



## **MEMBERSHIP FEES OVERDUE. !!!**

Please pay your membership fees.  
ie: \$30 or \$75. *They were due 1/7/98.*

**AGM** - 7pm - Thursday, November 5th.  
33 Lawley Street, North Beach.

All financial members are invited to attend and vote for a new committee. Remember, this is your club. More input from more people, makes for interesting paddling.

**So ! Who would you like to see on the committee???? Have your say!!! All positions are up for re-election..**

**Nominations accepted before and at the AGM.**

### **Impressions of my first beach capsize.**

The six kayaks arrived off Scarborough beach and the waves looked very daunting to me. The experienced paddlers moved one by one into the surf, then disappeared behind the breakers to prevent me from studying their technique.

After some cowardly stalling, I decided to go, so eased forward to select that elusive last big wave of the set and get onto it's shoulder, well behind the break. Suddenly, the stern lifted, and the kayak decided to accelerate, cut beautifully through the water, then decided to broach.

Apply right rudder -- still broaching, frantically apply rear brace and lean heavily----hear a sudden crack, was it my new paddle, ease the blade.

Where in hell did all this water come from. Which way is up??? What is the drill fo a wet exit??? Count to three///

That was a waste of time... Reach for the deck loop///// It has moved or gone altogether. Clutch at the side and back and pull frantically. Pop up and see a wall of foam coming. Wonders???? I am still cluthing the kayak and paddle, move to the stern, everything disappears, in more foam. A quick look seawards/ bloody hell.

Another breaker. I have lost the kayak. It flips upright, zooms toward the shore and disappears, can't swim much in all this gear, but the waves mop me in slowly. Peter offes help but I bravely say I am ok. Staaaager up the beach, discharing the water from my togs. Someone has pulled the kayak up on beach but it looks blurred. Double bloody hell, glasses gone, deck elastic snapped, must have been the sharp crack, I heard, deck knife gone also. Well I really enjoyed that, I think!!!! How am I going to get back out there through the surf?? Thing i'll catch the bus. **LEN HARRIS.**

## **THE BIG FEAR**

A couple of incidents recently have taken me back to the days when I was thinking of getting into paddling.

The first was when browsing in the local newsagency, I picked up a copy of american magazine "Canoe & Kayak". I turned to an article titled "The Big Fear". This article reminded me of the response from wife and friends, when I said, I think I will buy a kayak. You'll be drowned! How will you get out when you capsize? These comments almost convinced me to forget the idea, afterall, I was condemned to death the moment I entered the cockpit of a kayak.

After a few weeks, driving home along Scarborough Beach Rd, I had the good fortune to notice the Canoe Shop. I called in to look for some sort of second hand boat. Another bit of good fortune, even though there was no chance of getting a second hand kayak, according to the then salesman, Neil Oleary. He was quite helpful and showed me around and introduced me to what would eventually be my kayak. A blue and yellow osprey. I mentioned my fear about being trapped upside down. Neil explained that I would probably just fall out and that some of his paddling mates, actually padded their cockpits and did other things, to make sure that when they did capsize, they did not just fall out.

This freaked me out a bit. Eventually I found a second hand boat hanging in a mates carport. We agreed on a price and down to Hillarys I go, with Fran shouting after me, you are gunna die. In I get and over I go, and would you believe it, I just fell out.

Well, about two boats later and some instruction in



eskimo rolling from John DiNucci, I was paddling over a reef and getting a bit cocky, decided to check out the local abalone population. Looking up from my daydream, I was confronted by a looming wave, looking twice as big as it really was. With only about four inches of water under my boat, a quick decision, hit the wave before it hits me. I paddled fast up the wave, nearly made it, but now I am surfing backwards, then my bow is pointing to the heavens. Somehow, I have just about completed an endo. Just a quick brace and I will survive, not to be. No worries, I can roll. But wait, I am half out of my seat, no roll. A similar experience a couple of weeks later, when surfing with the club as described by Les Allen in the last newsletter, wipe out. Try to roll, but once again, out of the seat, so no roll.

Once again, to the canoe shop, remembering Neil's story about his mates making sure not to fall out. This time the problem was solved by Trevor Holm and a set of thigh braces, fitted to the cockpit of the Southern Raider. The extra feeling in boat control has been amazing and while not yet having to roll, the difference in practice has been great. I don't know why it took me so long or why I ever worried about that BIG FEAR.

Good falling out.

John Satherley.

## A flare for safety

We talk regularly about aspects of safety but rarely about a holistic approach to setting up a kayak to survive a disaster. History shows that someone who is prepared properly will generally survive a rescue situation. Preparation requires some thought and testing. To set up a kayak there are four things you need to take into consideration.

1. The conditions you will be using survival equipment in.
2. How you will raise the alarm.
3. How you will pin point your position to rescuers.
4. A basic knowledge of how a rescue will be mounted in the area you are in and what rescuers expect of you.

## Conditions

Unfortunately we rarely get into trouble on warm sunny afternoons with flat seas. Two to three metre waves, with a one to two metre wind wave, 30 knot winds and you being exhausted and scared is probably a more realistic scenario. This means your kayak will not be stable and you will have to brace at the top of waves. The problem with this is you don't have two hands and time to fiddle with your survival gear. Things will have to be done one handed or you will have to put on your sponsons to increase your stability before you start using your survival gear. Even then buying things like flares you can light with one hand instead of two will make life easier.

You need to work out how you will use the equipment in these conditions. Flares produce lots of hot bits that will burn through a spray deck or worse still if you drop a flare on the spray deck it will burn through very quickly and then you have a burning flare in your lap. Dropping it overboard does not enhance your survival prospect either. How do you hold a flare and a paddle at the same time so you can brace if necessary, because once you light a flare you have to hold it for a minute which is a long time in these conditions. In fact are flares the best option for sea kayaks?

Practise is essential because when you are under stress you may not think logically. Try in rough conditions getting out a flare and holding the flare and paddle blade in one hand with the shaft in the other ready to brace on the windward side. If you mess up and drop a flare or capsize it only costs you a flare not your life. Putting survival gear in hatches or areas not assessable from the cockpit is as good as leaving it home.

The other scenario you have to consider is losing your kayak and being left in the water with what gear you have on your person.

One thing that most people who have been rescued have in common is that they did not think it would happen to them. Give some serious thought to how you would fair if it does happen to you because you can't rely on other people if you are separated from the group. **Your gear must work in all**



conditions.

### How will you raise the alarm

The time it takes to raise the alarm is very important. If we look at figure 1 you can see the estimated survival time in the waters around Australia. By raising the alarm quickly you won't be suffering hyperthermia and have vastly reduced capability when you need to be at maximum alertness to help with your rescue.

**Sailing plan.** The best way to raise the alarm on short trips is to log on at the nearest sea rescue group or have someone who knows your sailing plan raise the alarm if you are overdue. This of course does not work on trips. For trips you need equipment like EPIRB's and radios.

**EPIRB** as discussed in the last edition this is probably the best way to raise the alarm on long trips

as it not only tells the rescuers you are in distress it aids in finding your location. Informing police of your intended trip and the fact you have EPIRB's with you is only going to help rescuers identify who they are looking for. Of course the EPIRB must be accessible when you need it. On your PFD I believe is the best place to carry one.

**Radios** in areas where there are sea rescue groups operating are an excellent means of getting immediate help. You should know where the base station is, basic radio procedure and some idea of the range of your radio. If rescuers know you have a radio it can assist in location your position and condition. I will do a separate write up on radios later.

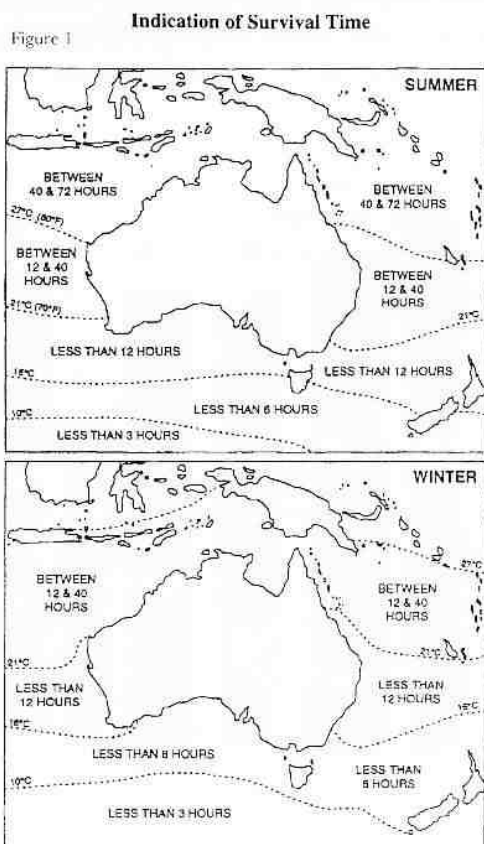
**Flares** are not ideal for raising the alarm as you have to be lucky enough for someone to be looking in your direction and then for that person to raise the alarm. Flare sightings would not be considered proof that someone is in distress and a full scale operation may not be immediately implemented. Flares are better kept for pinpointing your position to rescuers.

I would recommend always having two methods of raising the alarm every time you paddle in the ocean. This is not difficult to do and as quoted many times is very cheap insurance.

### Pin pointing your position to rescuers

It is amazing how difficult it is to find a small boat on a big rough sea. Some of the very fortunate survivors have stories of rescuers being so close, but not seeing them and moving on. We only hear about the ones who are eventually found and will never know about the ones who weren't. Your survival plan must have proven means of showing your position to rescuers in your vicinity. The best means are ones that are continuous and don't require manual operation or have infinite useful life so they can be operated over and over again. I will look in detail at some of these items but you will have to decide which ones you can carry and use on your boat, as storage is the biggest problem facing the sea kayaker.

**Signal mirror.** This is probably the most basic and best all round signalling device. They have





proved very successful in past rescues and of course have an unlimited life. On sunny days a flash from a standard 3 inch by 5 inch mirror can be seen for 10 miles and will generally be seen up to 50 miles depending on atmospherics. Mirrors will also work on overcast days and moonlit nights but with a reduced range. There are many types of signal mirror available and the best type for kayaking are non breakable, preferably floating with a lanyard attached. Sights are also an advantage. For those people who carry a pocket EPIRB the GME model has a heliograph on one side of the EPIRB. On the down side the flash of a mirror is restricted in early morning and late afternoon to an arc facing the sun. Applying mirror usage to kayaking in rough conditions highlights one problem you don't find on a boat. Signalling behind you is impossible and the time it takes to turn your kayak in rough conditions it could be too late to signal.

**Markers.** Dye markers are not ideal in rough conditions as they tend to break up quickly. The US Navy has replaced their dye markers with the Sea Rescue Streamer. This is a floating plastic streamer 40 ft or 25 ft long. It is compact (the size of a sunglass case), unbreakable and continuous. They can be seen at night with night vision goggles. They are not good for ships but work well for aircraft. They are not available in Australia yet but I do have details on where you can buy them.

**Battery powered lights** are not ideal for sea kayaks. They are fine for night paddling but anything that relies ordinary batteries is not reliable enough for safety. You can get

strobe lights with lithium batteries that are designed for safety but are only visible for 5 miles in ideal conditions. The humble flash light is better than all the strobe lights as the directed beam can be seen easier than the diffused light of the strobe. In fog however the strobe is very efficient. My personal belief is the limited space available to the sea kayaker can be better utilised with other signalling devices.

**Pyrotechnics** are required by law and have both advantages and draw backs. The draw back is the time they last for, they weigh a lot, take up room and can be dangerous to operate in difficult conditions. These faults aside they are good for both ships and aircraft and have a proven record of pinpointing survivors positions.

Figure 2







All flares have a use by date but how the flare is treated will determine its life flare more than time. All flares need regular inspection and have to be stored correctly if you want them to work when needed. One of the stories I was told was of two divers who broke down coming home from Rottnest and when they went to use the rocket flares the firing mechanism had corroded off. This I believe is not an isolated incident.

**Smoke flares** are required by law and are only effective during the day. Hand held smoke flares last one minute and the floating canisters about three minutes and produce far more smoke. The range of a smoke flare is about two or three miles and are easier to see from aircraft than ships. They should only be used to pinpoint your position to a rescuer that is in sight as the smoke breaks up very quickly in moderate or strong winds. All flares must still work after immersion in one metre of water for two hours. On the local market there are two types of ignition mechanism. One requires a striker to be passed over an ignition point the other to pull a cord on a sealed ignition point. I have never used either but from a theoretical point of view I would much rather a sealed unit I can light with one hand than an exposed striker I need two hands to operate. In figure 2 flare 3 and 4 are the two types I have seen on the local market. Canisters take up far more room but they do have the advantage of being thrown down wind on a lanyard and float with out being held. Hand held flares do drop hot bits and require holding down wind for a full minute. This can be a problem in a kayak.

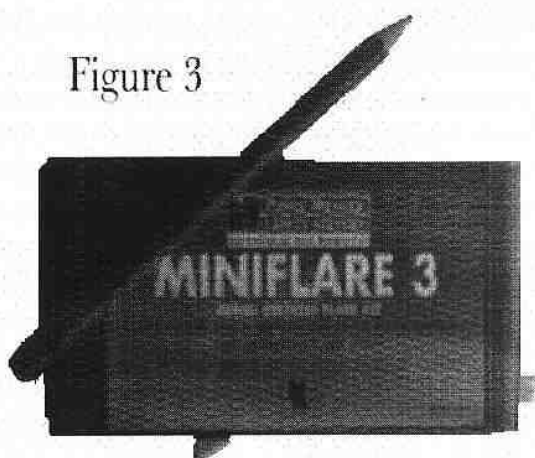
**Red flares** are also required by law and are effective during the day and night. Red flares have to burn for one minute with not less than 15,000 candela which makes them visible for 5 miles in daylight and 10 or more miles at night. Like smoke they should only be used when the rescuer is in sight or an aircraft is heading your way and about 10 miles off. Also like smoke you can get hot bits and they need holding for one minute so practise how you would use them in rough weather. In figure 2 flare 5 and 6 are the same flare but one is half the size of the other. Which would you prefer ?

**Rocket flares** are by far the best flare for attracting attention and are required by law when you are over 5 miles from shore. The legal flares fire to 300m and burn for 40 seconds at 30,000 candela. This makes them effective in day and night applications with a range of 24 miles at night and 8 miles for day. Rocket flares especially during the day are more visible to ships than aircraft. If aircraft are directly overhead they may not see a rocket flare. Rockets don't drop hot bits but they do have a recoil. If you hold it above your head you might get a smack in the head when you fire it. The other problem is the potential to shoot the paddler near you. If you do it could be fatal as these things are not toys and go off with a big bang. **Not ideal play things for kids.**



You can get small pocket rocket flares that don't comply with the legal requirements because they only go 80mt high and last for 6 seconds. Figure 3 shows one that is locally available and very small. It has a firing pin that clips onto the flare and has a pull back firing mechanism that can be used one

Figure 3



handed. The advantage of these is you get 8 shots and they take very little room.

**Whistles** are invaluable for attracting your mates when you are separated. Three blasts on a whistle will travel far more than your voice and uses less energy. You can also paddle and whistle at the same time.

### Will You Survive ?

This article is not designed to put you off paddling because if you prepare your boat so you can raise the alarm, can pinpoint your position and practice with your gear in rough conditions you will probably survive. If you don't your prospects are not good as you are totally reliant on good luck. Setting up your boat is not difficult and I will help anyone who is having problems. Remember none of the people who get rescued thought it would happen to them.

## Big ocean ... Bigger whale !!!

It started off a little different, the forecast was for 3mt waves and 3mt swell so only four of us pitched up for a club paddle to Mewstone Rocks then south to Carnak Island, to play with the rare Australian Sea Lion and back. Mewstone Rock is just a lump of lime stone that you can't land on and a lot of people ask why we paddle to Mewstone. The answer is because it's there... I mean people would think you are silly just paddling 12 km out to sea then coming back. Anyway back to the story. The day turned out to be only moderate conditions so we headed off.

After about 6km Steve and I were out in front and slowed down to wait for Mike. Usually we are well matched for speed but Mike broke his rudder last weekend in 2mt surf and was paddling a borrowed boat. It's amazing how over time you become one with you're boat and borrowing a boat that doesn't fit can really affect your paddling.

We heard an odd noise that sounded like a muffled jet engine. I thought it might be a ship horn being blown by the wind. Then about a minute later the sound came from right next to us. I looked right to see a whale surfacing 20m from me heading straight for me. Everyone knows whales are big but when you have a 30 tonne whale heading straight for you they are huge. It was almost as wide as my kayak is long. I was thinking to myself "how do you do a seal launch of the back of a whale without getting hit by the tail". Steve took the statement of the year when he said "should I be scared". The whale started sinking with the head going under our boats when I saw the tail. My heart rate jumped as I saw the size of that tail. It was frighteningly big as it started to come up. I could picture myself being launched in the air like a shuttle cock being batted with a five tonne bat. Fortunately the tail did not break the surface and the whale disappeared under our boats. Now that I new I wasn't going to die I was wishing I could experience it all over again.



This was certainly becoming a different paddle and to top it off about ten minutes later I was back into the rhythm with my mind in neutral when I came over the top of a wave only to see a pink frisbee heading straight for me. On the next wave Steve had a grin from ear to ear. He found the frisbee in the water and tossed it over to me, not expecting me to jump in fright. In my own defence seeing whales 7 km off the coast could be expected but who would expect a pink frisbee ! Certainly one paddle I won't forget for a while, and next time I see whales I hope it's not quite so close.

When we started the club the philosophy was to have an informal club so people with the same interest in sea kayaking could meet and paddle together. I am proposing we look at how far we want to take the formality by introducing a skills register or list of the paddlers in the club. The reason being that a novice paddler could turn up on a rough day and when asked what their paddling skills are like could say "good" because they don't know what we consider good skills are.

This starts to open a pandoras box because who decides if that person is skilled enough to go on that paddle. If you start delegating that responsibility then you have the issue of liability. Some would argue that you will soon see if their skills are not up to scratch and then

## Check These Out

### Chart Case

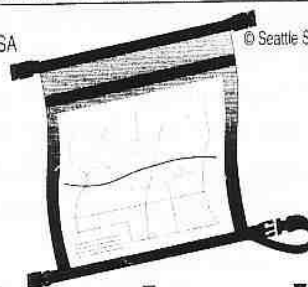
The Canoe Shop have a splash proof chart case that features a folding seal (the same as on dry bags) and adjustable tie down straps. This can be used for back packing and a variety of other outdoor sports.

## CHART CASE

SPLASHPROOF MAP CASE

Made in USA

© Seattle Sports 1998



PERFECT FOR:  
• Kayaking • Hiking  
• Hunting • Fishing  
• Boating

Keeps Maps  
Secure and Dry  
from Water & Dust

4 Quick Release  
Buckles Make it  
Simple To Fasten to  
Kayak or Backpack

### Foot Pump

Need a foot pump. Very handy when you are trying to paddle, brace and bail at the same time. The Whale Tip toe pump would need some thought on fitting or get the Canoe Shop to fit it for you. I don't know the volume but a bucket and a couple of minuets will soon show you how effective it is. My limited experience with foot pumps suggests a stocking filter on the inlet to limit the sand intake.



take them back. The problem then comes if the conditions change when you are out to sea

My proposal is we set a skills list we recommend a competent paddler should have and make it self regulatory in that if you don't have the skills listed its up to you to decide whether you want to paddle in the conditions on the day. We then can say all club paddles will be considered safe by the group of paddlers on the day for people who have the skills listed. This may need to be extended to a minimum required skills to go on a club paddle. That way new people will have to be taught to a minimum standard before they come with us.

Depending on your argument this could increase or decrease our liability. Personally I think it would reduce our liability and give members a standard to aspire to. On skills days people could ask for help on the skills they don't have or are not good at.

Whether the club wants to keep a self assessment of each paddler on record is also an issue to be looked at. I will bring it up at the next meeting so give some thought on what you want and have your say

This is my recommended skills for a competent paddler and I would like all members to consider what they believe is a reasonable skill level and comment at

the next meeting

Board Of Canoe Education have levels incorporated in their courses. We could use these as our levels and encourage people to do their courses. There is a cost involved here and I don't know how they would feel about us using their information. I will ask before the meeting.

## REMEMBER!!!!!!

ROTTNEST SAT 5TH TO  
SUNDAY 14TH  
FEBRUARY 1999.

REGISTER YOUR  
INTEREST  
NOW.....COME FOR THE  
DAY OR THE  
WEEK.?????

WOULD BE NICE TO SEE YOU, WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ALONG FOR A WHILE, BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

HAPPY PADDLING!!!!!! FROM ALL OF US....





Skills for a competent sea paddler				
Name			Date	Signature
Good	Needs work	Can't	Skill	Level
			Forward stroke	Correct technique. Efficient style for long paddles.
			Forward sweep	Correct technique incorporating edging the boat in rough conditions
			Emergency stop	Correct technique in rough conditions
			Reverse sweep	Correct technique incorporating edging the boat in rough conditions
			Reverse stroke	Correct technique
			Capsize drill	In all conditions including surf
			Forward paddling	Maintain a rythem in 1.5mt seas N.S.E & W
			Reverse paddling	Confident in 1.5mt seas NSE&W and "the soup" in 1.5mt surf. Includes landing backwards
			Low brace	Brace up from off balance position
			Sculling	Scull from level with the water to upright
			High brace	Brace up from shoulder in the water
			Surfing	Confident in 1.5mt waves and able to land though 1.5mt breaks.
			Rafting up	Able to raft and hold a raft in 2mt seas .
			Deep water rescue	Confident with both rolls, in seas to 2mt
			Eskimo roll	Confident on both sides with eyes closed.
			First aid	Good knowledge of first aid especially CPR, hyperthermia and dislocations.
			Weather	able to read and understand a weather map and identify the cloud formations of typical weather patterns.

# WA Sea Kayaker

## Calendar Oct-Nov 98

Date	Description	km	Safety Gear	Time	Contact
Sun 4/10	Hillarys north wall to Little Is, Pinaroo Pt, return	9 km	PFD 1, spare dry clothes.	8.00	Neville H
Sat 10/10 @ Sun 11/10	Penguin Is. south to Long Point. Overnight fishing / camping trip. Return via Warborough Sound. Or just sit on the beach and drink Port!!	12km each way	PFD 1, Flares, Radio, Bailer, water, fishing gear, camping gear, booze, food, tent, spare dry clothes.	Meet Sat. 10 am 46 Second Ave, Shoalwater.	John S 95287225 0414 447343
Sun 18/10	MAAC to Scarborough and return	12 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer	8.00	John S
Sun 25/10	Penguin Is. Picnic. Practice Rolling, Bracing, Sculling, etc. Bring snorkelling gear, swim with the seals!!	4 km	PFD 1, Bailer, Wetsuit, Snorkel and Mask. Food and Drinks!!!.	9.00 !!!	John S
Sun 1/11	Garden Is circumnavigation. Beach near causeway.	27 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, Radio, EPIRB, Water	8.00	Neville H
Thurs 5/11	AGM. 33 Lawley St, North Beach.		Election of new committee. Must be financial members to vote!	7.00 PM	Neville H
Sun 8/11	Fremanlle South beach to Cottesloe and return.	12 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, EPIRB	8.00	John S
Sun 15/11	Woodman point, Canac Is, Garden Is, return W/m Pt.	18 km	PFD 1, Wetsuit, Goggles, Helmet, spare dry clothes	8.00	Neville H
Sun 22/11	Practice Session at Hillarys north wall, Rescues!		PFD 1, Wetsuit, Bailer	8.00	John S
Sun 29/11	Ocean Reef Marina to Burns Rocks, return	km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, Radio.	8.00	Neville H

Journal of Sea Kayak WA Inc PO Box 230 North Beach 6920 Phone Pres John Satherley 95287225 Sec Neville Holden 94484196