



July.

1988

VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB c/- POST OFFICE, MALLACOOTA 3892

July Newsletter 1988

Dear Member!

This issue is a bit late, but has lots of good gear in it, thanks to Members' contributions, so keep 'em comin' folks!

The "Bayside Meet" and the Wilson's Promontory Workshop were both very successful (see reports that follow) and we look forward to more in the future.

The VACA plans another workshop in October and further info may be had from the Secretary, I Byrne Crt. Cheltenham, Vic. 3192.

Printed by request this issue list of VSKC members. As one member put it, he works odd hours, shift work etc. and it'd be great to get together for a paddle. If we didn't include your 'phone number & you'd like this included, send the info & we'll aim for our next issue, due in October...

"Sea Kayaker" article(s) courtesy Dave Huxtable. Splendid publication! Subscription form follows.

At last a pic of members & friends celebrating "Iolathe's" victory in the Easter boatrace at Mallacoota...

L to R (back row) Cath Hannon, Larry Gray, Sally Barton
Centre-Margaret Coulson, Front row- Mike Tahana, Graeme A. Albrey, Helen Morkham, John Thomson

Cordially yours & keep on paddling!

Sally Barton
Secretary-Treasurer



PRESIDENTIAL REPORT

SEA-KAYAKING WORKSHOP WILSONS PROM:

A most exciting and worthwhile workshop was held at Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory on 30th March/1st April, organised by Malcolm and Sue Cowall. Winds 30 knots or so funneling through from the east, caused concern to all present. With water-spouts and gusting winds, keen spirits decided to abandon the early morning session in favor of cups of tea in a warm tent! Not many of the thirteen participants had been to sea in a sea-kayak before so discussions on weather predictions, alternate plans, navigation, and general sea-kayaking took place. By early afternoon conditions were fine as we paddled off into Norman Bay around the western headland. Kayak exchange from Nordkapp - Icefloe, Baidarka to ordinary down-river slalems was interesting during comparison tests. Next morning the easterly was still a gale but eased off again by lunchtime as we launched off the highway to paddle down Darby River toward the sea. On the coast, small to medium size shore break made for an interesting invitation to an already windy sea. After lunch in a sunny, secluded bay off Tongue Point, the conditions were perfect for a relaxing and scenic cruise ten or so kms back to Tidal River, our base camp. At night a slide-show of my expedition to Cape York and Greenland filled in the evening. Many aspects of sea-kayaking were discussed. Thanks to all who attended, and to instructors "Ponch", Mal and myself.

PITTARAK SEA-KAYAK:

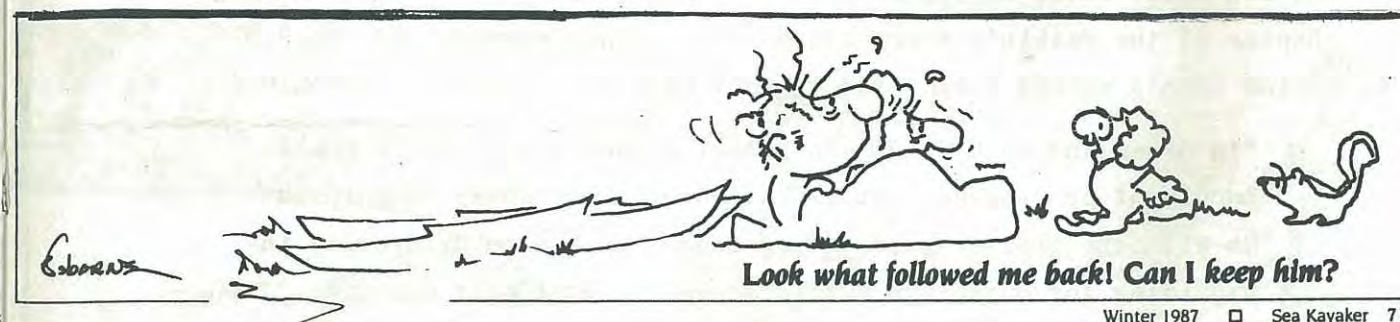
Research and design has finally come to a head as a mould successfully pulled off the plug and is now under polish. The first PITTARAK to be released within a week! The hull is extremely fast, designed and tested to handle large chop and swell, tracking is improved over my last boats. Time and thought has gone into developing a comfortable seating posture, a more functional bilge system and better rear hatch access. The kayak also accommodates for sail and rudder. The name PITTARAK comes from the feared wind of East Coast Greenland. Skilled hunters of the Arctic Circle region spoke of this wind with much warning as in the past, 70% of all Eskimos died in their kayaks. Tales of huskies flapping legs off the ground on the end of stiff chains, as this wind roars at speeds of up to 320 Kms per hour.

PAPUA-NEW GUINEA EXPEDITION; (continued)

P.N.C. expedition plans under way for July/August '89. Four Pittaraks will be used to kayak Louisiade Archipelago to Trobriand Islands, around 1200 kms. Difficulty factor yet to be assessed. Considerations to be made on possible water shortage and tide movements.

Larry Gray

PRESIDENT



Winter 1987 □ Sea Kayaker 71

List of Members of the VSKC A. Metropolitan Area & Environs:

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Joe Stanley, 6/26 Lording St. Fern Tree Gully, 3158 (758 9891)
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B. Country & Interstate:

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Col Russon, Mallacoota
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Dick Morris, Mallacoota
Max Donovan, Mallacoota (051) 580 359
Larry Gray, Mallacoota
Helen Morkham, Mallacoota

(N.B. All residents of Mallacoota have the same address - c/o the Post Office, Mallacoota, Vic. 3892)

Gino was totally original throughout his short life. His methods in exploration were entirely unconventional and he insisted on no visible forms of discipline. He believed that 'people work best when they are happy' and took great pains to ensure that they were.

Gino's next expedition, again to Greenland to gather more weather information and to map more of the mountains and coast, was his last. He died whilst hunting seals after having been in Greenland ^{only} a few weeks. The closing chapter of the Watkin's story stands mutely in a corridor of the R.G.S. beside Gino's ageing kayak, recovered from Lake Fjord, East Greenland:

"In Greenland on H.G. Watkin's last expedition we had a small supply of provisions, but we relied on the country to furnish us with the greater part of our food. We had no difficulty in providing for ourselves but it occupied about half our time.

There is a certain amount of risk attached to kayak hunting which was made very apparent by the tragic death of Watkins when his expedition had only been in Greenland for a few weeks. According to evidence which we found I do not think there is very much doubt concerning the cause of his death. I will not give a detailed account of the evidence here as it could only be appreciated by an experienced kayaker; it is sufficient to say that we found his trousers and kayak apron on a very small ice floe close to an active glacier. His trousers were wet and must have been in the sea. We also found his kayak floating full of water and with the hunting gear not seriously out of place.

If while out hunting the kayak screen is knocked by a piece of ice it is likely to get disarranged. If this happens it is necessary to get out of the kayak for a few minutes to right the screen, as it cannot be reached from the cockpit. We think this happened to Watkin's screen and he, thinking he would only be a minute, landed on a small floe in a dangerous locality. While on the floe a large piece of ice broke off the glacier, starting a wave big enough to upset the floe on which he had landed. There was a strong wind blowing off the glacier at the time, which would carry his kayak away while he was climbing back onto the floe. He then took off his trousers and kayak apron and tried to swim after his kayak. It would be impossible for him to get into his kayak in the water and he must have been overcome by the cold before he could get it to an ice floe. This, of course, is only a theory but from the evidence we found and from personal experience it seems the only possible solution to a great polar tragedy."



A seal, food for his family, is brought to the floe edge by a kayak hunter in northwest Greenland and hauled to firmer ice by his son.

VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB

Membership Application

NAME: AGE:

ADDRESS:

. POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE: (W) (H)

CANOEING QUALIFICATIONS (ACF or BCF):

YEARS EXPERIENCE: MAIN AREAS

.

MAJOR EXPEDITIONS:

Complete & return with Annual Subscription to:
Victorian Sea Kayak Club, 410 Station St., Carlton, Vic. 3053.

Enquiries: (03) 348.1059 ; OR c/o P.O. Mallacoota, 3889, or
Acting Secretary, 4 Oakwood Lane Tecoma, 3160
New Members \$15, Old Members \$10, Family Membership \$30-\$20 renewed.

Letter from Cath Hannon...

Report on the "Bayside Meet" held May 28th/29th 1988

I was pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the "Bayside Meet" recently. Members of the VSKC met bright and early Saturday morning at the Frankston Surf Lifesaving Club; the day was overcast & the clouds threatening, nonetheless we took to the water. Since levels of skill varied through the group - there were eight of us - we agreed we'd begin gently to allow ourselves to get the feel of our craft. We gently paddled a few kilometers up Kananook Creek to obtain a view of the secluded aspects of Frankston life. The creek itself was an interesting one, refuse of our throw-away society contrasted with bird life.

Following a brief sojourn, enthusiasm and courage were generated & so we tackled the Bay. Conditions for this novice were challenging. The object of the exercise for Kayakers was to hone their individual skills in variable sea conditions. It enabled the more experienced to attempt basic manoeuvres under the guidance of the more experienced members of the group.

A short break was taken for lunch. During lunchtime, the clouds broke, which drove us under shelter provided by sheds in the carpark. It gave us the opportunity to discuss and plan the afternoon's activities and destination. We consulted the map and were given preliminary pointers on map reading by Malcolm and Frank. Following lunch, we paddled a short distance to Wooleys Buoy, off Mount Eliza. Short shower bursts alternated with brilliant rays of sunshine - a spectacular sight at sea level. On reaching the Buoy, the eight Kayakers "hitched a life" alongside one another & discussed the ways of the world!

The following day it was one again - this time we gathered at Portsea front beach. We mingled around the water's edge for a time, observing the multitudes of scuba divers under instruction. Our paddle took us in the direction of the Heads, along the way catching close up views of Portsea Army Base. Unfortunately, existing restrictions did not allow us to beach - perhaps another time, as the area is to be opened up to the public as a National Park.

Letter from Cath Hannon (continued)

After a round trip of approximately 15 km the sight of the home beach was a welcome sight. Recuperation wasn't far away in the form of stable ground and nourishment. We rounded up the weekend with refreshments at the local cafe.

The weekend was an extremely pleasant learning experience for me. I was pleased to share with other VSKC members various individual experiences and skills. Hopefully, this type of event will be a more frequent occurrence. Special thanks also to Malcolm Cowell for his support, instruction and his fleet of Spindrift kayaks. Thanks, Cath!

6327 Seaview Ave. NW, Seattle WA 98107
(206) 789-6413

SEA KAYAKER

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Dear Sally,

Well, here I am back in Blighty!

Hope this material will prove of use to you and the VSKC.

The weather in England has been superb of late, I don't know what's wrong! Recently wished all the Transatlantic singlehanders bon voyage on their epic crossings of the Atlantic. So far, one man has fallen overboard whilst attempting repairs to a hull. Another inadvertently flicked his emergency MAYDAY! signal and didn't know a thing about it until an RAF maritime surveillance aircraft, a fishing boat and an eastbound Boeing 747, from the USA had all picked him up. Needless to say, he was severely reprimanded. Another Canadian yachtsman, in an 80ft trimaran actually received severe hull damage after he hit a whale at speed and is currently limping to the Azores after refusing rescue attempts.

The most incredible story was of one of the contestants, a Frenchman, who was attacked by killer whales. He had been picking up their squeaking, getting louder and louder, then suddenly he was hit, the boat was lifted momentarily and turned, his steering and navigation systems were destroyed. He quickly gave a MAYDAY call on the radio, when he was hit again, this time more seriously. The hull was breached and he had just enough time to get into a lifeboat, whilst his boat sank inside 60 seconds! Sounds like fun to me!

One of the most enjoyable trips to participate in whilst in the USA is "Seaworld" in San Diego. Here you can really appreciate these magnificent creatures at close encounter. Amazingly intelligent. Beautiful to the eye....

...Before I left the USA a friend had wished me to come on a four-month paddle down the coast of Alaska. He is now doing this, from Juneau to Port Campbell, including the Queen Charlotte Islands, home of the Indians who build those large totem poles. Superb paddling country. Ever thought of an alternative venue for the AGM??

....Well, again, best wishes and keep in touch; will be looking forward to seeing you all in the near future.

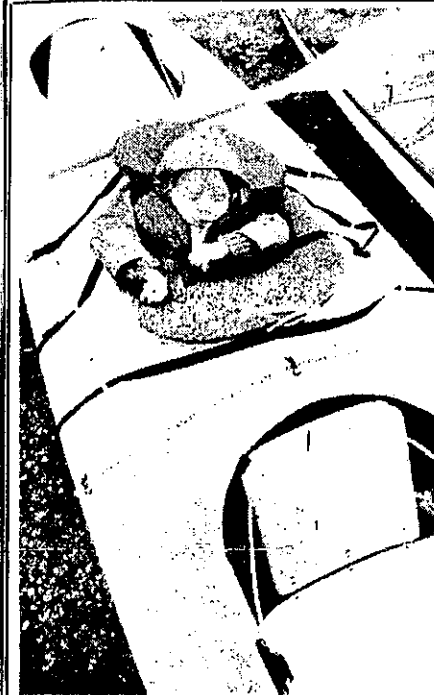
Good paddling!

Dave.

ALTERNATIVES

STOPPRESS!!!

BORN to Shelley & Graeme A. Albrey, on July the 24th '88
DARCY MAYNE a bouncing boy, weighing in at 6lbs 13ozs.
Heartiest CONGRATULATIONS from all!



"Are we there yet?" KAYAKING WITH KIDS

Some grown-ups will even say it's fun.

FIVE YEARS AGO, a certain father and his three-year-old son paddled in Desolation Sound, Canada, with a group of friends. In the evenings, while everyone else put up their tents, the father was still unpacking supplies and equipment; while everyone else explored the beach or relaxed with a good book, the father was still cooking freeze-dried mush for two, trying to convince his son that "all kayakers eat this stuff". By the time they finished eating and had time to relax, everyone else was asleep. The mornings went the same way, the dad and son always last off the beach, a half step behind the group. The highlight of this calamitous trip occurred on the return trip, miles from camp, where the only solid ground was a few sharp rocks battered by waves. The son leaned up and tapped his dad's shoulder. "Dad... Dad? ... I gotta go..."

Can kayaking with children possibly be relaxing, even fun? Is it worth the extra equipment, food, toys, worry and trouble? Yes: family kayaking satisfies a desire for family togetherness, enhances a child's

natural curiosity about the world around him, and puts to use all the kayaking gear stashed in the garage collecting dust because babysitters are so hard to find on those perfect kayaking weekends.

Kayaking can be a family adventure, but with children along, judgment must be tempered and special provisions made.

GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Preparing for an expedition must be a breeze compared to preparing for a kayak trip with children. The type of equipment taken is roughly the same; you simply take much more of it.

The first purchase for a child is usually a life vest, to be worn for hypothermia protection as well as flotation. Unfortunately for those with very new babies, the smallest personal flotation devices on the market fit children 16-20 pounds and above. One of the most common complaints among kayaking families is lack of a well-fitting, comfortable life vest for youngsters. It is important that younger children's PFDs have a collar with a grab loop, as this

enables the child to be pulled back into the boat, and a crotch strap to ensure that the life jacket will not slip off. The PFD should fit as snugly but comfortably as possible, especially when the child is sitting down; an ill-fitting PFD is almost guaranteed to spoil an otherwise pleasant paddle. Older children's PFDs generally offer more choice in colors and styles, and usually a better fit.

Most parents have surprisingly little trouble getting their children to wear a PFD, especially if they wear one themselves. "It was an automatic thing with us," said Belinda Lafferty, mother of two boys. "The boys got used to putting on their life jackets whenever they went close to the water." John Dowd, father of a 6-year-old boy and a 3-year-old girl, agreed. "The kids are so used to wearing their PFDs that it would feel wrong to not wear one when out in the boat—kind of like going in a car without wearing a seat belt."

Some parents consider a whistle attached to the PFD essential. Even young children can learn to blow a whistle for an emergency.

BY KAREN KERWIN

ALTERNATIVES

C. Robinson



ERIN ROBINSON AND HER DAD
CEC MAKE A PIT STOP IN
DESOLATION SOUND, B.C.

Of all the equipment you would normally take kayaking, particular emphasis should be placed on packing extra bandages, extra clothing (kids get wet just *looking* at water), toilet paper and snacking foods for recreational eating during "boring" trips. When asked what he thought was essential equipment to bring along for kids, Jason Lafferty, 10, replied, "Good gorp and your own water bottle." Toys may be as important as any other piece of equipment you pack. Anything from a small plastic boat on a string to flashlights, fake paddles, or field guidebooks will occupy your child during long paddles.

Although rescue and safety equipment should always be included on trips, it is especially important on trips with children. It is not fair to the child to omit it: Children cannot rescue themselves, nor can they force you to take the safety equipment their lives may depend on.

GETTING STARTED

Plan your children's introduction to the sport of sea kayaking with care. If your children have a fun experience their first few times, they'll look forward to it again and again. A variety of methods have been used to initiate fledgling paddlers. To some it's simple: "Put their life jackets on, hand 'em some gorp, stick 'em in the boat, and move away *fast*!" Others have more sophisticated ways of introducing their children to kayaking. Gavriil Ivanovich Davydov observed in the early 1800s how the Kodiak Island natives started their children in kayaking (*Sea Kayaker*, Spring 1986, p. 17):

From their very early years the children begin building baidarkas and launching them . . . A father places his son when he is six or seven in a baidarka with him and

teaches him how to paddle it. Shortly afterwards he makes him a small paddle and places the baidarka in the sea where large waves are breaking on the shore with noise and spray. To start with the father ties a rope to the baidarka so as to draw his son into the shore if it overturns, but later he does not even do that.

In modern times, the method remains viable. Werner Furrer, Sr., veteran kayaker and father of four, says he simply placed his children, minus paddles, in kayaks he led by string. When the youngsters seemed at ease, he introduced them to exercises in falling out—"all together, just having fun. It always has to be with a smile." Later, when they asked to kayak on their own at the age of five or six, he required them to swim 50 yards and demonstrate an ability to fit their hand around a paddle, first.

Children should feel at ease in the kayak, as well as in the water. Basic swimming ability not only makes children more comfortable in the water, but may save their lives. Unless it's sunny and hot, the best place to get the kids used to the boats is a pool. Pool sessions are available through many clubs and kayaking shops. For children, it can be fun to tip the boat over in nice warm waters and bounce up to the surface, knowing a parent's steady hand is there. Practice may prevent life-threatening panic if emergency situations arise in the "real world." Pool sessions are also excellent opportunities for practicing rescues and testing equipment. PFDs should be tested for adequate flotation; the exercise will also get your child used to floating with one on.

Exposure to sea kayaking should begin in small doses. It doesn't have to be exotic: evening trips around a local lake, Saturday

morning trips to a sandy beach, short paddles to a nearby camping area or fishing spot. The objective should always be *fun*. Although children will gradually adjust to longer trips, two hours seem to be the longest most children will sit still in a kayak.



TANYA EPTING AT 10: HER OWN
KAYAK AND HER OWN WETSUIT.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pitfalls are associated with involving children in any sport, but sea kayaking, being on or near the water, carries additional risk. Werner Furrer Sr. and his wife Martha believe that discipline is paramount, and children too young to understand discipline are too young to join the family in a boat. Most problems can be minimized by being prepared. Every time

G. & B. Epting

(to be continued next issue).