



President's Message

by Dawn Groves



The Lake Whatcom Easy Paddle was last Saturday, March 10. And as with so many easy paddles, it was anything but easy. Thirty-knot gusts forced several kayakers to move into the swimming area for stroke practice with Sharon

Lindsay. A few skilled souls decided to test their mettle by paddling across the lake. Beaming waves curled and broke over deck lines, kayaks bounced and rocked in the chaos. The trip leader capsized. As conditions deteriorated, she went over a second time and managed to swim her boat to shore through breaking surf. Another paddler followed her, his boat damaged from smashing against a concrete dock.

The trip leader was shaken up but fine. Her biggest concern was that her group had spread apart and separated. Later, when I saw her loading her boat, I congratulated her on her capsizes. Impressive. Capsizing is good. Problems are good. Why? Because when they happen in real conditions, we learn we can survive. We go over, we come up. We figure out what works and what doesn't. We realize we can handle it. Only then are we willing to push the edge.

Kayakers try their best not to capsize. We feel awkward when we do. But we forget that failure is the Tao of success. It isn't a side dish, it's the main course. When we fail, we learn. Failure is the pavement we walk on. It's our foundation. Granted, it's more fun to deliberately fail in a warm pool than to accidentally fail in a cold lake. But it is in the cold lake we grow to trust ourselves. In the warm pool we develop muscle memory. In the cold lake, we prove we can depend on it

Last Call for Membership!!

Go to www.wakekayak.org, download the membership/waiver form, fill it out, and send us the signed form along with a check today.

WAKE presents ...

Dave Harris, Les Rounds, and Andy Wallis

Kayaking the Green River

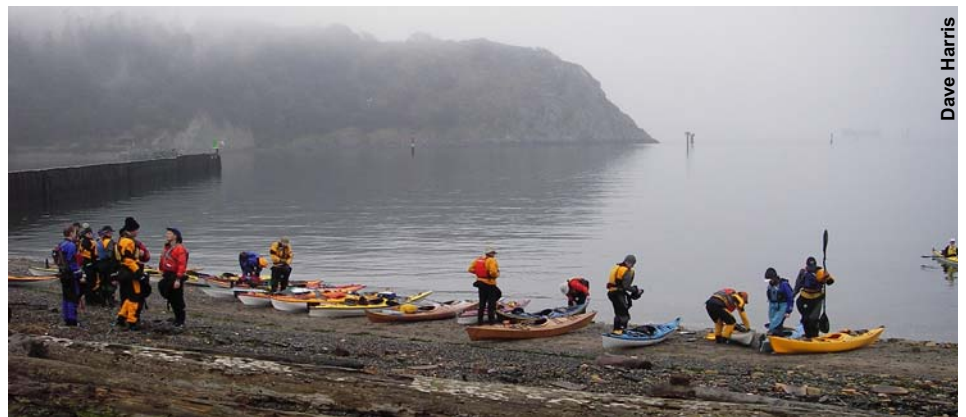
at the March 20th meeting

Downtown Bellingham Library

Doors open at 7p.m. ♦ Meeting starts 7:30 p.m.

Saddlebag Island Paddle

What's a kayak trip without tag, taverns, and tents?



Dave Harris

It's 8:45 a.m. on March 2, 2007, and Dan Barrett is first to arrive at Seafarer's Park in Anacortes on this chilly, gray, and foggy Saturday morning. Weather is overcast with very light wind, a flat sea, and patchy fog that seems to be lifting. The park, with its narrow strip of beach, is deserted—but not for long.

More kayak-bearing vehicles arrive, bringing John Janney, Dave Harris, and Andy Wallis, initiators and leaders of the much-anticipated WAKE Saddlebag Island Paddle. They aren't sure how many will show up, owing to a gloomy weather forecast. Apparently nobody believed the weatherman, because the access road was soon a parade of cars and kayaks. Some members have come from such far-away places as Canada and Mount Vernon to gather with the clan and stir the brine together.

By 9:45 a.m. there were 22 kayaks on the beach and four in the water. Paddlers include John Janney, Dave Harris and Mary Matyas, Andy Wallis, Merv Davies, Les and Kathy Rounds, Gene Davis and Nadine Kaaland, Pat Peacock (sans Dan Moos, who got dinged up and couldn't paddle), Ed Alm, Tom Borst and Amy Hammer, Dan Barrett, Linda Sanford, Eric Moe, Dave Church, Thomas Barnett, Kenni Merrit, John Groves, Lee Conrad, Tom Fawell, Sid Williams, Scott Jones, and John Calvin. The last boat hits the water at 10 a.m.—and the paddle is on.

The fog thins in the harbor but clings to the coastlines as the WAKE group fans out to cross Guemes Channel. Pairs and individual boats play tag back and forth across the group, greeting old friends and catching up on kayak-related gossip.

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Saddlebag Island Paddle *continued from p. 1*

This is the first WAKE paddle in a year for Gene Davis and Nadine Kaaland, long-time members and mainstays of the late lamented Saturday Starbuck paddles. Gene spent last year

working in the Republic of Georgia and says he has a lot of paddling to catch up on.

The group passes a pair of massive, silent tankers anchored mid-channel. Several lazy sailboats drift past under slack canvas. Those who love waves must make do with an occasional boat wake. Wind is under 5 knots, barely rippling the water. Mother Nature seems to be sleeping late today, a real break for the revelers on this most social of all social paddles.



Dave Harris

Taverns or tents?

The group returns to Anacortes and quickly hauls out and loads up. Not yet ready to part company, the entire herd stampedes to nearest watering hole. When the taverns in Anacortes prove unsatisfactory, the clan descends on Edison. Here they find a safe harbor in the Edison Saloon, and the Saddlebag Paddle lives on!

Meanwhile at Camp Saddlebag, the tents are up and kayaks piled high on driftwood logs. There is no shortage of beauty, with the full moon rising through the trees and its light glimmering across the calm channel. Morning proves a slight hang-over-icy wind, scattered showers, and bumpy water. The campers enthusiastically return to Anacortes.

Participants mostly agree that the 2007 Saddlebag Paddle was a big winner. It's hard to fault paddling with old friends, tipping a horn together, and unfolding old memories that only improve with age. Add to that a warm fire, waves slapping all night, and stars for a roof. Does it get any better?

Want to see more wonderful pictures of the Saddlebag Island Trip? Check out the photo album at www.wakekayak.org.

Ode to the Plastic Boat

By Sharon Lindsay

I was accused of paddling Tupperware. At first I was hurt, but as I thought about it, I realized there are some interesting virtues attached to pushing a piece of plastic through the water.

It takes a tough skin to paddle a plastic boat, and I shall go forth with pride as we do low brace turns, bow rudders, and side slips with grace and dignity.

I shall also chuckle as I think of that extra two grand sitting in my bank account.



Ed Alm

Never go hungry on a WAKE trip ...

The three miles to Saddlebag Island take a laid-back hour. The pod hauls out at 11 a.m. at a driftwood beach on the west side of the main island. With 26 boats on the beach, there are more kayaks in one place than most have seen since Ski-to-Sea. After the traditional luncheon on driftwood, some of the WAKers explore their surroundings. They find a trail around the beautiful little wooded island, with a few scattered campsites and a vault toilet, all maintained by WAKE's old and dear friend, the DNR.

Put in is at 12:45 p.m. The group heads east over a submerged bar that connects the big island to a smaller one, hence the name "Saddlebag." They round the island and head back through Guemes Channel. Here they part company with Dan Barrett, Merv Davies, Ed Alm, and John Groves, who have elected to camp overnight.

The Demos are Coming!

Saturday, May 5th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WAKE Demo Day is an established Whatcom County spring tradition with kayak vendors lining the Lake Whatcom swimming area. Also a tradition—the used boat sale and gear swap. Lake Whatcom will be bustling on Cinco De Mayo because in addition to Demo Day, the Lake Whatcom Classic Race runs during the same time frame. It's a really cool event and it'll increase the general action level of the park. Translation: more people to browse the demo and used boat areas.

Demo boat vendors will include Necky, Eddyline, Nimbus, Nigel Dennis, and maybe Wilderness Systems and Impex. This year we're expanding our offerings to include Wave Walker and Pedal Craft for folks who like to cycle over liquid. Pedal boats are especially fun to demo, even for the non-paddlers in the family.

We're also delighted to bring in two surfski vendors: Dan Henderson from Renton Paddlesport Shop and Vince Darwood of Futura Surfskis. This is their first time at WAKE Demo Day so be sure to welcome them. We've scheduled a special surfski demonstration by endurance IT couple, Brandon and Heather Nelson. Other plans include a roll-off with Dubsid against some of WAKE's better rollers and a few additional surprises.

Of course we'll have our designated used boat area for you folks who want to clear out your kayaks. And finally, there's the gear swap—always a great opportunity to score deals.

Browsing and chatting are free to all comers but if you want to demo a boat, you'll need to purchase a \$5 wrist band and sign an insurance waiver in the gear swap building behind the Bloedel Donovan gymnasium. Ten percent of each sale (up to a total of \$100) goes to WAKE.

Early thanks to Mac Carter for handling the vendors, Donna Vandergriend for managing volunteers, Tara McDonald for handling all things money, Ted Ullman for managing the used boat area, Ed Alm for overseeing the gear swap, and Dawn Groves and Kathy McGee for covering publicity and communications.

A volunteer sign-up sheet will circulate at the April meeting. Volunteers are organized into morning and afternoon shifts so it's easy to fit in a little time to help the cause. Besides, it's always fun hanging around a beach-load of colorful kayaks.

Kayaker of the Month: Sharon Lindsay Get busy and do it yourself!

by Dawn Groves



On Tuesday and Thursday nights, you can often find Sharon Lindsay at the Bellingham Aquatic Center, practicing rolls or coaching new

kayakers through wet exits and rescues. Sharon is passionate about all aspects of sea kayaking, especially safety. I talked to her one afternoon as she was getting ready to go paddling on Lake Whatcom.

Dawn: Thanks for talking with me, Sharon. Just to establish your background, what did you do before you retired?

Sharon: I was a chemist and taught at San Jose State University and other universities in the general chemistry programs. I've also been employed in the pharmaceutical industry and worked for the United States Geological Survey. With USGS I was working with the Water Resources Division doing analysis of groundwater.

Dawn: How did you get into kayaking?

Sharon: Well, I actually got into canoeing when I was a teenager in Girl Scouts. I had a canoe and dragged it all over the United States. When my husband, Jim, and I moved out here, I didn't want to use a canoe in the bay, so that's when I moved into kayaks. That was in 2001.

Dawn: Where did you canoe?

Sharon: Most of my early paddling was in the Chesapeake Bay area, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and upstate New York. Jim and I paddled a lot when we lived in Spokane, Wash. I had an old Mad River canoe that just wasn't suitable for Bellingham Bay. There are canoes appropriate for this area but they have much more freeboard on them. One advantage of the kayak, of course, is the rudder or the skeg so you don't spend as much time doing correction strokes in conditions.

Dawn: Did you just start boating out in Bellingham Bay by yourself?

Sharon: I went out with Sharmon Hill who runs Moondance Sea Kayak

Adventures. I paddled with her a couple of times and then she invited me to go on one of her tours. I think she invited me because I could paddle the big Tesla. They stuffed it with gear. I was the one strong enough to paddle a huge boat. (laughs) But that was good. It introduced me to kayaking, then I got my own boat.

Dawn: What kind of boat did you get?

Sharon: I started with an Eddyline Falcon. An 18-foot boat. I've come to realize that I don't need to push 18 feet of boat anymore. If I need more space I cut back on what I'm carrying. Right now I'm at 15.3 feet, and I like it with the Necky Eliza.

Dawn: What is it about kayaking that you enjoy so much?

Sharon: I like the freedom of it. I used to do a lot of bicycling. Three to five-thousand miles a year touring all over. But you're limited to the roadway and you're always wondering if you're gonna get run over by an 18-wheeler. In a kayak I don't worry about 18-wheelers. I worry about freighters. (laughs) With kayaking I also like the interaction with the environment. I'm a very water-oriented person. It's a marvelous environment. For anybody who enjoys both water sports and interacting in the environment, kayaking is the best.

Dawn: You do a lot of training for WAKE. What is it that appeals to you about teaching people to roll or to practice a stroke?

Sharon: Education is quite an equalizer. And I'm a great believer in equality.

Dawn: What do you mean by equalizer?

Sharon: When everybody is equally educated about something, they can choose to take it up or not. If they haven't been educated, they don't have the same opportunity. Plus, once that knowledge is obtained the student can go beyond what they thought they were capable of originally.

When it comes to teaching kayaking, I like to work with beginners especially. Give them a sound basis so that they can get out there and safely enjoy what's available. The biggest risk in any sport is not knowing the risks. Although I don't want to overemphasize risk, it's important to be educated. Be fully aware of all the aspects of your sport and then go out and enjoy it.

Dawn: You do a lot of practicing on your own. I see you at the pool all the time.

Sharon: I go into the pool for pure enjoyment. I love the warm water. But I don't waste time. I practice a lot when I'm

there. I'm not as agile as some but I enjoy having a good, efficient technique. And for certain students I'm good as a role model. I practice hard, they practice hard.

I've worked extremely hard at rolling. I approached it the same way I approached being an analytical chemist. I studied intensely, figured out what was involved, and then started to work on it. When it came to rolling, I had some initial training but then continued to practice on my own and learn in slow increments. Now I'm comfortable with it. But if rolls are forced on me in the surf, I find them only about 50% successful under really rough conditions. I'd like to see that improve so I continue to practice.

Of course, if I get into situations where I have to swim, it's not a problem. I paddle with good people, we all practice the rescues. We all try to work together. That gives me a comfort level. You're quite independent when you're out in that boat; you're your own coxswain. But in reality we all need to work together as a team.

Dawn: Greg Dutton said when you're comfortable in your boat, you're willing to push boundaries. If you're not comfortable, then you'll be afraid to push yourself and even if you do, you won't learn as much from it. You'll just be scared. John Janney said the same thing about rolling. He said you learn to roll because it makes you more willing to practice bracing. You're not as afraid of going over. So comfort level is quite important.

Sharon: That's right. Comfort level is critical. Then you can push harder. And if you make mistakes, you can always recover. You know what to do. That's the whole idea of Splash and Thrash, which we'll do again this year. You just get out there and play with your boat. Get comfortable with what you know and work on what you want to learn. Hang upside down. Spend quality time under the water. No panic. You can wish for it as much as you want but you have to work on it and push it. That's when you develop as a paddler and enjoy it more. Not everyone is going care about training up to the same skill level. Not everybody has the same interests. But for me, a good bow rudder with a tight turn, proper form, that's really neat.

For the rest of the interview, please go to www.wakekayak.org. Learn about Sharon and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

2007 WAKE Board Members

Dawn Groves	President	dawn@wakekayak.org
Ted Ullman	Vice President, Speakers/Training	ted@wakekayak.org
Roger Lamb	Vice President, Trip Coordinator	roger@wakekayak.org
Ed Alm	Membership	ed@wakekayak.org
Donna Vandergrind	New Member Liaison	donna@wakekayak.org
Tara McDonald	Treasurer	tara@wakekayak.org
Lisa Wallis	Lummi DNR Campsite Liaison	lisa@wakekayak.org
Dan Barrett	Webmaster	dan@wakekayak.org
Kathy McGee	Newsletter Editor	kathy@wakekayak.org
Sharon Lindsay	Librarian	sharon@wakekayak.org

We still need a secretary. If you'd like to volunteer, please email any board member. Board meetings are typically short and held on a weeknight early in the month.

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Coming Up ... April 17th!

Wayne Horodowich: Learning and Practicing Good Judgement When Kayaking

Our April speaker is Wayne Horodowich. Wayne has filmed and produced the popular USK *In Depth* instructional video series specifically for sea kayaking.

Wayne's presentation will be "Learning and Practicing Good Judgment When Kayaking." How do you learn to make a quality decision in a kayaking emergency? Is your past experience enough to help you when faced with a problem? Do you have difficulties in making tough decisions? This presentation will examine the decision-making process and the steps to make quality decisions in the future. Part of the presentation is reviewing emergency scenarios.

Wayne was a former captain of the U.S. Surf Kayak Team. He teaches instructor development clinics around North America and is the founder of University of Sea Kayaking (www.useakayak.org), an organization that promotes sea kayaking education. Wayne ran the kayaking and adventures programs at the University of Santa Barbara for 25 years.

Mark your calendars!

The following events are for WAKE members only unless specified otherwise.

Wednesday, March 28

Conditioning for Injury Prevention with Ellen Roth

7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Fairhaven Library
Free to WAKE members, donation requested for non-members. Limit 25.

Friday, March 30 - Sunday, April 1

Yellow Island Overnighter

Camp on Jones Island and paddle to Yellow Island.

Tuesday, April 10

Tides and Currents

7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Fairhaven Library
Free and open to all. Limit 25.

Wednesday, April 11

Kayak Navigation

Class full; sign up for waiting list.

Sunday, April 29

Maneuvering Your Kayak with Wayne Horodowich (Univ. of Sea Kayaking)

9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Lake Padden
\$60. Limit 10.

Saturday, May 5

WAKE Demo Day and Swap Meet
Bloedel Donovan Park

Demo kayaks, surfskis, pedal boats, more.
\$5 beach demo fee. Open to everyone.

Sunday, May 6

Edging and Leaning Beyond the Cockpit with Wayne Horodowich

9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Lake Padden
\$60. Class full; sign up for waiting list.

Saturday June 9 and Sunday, June 10

Surfing Lessons at Neah Bay

Camping and surfing with Chris Mitchell.
\$60. Classes full; sign up for waiting list.

Saturday, June 23rd

WAKE's 3rd Annual Symposium at Lake Padden, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sharpen your skills with a full day of on-water training. Free to WAKE members.

Check the website (www.wakekayak.org) for details on each of these events.