an easy, sheltered day from there on. The swells grow and there is a cross sea so by the time I get near Karau Point the sea is a wickedly moving carpet of dancing gray. I note that over the last three days the BE has

become an extension of me, I feel very like a sea-going centaur, my upper body growing naturally from my kayak. There are wave crests popping up and moving in random directions and every couple of minutes one of these grabs either the bow or the stern and swirls me to a new direction. My responses feel easy and relaxed. There are petrels everywhere, the big black sooty shearwaters doing amazing swoops and swirls in the airflows over the waves, Buller's petrels with their white bellies and occasionally one of the tiny fluttering storm petrels, webbed feet extended dancing just above the surface. Cone Rock comes into view from behind Karau Point, echoing the shape of the point but bare of soil and weathered, a sort of ghostly glimpse of Karau's future. The seas off Cone Rock are horrible, large, steep and confused. There is a low motor noise from the surf breaking on the rocks. Working through this takes concentration.

After Cone Rock the seas are less confused but I do not get the hoped for shelter. The wind and swell direction are east not SE and the next 13 km to Berghan's Point contains some pretty exposed bits though there are a number of deep bays that can be sheltered in. There are long foam streaks on the water so I guess the basic wind strength at 20 – 25 knots. Still its early in the day and I aim for Otonga Point about 9 km away. Taemaro Bay lies behind the point and that will be shelter and easy landing if I need it. I work towards Wekarua Island, see it as looking like a vast baboon. bum down and back sloping up steeply as it challenges the sea. Then as I run past it there is a large sea-cave in its rear and the image becomes slightly obscene but I have no time for re-invention.

Otonga Point is hard work, I am meeting conditions that I did not know I could handle and feeling reasonably comfortable. I rest behind the point and make decisions. Taemaro Bay is rain swept and unappealing, I have been going about three hours and feel fine. It also seems as if it could be a good idea to get around Berghan's Point before the wind gets up any further. So onward, out of the calm

and back to the swells. My feeling about myself so far is that I probably should not be here but that I am making a respectable job of handling the kayak. I stay fairly well out from the cliffs and get to Berghan's Point about 11.30. As I go round the point things get hairy. There are cross seas and every so often there is the sound of someone tipping a load of large gravel off a truck that means that a wave has seriously broken somewhere behind me. At times I am looking down, at times I am looking up, bow and stern are randomly jerked left and right and I paddle across the waves dodging crests, sliding down shoulders, surfing on the small slopes and back paddling on the steep ones, bracing when a break runs across me. I am doing the best paddling I have ever done in my life, each action flowing from the next, reading the sea well. In the back of my mind there is the thought that if this was not so tied to survival it would be a whole barrel load of fun. The cliffs are 60 – 80 m away and the sea breaks on them with towering bursts of spray and a low continuous growling sound. Ahead there is a new, expensive, body board floating in the foam, I flick past, make sure there is no body attached and race on without a thought of attempted salvage.

I get level with the point itself, am mentally preparing for easy water when I get into a small overfall. In the midst of the crossing seas there are now pillow sized lumps of water popping out of the tops of the crests and exploding, I paddle like hell for 2 – 3 minutes and am through. Whew, I slide into one foot ripples. I have reached Doubtless Bay and I will paddle gently into Coopers Beach sheltered from the SE by the high hills. A gust comes down from those same high hills, tears swirls of spray off the water and tries to take my paddle away. I have always found Doubtless Bay a spiteful bit of sailing water. But the wind does ease off. I have lunch at Takerau Bay and on to Coopers Beach, where I finally have a whisper smooth landing.

Dan Hawthorn

PUNISHING HUMOUR

Meaty Pun

A man walks into a bar and sees two pieces of meat hanging from the ceiling. He asks the barman "Why are those two pieces of meat hanging from the ceiling?"

The barman replies "It's a competition we run every night. If you can jump up and touch the meat, you get free drinks all night."

"Great!" says the man, but what if I can't reach?"

"Then you have to buy drinks for everyone all night" the barman answers. "Do you want to try?"

"No, but thanks anyway"

"Why not?" asks the barman.

"The stakes are too high."

Notre Dame's Bells

After Quasimodo's death, the bishop of the Cathedral of Notre Dame sent word through the streets of Paris that a new bell ringer was needed. The bishop decided that he would conduct the interviews personally and went up into the belfry to begin the screening process. After observing several applicants demonstrate their skills, he had decided to call it a day. Just then, an armless man approached him and announced that he was there to apply for the bell ringer's job. The bishop was incredulous. "You have no arms!" "No matter," said the man. "Observe!" And he began striking the bells with his face, producing a beautiful melody on the carillon.

The bishop listened in astonishment; convinced he had finally found a replacement for Quasimodo. But suddenly, rushing forward to strike a bell, the armless man tripped and plunged headlong out of the belfry window to his death in the street below. The stunned bishop rushed to his side. When he reached the street, a crowd had gathered around the fallen figure, drawn by the beautiful music they had heard only moments before. As they silently parted to let the bishop through, one of them asked, "Bishop, who was this man?" "I don't know his name," the bishop sadly replied.....
"but his face rings a bell"

IN THE NEWSPAPERS

SHARK

By **DANIEL JACKSON**
The New Zealand Herald
8 January 2001

The following day, despite the sadness that weighed heavily on his heart due to the unfortunate death of the armless campanologist, the bishop continued his interviews for the bell ringer of Notre Dame. The first man to approach him said, "Your Excellency, I am the brother of the poor armless wretch that fell to his death from this very belfry yesterday. I pray that you honour his life by allowing me to replace him in this duty." The bishop agreed to give the man an audition, and, as the armless man's brother stooped to pick up a mallet to strike the first bell, he groaned, clutched at his chest, twirled around, and died on the spot.

Two monks, hearing the bishop's cries of grief at this second tragedy, rushed up the stairs to his side. "What has happened? Who is this man?" the first monk asked breathlessly. "I don't know his name," sighed the distraught bishop, but.....
He's a dead ringer for his brother.

WEATHER WEBSITE

With Xtra's new Weather Channel you can see either a handy map of New Zealand or a drop down menu to click on the region applicable to you to see whether it'll be blue skies or rainy days.

There's also access to satellite, radar and isobaric maps, moon phases and marine forecasts. All forecasts and maps and information supplied by Metservice and all at:
<http://www.xtra.co.nz/weather>

Kayak Fishing Website

Kayak anglers @ egroups.com is an email list and notice board for kayak fishermen and women who want notification of upcoming trips, workshops, and events, and is also a bulletin board to discuss kayak fishing interests and concerns. The group does not have many members and doesn't appear to be very active, although it is still a new group.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kayakanglersKayak>

And a second fishing site:
<http://www.socalkayakfishing.com/>

A kayaker on a quest for seafood nearly became a meal himself when a shark, thought to be a great white, attacked his craft. Michael Hogan was kayaking about 1.5km from shore, between Sandy Bay and Whananaki on Northland's east coast, on his way to get paua what has been described as a classic great white attack.

"There was just this explosive 'whumpf' noise and then I fell out," said Dr Hogan.

At first, he thought he had hit a rock, but the clearly visible bite mark on the bottom of his bright yellow kayak has been identified as belonging to a shark at least 4m long which probably mistook his kayak for a whale.

The bite punctured the tough plastic on either side of the hull and measures about 45cm from the top outline of the jaw to the bottom. Dr Hogan said he was unafraid when he went into the water, and concentrated more on keeping hold of his paddle than on the grey-green shape he saw swimming away.

"I thought it couldn't have been a shark because I didn't see any fin and then it just disappeared."

But kayaking buddy Hugh Oakley-Browne, who was 50m away when the attack happened, had no doubts. "I heard a noise like a 'thunk' and when I looked over, the boat was just starting to flip and there was something grey attached to it that wasn't on it when we left."

He paddled over to Dr Hogan and noticed a long, deep gouge in the bottom of the kayak. "I checked that he still had his legs, which were dangling in the water, and then I helped him get back in."

The pair continued to Whananaki but made sure they hugged the coastline on their way back.

Department of Conservation marine scientist Clinton Duffy, who keeps a

record of shark attacks in New Zealand for the International Shark Attack File, had little doubt the kayak had been attacked by a great white.

"There's really nothing else that could do it." He had never heard of a kayak being attacked in New Zealand waters, but a shark did puncture an inflatable boat some years ago in a similar attack. "It was lifted out of the water too." Mr Duffy said the shark would have probably seen the silhouette of the kayak from below and confused it for a small whale or large dolphin.

"They usually attack from below and behind on their prey. They do one massive and incapacitating bite, then they let them bleed to death on the surface and come back and feed on them later.

"This shark would have grabbed the kayak, thinking it was something yummy, and got a nasty surprise when it got a mouth full of plastic."

Mr Duffy said recent publicity had highlighted the numbers of great whites in New Zealand waters. But they were no more common than in the past. Only nine sightings of great whites had been recorded last year, compared to the average of about 14 a year. This summer, great whites have been spotted in Whitianga and near Maketu in the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

On Friday, in neighbouring Hahei, experienced fishermen thought they saw a great white only 500m from shore. Last month, a 2.6m shark was caught in a net 300m off the Takapuna Beach boat ramp.

Mr Duffy said shark attacks were rare in New Zealand, and no one had died in one since 1976.

PSYCHOLOGY

Who's in Charge? Leadership and Decision- Making Among Peers by Mary McClintock

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How does leadership happen when no one person is the designated leader in a group of common adventurers? There is a variety of ways to manage the leadership functions in a paddling group, depending on the goals and relative skills of the group.

Stars still shone in the sky early Saturday morning as we walked out to the point to squint at the water. Was the three mile crossing from the island to the mainland paddlable? Our trip had been scheduled to end the day before, but Friday the water had seemed too rough for us to make the crossing to where the car was parked.

Becca, Sean, Pat, Elise, CJ and I, some of us long-time buddies, some newer friends, were out for a week of kayaking in early June on the eastern shore of Nova Scotia. Pat, CJ, and I had done extensive kayaking for 15 years, Elise had more recent multi-week trip experiences, and Becca and Sean had several years of day and weekend trip experience. None of us, however, had ever paddled this stretch of coast.

Pat had initiated the idea for the trip, but no one had been designated or assumed the role of 'leader.' Some kind of collective process for making decisions had emerged during the trip, with Pat generally taking the 'bold' role and CJ the more 'cautious,' but it wasn't conscious or defined. Pat, Elise, CJ and I were all currently working or had previously worked as outdoor leaders, and we wanted a break from the demands of being the leader. We backed off from anything that smacked of leadership. The whole group had made decisions about the goals for the trip and the paddling route by talking about the possibilities until everyone

agreed. The trip had gone smoothly until Friday and the questionable crossing.

By Friday evening, sea conditions had worsened, and tension was mounting in the group. The forecast for Saturday was for even stronger winds; however, the forecast indicated less wind overnight, opening a possible window of opportunity early Saturday morning. After listening to the weather forecast Friday evening, Pat and CJ got into a heated argument. Pat said we should have paddled out first thing Friday morning to see if we could make it. CJ said that the conditions were too risky, we had plenty of food and water, we could radio in that we were okay, and we should just wait out the weather.

This argument pushed them deeper into their respective roles of boldness and caution.

Someone had finally suggested that they stop arguing about what already happened and focus on what we were going to do now. We discussed the possibilities and decided to get up early to check the conditions. If things had improved, we agreed we'd get in the boats and paddle in the lee of the island to where we could see if a crossing was possible. CJ was dubious, but willing to look in the morning. Pat said, 'we'll make the decision by consensus, with everyone having veto power.' Everyone agreed.

At 3:00 Saturday morning, we found that the seas had calmed some, but they were still rough. It seemed worth packing up and evaluating the conditions when we were actually on the water and ready to go. By 5:00 a.m. it was light, the wind had picked up, and we bobbed in the swell wrapping around the island and discussed whether to do the crossing. Everyone was feeling the pressure of being overdue. Although we had plenty of food and water and had radioed the local Coast Guard station to say we were all right, Elise and Sean had commitments waiting for them at home. As with all of the decisions our group had made, we made the decision with everyone present, rather than in subgroups

or off privately. Pat and Elise offered why they thought the crossing was possible, and why the group should go for it. CJ remained dubious, saying it wasn't safe with the combination of cold water, fetch, forecast of more wind, and opposing tidal current. Becca, Sean and I didn't say anything.

Pat and CJ started arguing again, each in their 'bold' or 'cautious' roles. After a while of no one but the two of them speaking, CJ finally agreed to paddling up the shore of the island for a while, still in the lee, rather than heading straight out into the rougher crossing. He thought that farther up the shore we'd have a better view of what the conditions would be out in the middle of the crossing. After five minutes of paddling, the group stopped, and CJ and Pat continued trying to persuade each other. At some point, Becca, who hadn't been speaking, said, 'the wind is building-we just have to decide one way or the other.' CJ said, 'All right, then, I say no, I'm vetoing, I don't think it is worth the risk.' Pat fumed, but joined the group as we turned and paddled back to the campsite.

Leadership

Deciding whether to paddle in rough conditions, especially when overdue at the end of a trip, is one of the toughest decisions a group of paddlers can make. With no one the 'designated leader' on this trip, how did decisions get made? What would have helped this group make decisions? If you're an experienced paddler, you've probably been in this type of situation: heading out on a trip with a group of friends who range from eager novices to your paddling peers. How does leadership happen when no one person is the designated leader? What roles and functions does a leader perform in a group? How do those functions get taken care of when a group of 'common adventurers' decides to do a trip together?

There is a variety of ways to manage the leadership functions in a group of common adventurers, depending on the goals and relative skills of the group. I use the phrase 'common adventurers' to describe the paddlers on

a trip in which no one is the paid or volunteer leader, and everyone has equal responsibility for the outcome of the trip. Often such trips are made up of paddlers who possess different kayaking skill levels, similar to the group in the story above.

Many people think of leadership as traits that a particular person does or doesn't have. Others define leadership as a particular set of roles and functions within a group. One person can perform those roles and functions, or a whole group can share them. They include functions that help accomplish tasks, as well as functions that help the group maintain itself. Motivation, risk management, logistics coordination and managing interpersonal dynamics are examples of leadership functions on a kayak trip. Two of the key functions that are considered part of leadership are decision-making and group facilitation.

Decisions

Decision-making happens continually in groups of common adventurers on a kayak trip. Having someone in the role of a facilitator is key to effective group decisions. Although facilitation is an important part of leadership, a facilitator is different from a leader. A facilitator in a common adventurer group is someone who supports everyone to do their best thinking in decision-making situations.

What needs to be decided on a kayak trip? Who decides? How are decisions made? How can a facilitator help the group make effective decisions? What gets decided? Paddlers make a wide range of decisions on a successful kayak trip. In part, the decisions depend on the scope of the trip, but some things are true regardless of whether it's a day trip in local waters or a month-long expedition on a never-before-paddled section of coast.

Common decisions that need to be made before and during kayak trips include: overall trip goals (What does each participant want from the experience and each other?); safety/risk management (How can the group members be safe on water and on

land? How can they be both emotionally safe and physically safe?); route/navigation (Where is the group going? How are they going to get there?); pace/schedule (How fast will they paddle? What is the schedule for the day and/or trip?); camping (When and where will they camp?); environment/other people (How will the group interact with the environment and other people?); and gear/food (How will gear and food planning be done? Who brings what? Who cooks? Who decides?).

In groups of common adventurers who operate without any formal leadership, the group assumes all of the roles and functions a leader might normally have, including decision making. There is a great deal of variability possible in who makes decisions. There is a continuum that ranges from the group's choosing a single leader who has absolute power and responsibility to a group that shares all decision-making, big and small. Let's assume that the group has decided to make decisions as a group, rather than designating a leader. Many paddlers, myself included, travel in this way, with groups of friends.

Decision-Making Styles

There are a number of decision-making styles possible for common adventurer groups, as well as means to facilitate these styles. Majority Rule and Consensus are two common decision making styles.

Majority Rule: This is the common one person, one vote, whichever option gets the majority of votes wins type of decision-making.

Consensus: Consensus decision-making is a process by which all group members consent to a decision. The decision must be acceptable enough that all will agree to support the group in choosing it.

If the decision is not acceptable, any group member can veto it.

Regardless of which style is used to make most decisions, some groups also agree to a third style for on-the-water situations:

Rule by Most Conservative Voice:

With this type of decision-making, the group agrees to follow the decision of whoever is the most 'conservative' in a given situation.

Facilitating Decisions

All group decision-making styles work best when someone facilitates the process. A facilitator's functions include encouraging full participation and promoting mutual understanding. A facilitator identifies the need to make a decision, coordinates the process, and helps the group follow the steps of the decision-making style they've chosen to arrive at a decision. Since there isn't a 'leader' to do the facilitating, the group needs to figure out how facilitation is going to occur.

Rotating facilitation is a common way for groups to share the role of facilitator. With rotating facilitation, the group agrees that there will be a 'facilitator of the day' or for a given time period, with each group member taking a turn. The rest of the group agrees to follow the direction of whoever is the designated facilitator for that period of time.

There are some overall conditions necessary for a group to be successful at sharing these leadership functions. To work well, these decision making and facilitation systems require the members of the group to have a common set of goals and expectations, good communication skills, and a willingness to participate. It is important to make sure that everyone's - goals and expectations for the trip are compatible. Along with discussing gear and food, I believe that a pre-trip discussion about goals is essential. It's the time to do some negotiating or creative problem solving about how many miles you're going to travel and how fast. If the group's goals are incompatible, this could be the time for some to realise that this may not be their kind of trip. For example, this is the best time to find out that one of you thinks an 'average' paddling day is twenty miles at a pace of three miles an hour, but that someone else thinks 'average' means ten miles at two miles an hour.

Over the years, I've learned the hard

way about unspoken, incompatible goals and expectations. Now I won't go out for even a half-day trip without some kind of 'goals and trip style' discussion. Recently, I spent an afternoon kayaking near Kittery, Maine with a long-time friend. When we discussed the trip beforehand, I told her I was recovering from a shoulder injury and wanted a leisurely, low-mileage afternoon to explore an area new to me. She's quite the athlete, so I wanted to make sure she wasn't looking for a 'workout' paddle. She said she was getting plenty of workouts in other settings, and a low-key paddle sounded like great fun.

Communication

What are the 'good communication skills' needed for effective group decision-making? I consider the following list to be essential:

- 1) Self knowledge of one's strengths, weaknesses and desires
- 2) the willingness to be honest
- 3) the ability to explain one's thoughts to someone else
- 4) being able to speak up in a group
- 5) being willing to listen carefully, to understand the other group members; and
- 6) the willingness to ask questions to clarify statements that are unclear.

I believe that self knowledge and the ability and willingness to communicate are as essential for group kayaking trips as technical paddling or navigation skills. Often, I'd rather go paddling with a less skilled paddler who has a clear understanding about and the ability to communicate his/her skills and goals than with a highly skilled paddler who is unable or unwilling to describe what s/he wants to get out of the trip.

Are the group members willing to participate in decision making? In a common adventurer trip, there's more to being a group member than just showing up with your gear and safely paddling a certain number of miles. Group members need to spend time and energy making decisions and working together as a group. If someone in the group is not able to agree on the group's goals and expectations, is not able to communicate well, or is

not willing to put energy into group discussions, then it is important to consider whether this is the right trip and group for that person.

What can happen to a group that doesn't meet these basic overall conditions for a trip without a designated leader? The consequences can range from an unpleasant trip where group members don't get along well or don't have much fun, to trips where friendships are lost, to more extreme situations in which the decision to paddle leads to injuries or loss of life.

Choosing a Decision-making Style and Making it Work

For each group decision-making and facilitation style, what are the conditions necessary to make it work well? How does it work? How does it deal with disagreements? What are the pros and cons to that style? What are the actual steps for doing it?

Consensus Decision-making

Consensus decision-making is like most skills related to paddling: To do it well, you need the right attitude, skills, and lots of practice. To be effective at making decisions, a group must have common goals, group members must have equal access to power, and there must be enough time available to carry out the process. It is also important for group members to be aware of their own attitudes, willing to pay attention to the process, and willing to learn and practice decision-making skills.

My friend, Martha McPheeters, used consensus decision making on a long wilderness white water canoeing expedition. She and a group of other Outward Bound instructors spent three months paddling the Back River in Canada's Northwest Territories. All of them had used consensus decision-making on trips, and were committed to making it work on this trip. They knew that if they were going to be able to come to consensus about difficult decisions or in emergencies, they were going to need lots of practice with smaller, less crucial decisions. They started practising early in the trip, and came to consensus about what they were going to cook for supper, how

many minutes they were going to take from getting done with breakfast to getting on the water, and how they were going to run a particular set of rapids. Practice paid off. When they got to a point where they needed to make a major decision in an emergency, they were able to make good decisions, fast.

How it works: Consensus decision-making follows these basic steps:

- 1) An issue to be decided is presented
- 2) clarifying questions are asked
- 3) discussion is held about possible decisions; and
- 4) a test for consensus is conducted.

A test for consensus or to gauge the general feelings on a proposed decision can be a simple 'show of thumbs,' where each person shows thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs middle, signalling agree, disagree, or neutral.

Along with this test for consensus, there can be a call for major objections or strong concerns. A major objection blocks the proposed decision. A strong concern does not block the decision, but is a public statement of why the decision isn't liked. When does the proposed decision pass? If there are generally positive feelings and no major objections, it passes. If there is a major objection, it doesn't pass. The process continues until a decision can be made, or the group agrees to not make the decision now, but try again later. If the group's feelings are mixed, discussion continues or the decision gets tabled. (Information about this model can be found on the Web site: www.msu.edu/~corcora5/org/consensus.html.)

Here's how a kayaking group using the consensus model would approach a route decision. Someone gathers the group around the charts and raises the question of which route they'll paddle that day. Several people offer possible route choices. Questions about weather forecast, tide and current conditions, everyone's energy levels and goals for the day would be asked and answered. Everyone would share their opinion about the routes that had been presented and discuss other possible variations. Someone

would say, 'It sounds like the group is leaning toward Route B, which I hear is from here to Point A for lunch, then on to Point B to set up camp in the late afternoon. Let's do a thumbs up, middle or down to see if that would work.' Several people had thumbs middle, so discussion continued to find out what would work better for them. After more discussion, consensus would be tested again, with a show of thumbs for Route B, which is now modified to include several short snack breaks, a brief lunch break, and arriving at Point B earlier to set up camp. Everyone shows thumbs up for this decision: It's a go.

How this model deals with disagreements: If the group cannot agree, sometimes they need more information or more time to consider the options, or have more discussion in order to make a good decision. The process is continued until everyone agrees with or at least agrees to live with a decision. There is room for blocking or voicing strong concerns. Because it is not competitive, no one is going to 'lose,' and members can trust that their concerns will be heard and considered, making them more likely to compromise. What keeps it noncompetitive? By its very nature, consensus is not competitive, because people enter in with the spirit of cooperation, in the belief that the collaborative decision will be stronger than one made with competing viewpoints. In fact, minority viewpoints are not only solicited, but actively advocated by other group members who don't necessarily hold that opinion. That's what keeps it noncompetitive.

Pros: Decisions made are ones everyone can live with; it builds collaboration, rather than competition; and there is lots of room for considering creative solutions.

Con: Consensus can take more time than other decision-making styles, especially if the group is not skilled at the process.

Democratic/Majority Rules

Democratic or majority rules decision-making works best if the group has a defined process and practices using it. Everyone in the group needs

to be willing to participate and express opinions. Group members also have to be willing to go along with the decisions they make, even ones in which they are on the 'losing' side. It is important that everyone in the group has equal power, that each person really has a vote.

How it works: There is no need for full parliamentary procedure on kayak trips. Basically, an individual or the group identifies a decision to be made, such as the route decision discussed above. The members then discuss the two route choices that were presented, with individuals or subgroups trying to convince others to vote for their position. When the group decides enough discussion has taken place, a vote is taken, with each person having one vote. The decision with the majority of the votes wins; the minority loses.

How it addresses conflict/disagreement: With majority rules, everyone has the opportunity to sway others to their position. Once discussion has ended, there is a clear-cut method for making decisions. However, disagreement can continue after the decision has been made. This can mean that losers who don't accept the decision may struggle against it in one way or another. Conflict can linger, including 'bad feelings' from conflict.

Pros: This is probably the most familiar method of decision making in North America and other 'democratic' countries; most people have the skills and attitudes for it; and it can be done fairly quickly.

Cons: It can lead to polarisation, in which people are stuck in their positions and not able to consider creative solutions; resentment for the decision can build among the 'losers,' who could even sabotage decisions, and it can lead to the formation of subgroups.

Conservative Voice

The 'rule by most conservative voice' method of making decisions requires attitudes of trust and acceptance of all group members' a willingness to speak up and be the 'conservative voice,' and a willingness to follow the conservative voice.

How it works: This model is useful for on-the-water decisions or when considering getting on the water. For example, if someone says clearly, 'I don't feel safe doing the crossing,' or 'I don't think we're strong enough as a group to do the crossing safely,' the others listen and agree to not do the crossing. While there may be discussion to clarify what is or isn't okay, there is no debate or attempt to convince the member to change his or her opinion. Later, the decision may be discussed to better understand the situation, but the decision is not questioned. This method in action is beautifully described in the 'La Nifta Expedition' by Alice Weber (SK, Aug. '00).

How it addresses disagreement: By agreeing to this form of decision-making, everyone agrees to defer to the conservative voice, even if they disagree. Anyone who disagrees basically has a head start ahead of time to step aside and defer to the 'conservative' voice.

Pros: It tends toward safe decisions and it's quick.

Cons: It can be hard to be the conservative voice in a larger group. That person can feel as though she is 'holding everyone else back.' It can be a problem if there is a disparity of skills or confidence in the group and one person is regularly the 'conservative' one.

Facilitation

Once a group has chosen a decision making process, to use it effectively, it helps to have someone facilitate the process. Regardless of how the group shares facilitation or who is in the role, the facilitator has several key functions. His or her overall purpose is to help the group with the process of decision-making and to do their best thinking. The facilitator's Job is not to make the decisions or to be the 'expert' on content. The facilitator encourages everyone in the group to participate. Especially when working under difficult conditions such as time pressure or when facing tough decisions, many people censor themselves and don't really say what they are thinking. The facilitator asks for input

from members who haven't spoken, and encourages the group to brainstorm a whole range of possibilities before evaluating them. The facilitator also promotes understanding among the group.

Often, some group members are better at expressing themselves than others, and misunderstandings arise. Until the individual feels as though he or she is being understood, that person will have a hard time speaking up or listening to anyone else's opinion. The facilitator helps the group ask clarifying questions to make sure everyone's viewpoint is understood.

With Rotating Facilitation, it is important that everyone in the group is willing to take his or her turn as facilitator. It also helps if everyone has basic facilitation skills. All group members need to be willing to participate in the facilitated process. Clarity about who is facilitating when is important. The Rotating Facilitation system works better when the trip is long enough to give each person time to take a reasonable length term. It wouldn't work well to rotate facilitation on a day trip with six people. Who wants to pay attention to whether this is their hour for facilitation? For short trips, it is best if someone volunteers to facilitate for the trip.

How it works: Before the trip, or at the beginning, when a decision-making style is agreed upon, the group decides to rotate facilitation. For rotating facilitation, a schedule for who is 'on' at what time is developed, dividing up the time of the trip. When a decision such as which route to follow needs to be made, the person who is 'on' at that time pulls the group together and leads the group through the steps of the decision-making process. If the group strays from the process, the facilitator points that out, and asks the group to return to the next step.

Pros: No one person has all of the facilitating responsibility. Decisions are facilitated, rather than left to whether the group can complete the process on their own. The facilitator encourages full participation and understanding.

Cons: Uneven skills in the group can mean that the facilitation may not always be as effective.

What happened on my trip with Becca, Sean, Pat, Elise and CJ? After accepting the decision not to attempt the crossing, we paddled back to our campsite to wait out the wind. Not long after, the winds picked up very quickly, and everyone agreed that waiting had been the right decision. The next day, the seas had calmed enough so we could all agree to paddle out. Sitting in a restaurant, talking after the end of the trip, we realised that our attempt at consensus had failed. In talking more about how we had made the decision on Saturday morning and what led up to it, several problems became clear.

Several of the group members were highly experienced and skilled at using consensus decision-making, while others in the group had very little experience with it. Everyone assumed that we could just decide to do it, and somehow it would work. What we didn't understand is that we did not have a common understanding of what we meant by consensus, what process to use or what attitude we needed to have to do it well. We also had not practised before we were in a really tough decision-making situation.

For some of the members in the group, it felt as though CJ did not enter the consensus process with an attitude of willingness to really consider all of the possible options and work for a good solution. For some, it felt like CJ already had made a decision. CJ had focused on the 'everyone had veto power' part of the description of how the decision was going to be made, and had a hard time trusting that others were listening to everyone's concerns. We realised that what had really happened was 'rule by most conservative voice.'

While the decision that was made was safe, hard feelings came from it. It didn't work well because, by that point in the trip, CJ had become stuck in the 'conservative' role and Pat in the 'bold' role. Also, we hadn't discussed and agreed to that form of decision-

making ahead of time, so those who thought we were using a consensus process were angry. Elise pointed out that if this had been a group that she was leading, she would have stepped in as facilitator. She had been reluctant to take on that role because she was on vacation, and didn't want to get stuck being the 'leader.' She also said that she didn't know if the others in the group would accept her in that role since we hadn't agreed to it ahead of time.

How about your next trip? How will the group make decisions? Will there be a facilitator? Learn decision-making and facilitating skills. Just as with learning about tides and navigation, there's more to a successful kayak trip than how you put your blade in the water.

Author's Note

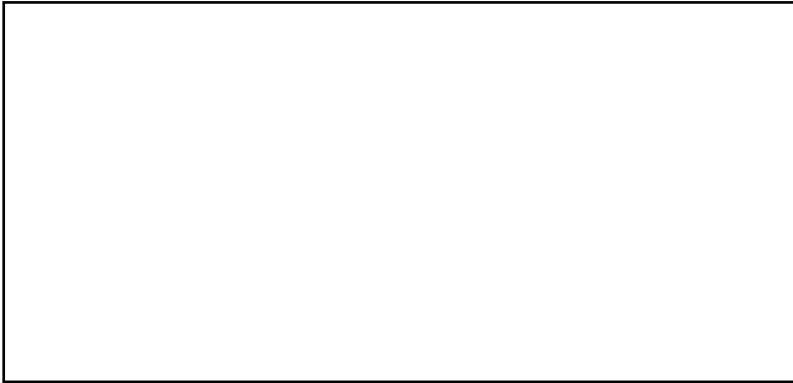
Thanks to Ann Driscoll from the University of New Hampshire Browne Center and Karen Warren from the Hampshire College Outdoors Program, as well as a number of other friends, for their help with this article.

Suggested reading:

The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making by Sam Kaner, et al. (New Society Publishers, 1996, ISBN: 0865713472).

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