



The Bow Line

Volume 8 Issue 1

Spring 2012

President's Message

Welcome everyone to our 2012/2013 season! Some of us have been practicing in the pool or have been out enjoying paddling already. Others are checking the schedule and picking their first event. If your favorite place is not listed, it's not too late to organize your own and volunteer as a trip leader. You'll notice several public events are planned to promote the club and encourage new membership. In addition to these paddlefests and festivals, business cards will be soon be available to advertise the club at any time. Please plan to attend these events, help out at the booths, and consider carrying our cards to make these endeavors successful.



These last few months have brought to light all the important work your executive completes behind the scenes. On behalf of the club, I extend a huge thank you to Don Whittaker for all his time and efforts spent nurturing the club these past years. I'm grateful that Don agreed to continue to contribute his time, skills, and knowledge as our Past President.

Have you set your goals for this season? Perhaps you'll aim to make the over 200 km list, volunteer more, share a special interest, or simply try to encounter fewer rocks, frogs, or snakes than last year. More than ever, I am looking forward to spending time on the water with our club and getting to know each of you better.

Jennifer Davies

It is impossible to die from hypothermia in cold water unless you are wearing flotation because without flotation you won't live long enough to become hypothermic.

Mario Vittone

(19 years of combined Military Service in the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard).

*Welcome to the 2012
Paddling Season*

Tammy Chambers

Are you one of those adventurous paddlers who got out and enjoyed winter kayaking this year? It was the perfect season for it. And now, with the warm spring weather here, the Adhoc group has gotten the itch. EC Brown & Big Fork Creek was the perfect start for our paddling season.

The kayaking schedule is now prepared. Thank you to all who have volunteered to be tour leaders. Because of your help, there are plenty of opportunities for our members to get together for some great paddling adventures. Take note of the 2 Multi-day trips. In August is the Massassauga Provincial Park and Billy Bear in September.

So, if you haven't already - get out your boats, clean off the winter dust, and join us on the water. We're looking forward to seeing the regular paddling gang again, and we welcome all new members. I hope you will enjoy the sport of kayaking as much as we do.



To Paddle or not to Paddle?

“Hey Dave-When do you normally give up paddling for the season?”

This was the question I put to David Johnson, one of the organizers of the Georgian Bay Stormgathering.

“Well we go through to the end of January but by February it’s a bit too cold so we call it quits for February.”

We were paddling in Georgian Bay in mid-October and that was enough for me. I didn’t think of the conversation again until I got a call from John Wolfenberg telling me about an enthusiastic paddler who had just joined the club and was looking for some year round paddling company. Dave Stumbo and I met at the Paddler’s annual meeting and I passed on the trip log and information I still had from a paddle around Manitoulin Island, since Dave was thinking of a solo circumnavigation. That of course led to “We should get out some time” and that in turn led to us carrying our boats down to Lake Ontario though the snow covered park at the end of Teal Avenue in Stoney Creek on a Sunday morning in February.



The roadside flags on the QEW showed a stiff breeze out of the south-west. At the put in it was quite calm with the off-shore breeze. By the time we were all geared up, the breeze had shifted a little more to the west but still seemed benign. We decided to paddle east along the shore. Although the warm winter we had been experiencing meant that there was no ice-pack, ice still coated some of the breakwalls and rocks along the shore. All the while I was thinking: “This seems pretty enthusiastic for a guy who moved up here from southern Florida.”

We had a pretty easy paddle with the breeze at our back as far east as Fruitland Road. We shared the partially frozen waterway with about 200 squawking Canada Geese who obviously would have preferred it if we weren’t there. The chill we were starting to feel meant it was time to be moving again so we headed due west out of the marina. As soon as we cleared the point, it became clear that we had underestimated the westerly breeze that had been at our backs, and secondly that it was continuing to steadily build. Our leisurely paddle quickly turned into a serious workout. Waves were now routinely coming in over the bows providing bracing showers of frigid spray. It became discouraging to fix your marker on the shore only to realize several minutes later that you were paddling hard and standing still. The shore was very inhospitable with large limestone blocks forming extended breakwalls with lots of refracted waves and no safe place to get out. A decision was made to edge closer to shore for safety. Moving toward shore also seemed to give us a slight bit of shelter and we began to slowly make progress back toward the launch beach. As I adjusted my paddle grip to make the turning strokes a little more effective, my gloves slid down the shaft. I hadn’t noticed until then that the paddle shafts were coating with ice from the spray. Having a slippery paddle in your hands in these conditions, was an invitation to disaster.



We were fortunate that condo buildings near Fruitland Road provided some partial protection from the force of the winds. Another quick discussion led to a decision to beach here and walk back to Dave’s house rather than poke out from behind the shelter of the condos. We both ended up in the water unceremoniously in the course of getting ashore in the waves. We were less concerned with getting wet, but instead just getting our feet onto solid ground. Only when standing on the shore did I notice that my arms and chest and PFD were all covered in layers of ice so thick that the zippers couldn’t be worked.

An older gentleman out for a walk with his dog looked a bit surprised to see two men in spray skirts carrying paddles approaching him from the snowy field, but we assured him that it had been a fine day for a paddle. A short walk, some dry clothes, a Tim’s and you’re good as new.



Graham Repei

Observations of a Southern Kayaker in the Northern Latitudes

The physical and emotional transition from living and sea-kayaking in a sub-tropical climate (the southwest coast of Florida) to the waters and winters of Southern Ontario was and continues to be a difficult one. Potentially the sea kayaking wasn't so hard after all since the Inuit do it at a much higher Northern latitude. With this in mind and the help of modern equipment, I knew I could make the transition from kayaking in the south to the north.

One of the big differences I found was the terrain for launching and landing. In southwest Florida you can launch a kayak and land on almost any beach (the Gulf of Mexico has typically calm turquoise waters with very little wind and waves). In fact, I have found myself on pristine white beaches with no other traveler or boat for miles around (locating camping spots from Cape Romano down to Flamingo without any problems).

Another one of the big differences I found was the water itself. When I first moved to Canada I spent some time sea kayaking in Georgian Bay - talk about clean water and certainly no need for detergents, soap or washing machines in fact, I could have everything hung up to dry in 15 minutes including the kayak. However, in the south the water is obviously much different since you have to deal with salt and its harshness on you and your equipment. Every time I kayaked it would take an hour and a half of cleaning myself, the boat and the equipment (and not necessarily in that order).



Over the years I've noted some personal comparisons:

-In the North the water is always cold to me so I dress for it year round. I always have a full kit of extra clothing from socks to the hat on the top of my head (located in a secure hatch inside a dry bag even if it is a local hour long trip). [Note: year round I always carry a wet suit or dry suit.]

-In the South it is usually very sunny and hot and the water is quite warm so I don't paddle without sunblock, a wide brimmed hat and long sleeved shirts. I always carry water on me not just in the kayak. In this kind of climate drinking water is right up there with wearing a PFD (you can float and survive days in the Gulf of Mexico but you can't drink it)

Now here's a few simple sayings I use to keep myself in check:

- When at sea no fewer than 3 (for example if I were to cross Lake Ontario I would want 3 boats at minimum)
- PFD use it or lose it (your life that is)
- Plan, prepare, paddle – self explanatory
- Wind and waves (dictate to go or no go)
- In reference to the water in Florida - when you're drinking water is done so is your fun
- In reference to the water in Canada – it's not what's in the water that can kill you IT IS THE WATER



I feel very fortunate to sea kayak and live in both countries. Around March I usually try to go back home and do some sea kayaking since it's typically not too hot at that time of year and the weather patterns are good.

So if anyone needs any information on kayaking in southwest Florida or would like to plan a sea kayaking trip down south, please contact me: David Stumbo 905-930-8855 gatorrenovations@hotmail.ca

David Stumbo

Making up For Last Year!

by Garry Lumley

The Wednesday AD HOC group is going strong this year having paddled both Big Fork and Black Creek before deciding to paddle the entire Welland River (known as the Chippawa Creek in some areas). Three sections have been covered already; the 14 kms from the old Aquaduct at Port Robinson to Chippawa; the 8 kms between the Aquaducts along Merritt Island completed last Dec.; and the 8½ kms from E.C. Brown Park to the old Aquaduct at Niagara Street in Welland.



On the 18th of April we paddled 19 to 20 kms from Wellandport to E.C. Brown. The fifth section will be from Wellandport to Robert Land Academy near Attercliffe with a side trip up Oswego Creek. Sixth, is a 4 hour round trip from the R.L. Academy until we run out of navigable water. The river is again deep enough to paddle at the west end of Lake Niapenco, so we will travel to Binbrook Conservation Park to paddle the lake and river for the seventh and last leg. (We will publish the total length later).

The Welland River flows parallel to the Grand River starting at the Hamilton Airport and emptying into the Niagara River at Chippawa. NPCA has jurisdiction over this and the Binbrook Conservation Park (Lake Niapenco) as the water drains into the Niagara County.

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Swan Song!

One of kayaking's greatest joys, is the ability to get close to wildlife by silently gliding in the water. One of nature's beauties is the trumpeter swan. As the bird attempts to get airborne three things happen simultaneously; water sprays up from their rapidly churning webbed feet, their enormous outstretched wings 'thump whump' as it applies lift and its' long neck snakes forward to add balance. The effect is stunning! The following is an excerpt from an online article describing a swan attack that ends in the death of a kayaker:

"Anthony Hemsley, 37, drowned after a swan he was checking as part of his job at a condominium complex, charged at him. Authorities believe Hemsley, who was devoted to caring for swans, got too close to the large bird or its' nesting area before he was attacked. While checking on the swan, he fell into the water when his kayak flipped.



He had on heavy clothing and tried moving his kayak toward shore while being attacked by the bird. He managed to get his head up a few times but ultimately failed to resurface. Sadly, emergency crews were unable to revive him."

Swan attacks are not uncommon, though they nearly always make false charges to scare us away. Make sure you are extremely cautious and give them as wide a berth as possible- group travel is a good idea. In our area there are a pair of swans who inhabit the east side of Fifteen Mile Creek where it narrows and turns north toward Lake Ontario. **Safety Tips:** be sure your paddle is attached by a leash; wear a life jacket; know attack signs such as - wings folded in and back, neck up curving back then forward, swan silently speeds up, running on water, neck straight out, then sudden application of brakes as swan skids on the surface folding its wings in a tucked position then slides by (hopefully) and finally keep your head down, lean forward ready to use your paddle if need be for protection.