



wake

whatcom association of kayak enthusiasts ▲ www.wakekayak.org ▲ September 2007 ▲ Vol. 26 Issue 7

President's Message

by Dawn Groves



I took a few calculated risks this summer. I bought a lottery ticket, let our 6th grade daughter, Holly, wear a two-piece swimsuit that fit somewhat like a bikini, and started whitewater kayaking. The lottery ticket was a loss. The swimsuit was fine on Holly who, fortunately, still looks quite 11. But the whitewater kayaking, now that was an experience.

Six of us, all sea kayakers, took the challenge and spent several weekends with river masters Reg Lake and Greg Dutton. We indulged in the whitewater universe by caravanning with stacks of colorful boats piled high on our car roofs, scouting the river, figuring out shuttles, dragging our boats over boulders, rolling in combat, pushing our boundaries, celebrating successes, and planning the next venture. Some folks learned easily, others practically knew everything before they entered the water. For me it was a stretch—a happy, sometimes stress-inducing experience of good times, adrenaline surges, and plenty of skill development. Most of all, I loved exploring brand new territory, like the feel of the river, the smell of the riparian watershed, and the wax and wane of my self-confidence.

If exploration is one of the true draws of kayaking—and I know this is the case for many WAKE folks—take a look at your summer. What did you explore? A new paddle destination? A new skill? A new piece of equipment?

If you let the summer slip away unnoticed, don't worry; there's always the Fall. What can you reach for by October 31st? How can you stretch yourself? Maybe you'll join the WAKE board and explore club leadership ... now there's a thought.

My push for the Fall is to improve my rolling skills. That, and survive Holly's entrance into middle school. Talk about new territory... sheesh. At least the white-water was voluntary.

WAKE presents ...



Reg Lake
Kayaking into
Unexplored Patagonia
September 18th

View Reg's magnificent slides of his 2007 expedition into unexplored Seno Peel, Chile, the deepest part of Patagonia's southern ice cap. Together with *Outside* magazine editor Grayson Schaffer, Reg paddled into unmapped ice-enrusted fiords with countless glaciers calving off in huge sheets the size of five-story buildings. Reg's expedition will be featured in *Outside* magazine's December issue. (See interview of Reg, *Kayaker of the Month*, Page 5.)



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



Ron Oberst

Tri-Club Picnic a Great Success

The Hole-in-the-Wall, WAKE, and NSSKA clubs' annual picnic on Saturday, September 8th was a great success. Conditions were picnic-perfect: glassy water, clear blue skies, and a fresh breeze. Highlights of the event included a gorgeous morning paddle north along the cliffs with over 25 participants, a swap meet and silent auction, delicious food, and one of our favorite sights—Tom Banks and Marianne Majerus traveling sideways through the bay by doing roll after roll after roll. Special thanks goes to the Hole-in-the-Wall club for arranging the event and handling all the details. Nice work, folks!

(Above photo: Tri-club members preparing for a launch from Bowman Bay. About 26 paddlers joined Ron Oberst and Tom Plank on a two hour paddle to Biz Point and back. Appetites were well wetted for the gourmet delights of the following potluck picnic.)

Summer Fun

Here's just a sampling of what your fellow WAKEsters did this summer.



Mac Carter

Besides paddling many summer mornings on Lake Whatcom, Mac Carter spent three days sailing in the San Juan's with a kayak on board. He spent time each evening, after he anchored the boat paddling, in the area. "We spent one very windy night at Cypress Point (what a beautiful camp site!), one night in Griffin Bay (East side of San Juan Island), and one night at Obstruction Pass, which is between Orcas and Blakely Islands," Mac says. "I really enjoyed Obstruction Pass because it's similar to Deception Pass—huge currents moving through a narrow channel on each tide change."

Donna Vandergriend

Donna Vandergriend's 50th birthday present to herself was a five-day trip kayaking the Broken Islands in Barkley Sound with Sharmon Hill/Moondance Sea Kayak Adventures. "It was fabulous!" Donna says. "Sharmon catered breakfast and dinner, we paddled 8-10 miles a day, and saw sea lions, eagles, grey and humpback whales. We enjoyed the company of fellow kayakers at our campsites. I'm ready to go again next year." Indeed!

Tom and Marianne together forever!

Tom Banks and Marianne Majerus got married. The couple that paddles together, stays together.

Mike Massey

Mike Massey finished the Colorado River 100 marathon race this summer in a Seaward Passat G3 tandem with a friend from North Carolina.

Dave Peebles and friends

The first half of April, Dave, his wife Mary, Les and Kathy Rounds, and Jim Graeser circumnavigated Isla Carmen off Loreto, Baja Sur, Mexico. "The distance around is about 57 nautical miles according to Google Earth, but about 68 according to our own reckoning." Dave says. "We were out ten days, of which maybe three saw us pinned on the beach by el norte, which really can turn the sea lumpy." The island is mostly, if not entirely, volcanic in origin, and has rugged cliffs and peaks, extensive deposits of volcanic ash (tufa), and considerable fossil deposits—most fascinating to any geology aficionado. The desert is far richer in plant and animal life than you might imagine, too.

The group saw pilot whales, a small hammerhead shark, a large pod of dolphins up close, jumping rays, and hundreds of pelicans. "About the only denizens we missed were blue whales," Dave says. "We also made an excursion to the old Jesuit mission of San Xavier, an oasis tucked into a narrow valley, surrounded by the bone-dry, rugged peaks of the Sierra Gigantes. This is a farming village, where beans, onions, and corn are grown for sale in Loreto. The partially restored church dates to about 1794, if I remember correctly."

John Bremer

John Bremer spent a week on the water north of Port Hardy off the British Columbia coast with Earthwatch Institute (www.earthwatch.org). John explains:

For about 15 years, Dr. William Megill of the University of Bath has maintained a



John Bremer

research station on Branham Island, where he studies grey whales. Earthwatch volunteers help observe and identify the local grey whales and assess their primary food source, mysids (shrimp), which hang around kelp beds. From kayaks, the volunteers surveyed the extent of kelp beds and used sonar to explore the underwater acoustic environment of the whales. From a converted gill netter the volunteers supported scuba divers and video cameras measuring the density of the mysids. On the gill netter, the group traveled north to Rivers Inlet about halfway between Port Hardy and Bella Coola for an overnight at Dawson's Landing lodge. The grey whales are scarce in the area this year; the Earthwatchers saw only JoJo, identified by the pattern of barnacles on his side. There were more humpbacks, including a calf that cleared the water. You haven't lived until you've smelled humpback breath. A group of Pacific white-sided dolphins entertained us, bow-riding for a quarter of an hour.

The volunteers were from Japan, England, Holland, and the U.S. Dr. Megill is a widely traveled Canadian. His staff of six American and English students are mostly mechanical engineering students with projects, including a remotely operated submarine, focused on measuring the whales' food resources.



Dan Barrett, the Johns, and Jim

Dan Barrett, John Calvin, John Groves, and Jim Atkinson also kayaked The Broken Group at Barkley Sound for eight days. Photo: Waiting for the wind to settle.

Whitewater Class Report

by John Groves



Six lucky WAKE members had a chance this summer to enroll in Reg Lake's and Greg Dutton's premiere whitewater skills class. Reg and Greg are certified whitewater instructors with vast experience, and plan to make this class an ongoing enterprise. The first students included Dawn Groves, Tara McDonald, Norm Nielsen, Tom Banks, Marianne Majerus and John Groves, all experienced sea kayakers.

The course began 9 a.m. on July 1 at Whatcom Falls creek. Reg and Greg assessed students' skills in wet exits, rolling, and assisted rolling, then taught sweeps, stern draws, and ways to keep the kayak on track. After lunch they all portaged to the Whatcom Creek dam, where enough water was pouring through the spillway to practice entering and exiting the current. This workout was followed by a ride down the shallow but fast-running creek and then turning practice at the Scott Shipley slalom gates. The day ended about 3:30 p.m. Nobody complained that it wasn't long enough. Next week the class would graduate from creek to river.

The Mighty Nooksack

On July 8 and 9 the class met at Hovander Park to paddle down the mighty Nooksack. A shuttle was organized, boats were quickly reloaded, and the class drove to the put-in at Guide Meridian bridge. The distance from put-in to take-out was about eight miles. The river was relatively high, moving at an average speed of about one and one half miles per hour. The kayakers got an orientation to the river and its dangers: hidden rocks, snags, and

"strainers," to name a few. They also learned that almost all of these perils can be avoided by staying vigilant and avoiding blind turns. Some basic skill reviews followed, including paddling backwards, spinning around, and sweeps and draws. Then the class divided into two groups and moved down the

river, pausing at various rapids where the instructors devised such challenging exercises as paddling backwards into the jet, stopping in troughs, or holding an angle against the current. Two days on the Nooksack gave the class valuable on-water experience and a safe place to reinforce basic skills.

The Scenic Skagit

The class met again on July 14 and carpooled to the Skagit River, where the next two sessions were held. They staked out two campsites at Newhalem Campground, then shuttled between the take-out at Marblemount bridge, and the put-in at Bacon Creek, about eight miles upstream. The cars were parked on the side of the highway above the river and the boats slid down a steep slope to reach the water. The Skagit was running high and fast, Class II and one half. After an extended practice session and review of skills, the class divided into two groups. Reg moved downstream with his three students, practicing ferrying, while Greg lingered in the rapids and drilled entering and exiting the flow. The groups changed occasionally, as the class made its way down the river. The Skagit was flowing faster than the Nooksack, and had a lot more rapids. The scenery was breathtaking, and there were plenty of quiet stretches where the kayakers could relax and rubberneck. Green mountains, rocky crags, glaciers, and the

clear rushing river gave paddlers brief intimations of Paradise.

After a night of congenial camping the class returned to the river, this time putting in above the previous entry spot. This new entry gave access to a run of fair-sized rapids, which tested the class at the outset. Most made it, a few capsized. Some rolled up and others gained additional experience in river rescue. The class divided as before, and made its way down the river, pausing at notable jets and eddies and ferrying across fast-flowing stretches, giving the students endless opportunities to practice their skills.

So many rivers, so little time

The final class was August 11. The group carpooled to the Skagit and got a campsite, then put in at the same spot as before. The river was lower than it had been three weeks earlier, but still running fast. The students spent about 40 minutes warming up in the jets and eddies above the put-in, then began the trek down the river. They observed a lot of differences in lower water. Rocks stuck up where none had been before. There were new stretches of fast rapids, and long sections where the water was churned into a washing machine. A run of really big waves gave paddlers a roller coaster thrill ride. The



group hauled out at Marblemount after 4 ½ hours on the water. Reg and Greg's premiere whitewater class was an unqualified success. Students came away with knowledge, thrills, and adventure. Some of the graduates couldn't get enough and camped overnight to go out again the next day. As Reg reminded them, "The whitewater skills you learned here will work on any river in the world."

So many rivers, so little time.

Wild Coast Critters

By Sonya Bailey

The water taxi took us from Fair Harbor to the North Beach near Rugged Point. Our kayaks were soon laying on the beach with gear pile high beside them. Before we set off down the coast, my paddling companions, Leslie, Rob, Alan, and I hiked down the trail that connected the north beach to the open wild coast. We explored the beaches on the Pacific side for potential campsites, noticing a variety of animal tracks crisscrossing the beaches. Some of those tracks were of wolf, cougar, and bears. The bear tracks made me feel just a little uneasy.



Sonya Bailey

Back at the north beach we loaded our kayaks and pushed off in the Pacific, heading down the coast. Our first campsite was a couple miles down from Rugged Point near Kapoose Creek. Of course, the usual bear track transversed the beach, accompanied by occasional bear scat. After dinner, Rob, Alan, and Leslie went for a walk on the beach. I still had to clean up after my dinner and find a tree to hang my food bag. My companions all had bear vaults that they conveniently placed away from our campsite.

Darkness quickly settled on our little oasis and my companions had not returned. I decided to start a small fire. As I wondered in the darkness gathering driftwood, I thought it would be a good idea to make my presence known by talking to myself or to any bears that bothered to listen. "Here bear, bear, bear," I said loudly, feeling a bit silly. Eventually my friends returned, and we enjoyed the campfire. That night, I was sure I heard something in the trees growl and stump about.

The next day we paddled by Grassy and

McQuarrie Islands. These islands were rookeries for many kinds of birds like Brant Cormorants, Pelagic Cormorants and Sea Gulls. We had our first encounter with a momma sea otter and her pup lying on a kelp bed.

We landed at Jurassic Point, but we saw no dinosaurs. At Tatchu Creek, near where it flowed into the Pacific Ocean, the upper beach was covered with Beach Pea, Curl Duck, and a few plants I couldn't identify.

From Jurassic Point we paddled to Sandstone Point, finding ourselves in an oasis, a protected cove surrounded by rock. Once again, there was bear scat on the beach, but we had no problems with bears.

The scat appeared to be old and dry.

I was always the first to wake in the morning. At low tide I saw fresh wolf tracks in the small cobblestone near the water. I walked along tidal pools to look at a variety of sea anemone, sea urchins, starfish, and crabs that would raise their pinchers in protest to my invasion.

After Sandstone Point, we spent a couple days on the south beach on Catala Island. The first morning while taking my morning walk, I saw a deer foraging. He was shy, and I could only approach from a distance to photograph him.

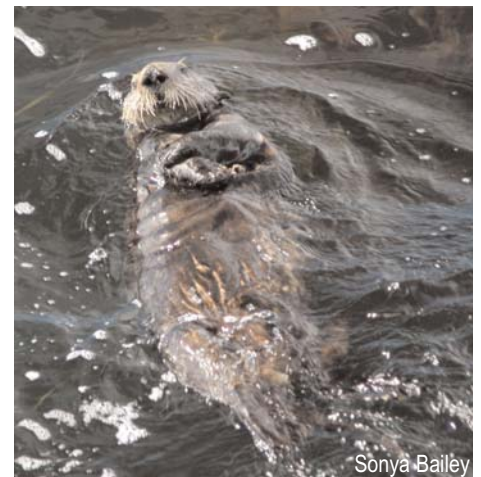
We spent another couple nights at Island 44, across from Catala Island. After we made camp, we paddled to the inside of Nuchatlitz Inlet where we saw a river Otter swimming about. Paddling back to our campsite, we spotted a Humpback whale surfacing and diving. The sight and sound of his spout caught our attention, and we watched his fluke disappear in the water. A few minutes later he would surface and dive again. While we waited for the whale to surface, I watched many thimble jelly-

fish drift pass my kayak.

The next morning the tide was out. We walked the exposed sand bar connecting Island 44 to an adjacent island to the east. Many different kinds of gulls and sanderslings occupied the bar. Rob, who was knowledgeable about nature, identified a variety of shells, such as Geoduck and butter clams. A couple of women walking their dog told us the name of Island 44 was Shies.

Later, we spotted a sea otter just inside the cove in front of our camp. The clap-clap sound of shell hitting rock caught my attention. The sea otter broke open the mussels by grabbing them in his front paws and pounding them against a rock that was lying on his belly. I grabbed my camera, snuck around the cove and up the backside of the rocks that hugged the seashore. I watch for a couple hours as I fired off photos of him gorging on shellfish.

This part of the West Coast had its share of leopard slugs. "Shies" must mean "Slug Island" in the Native American tongue. We would brush slimy little critters from our food containers, tents, and gear. In the evening, I was careful that no slug made its way into my mug of wine. As I slept, I heard the sand fleas pounce against the outside my tent wall. The island crawled with life. At night, you could shine your light onto the cobblestone to see the evidence of it.



Sonya Bailey

The next morning it was time to paddle back to civilization. As the trip progressed, I became more and more disappointed that I did not see a bear. My fear turned into fascination, and I had hoped to see one before the end of the trip. As our journey was coming to an end, and we paddled up the Espinosa Inlet, I finally saw a black bear. After a moment, he saw us and ran back into the wilderness.

Kayaker of the Month: Reg Lake: The Water Man

by Dawn Groves

Reg Lake won't necessarily tell you, but he is one of the premier river runners from the early days of California whitewater kayaking, having accomplished several first descents with the likes of Yvon Chouinard, Royal Robbins, and Doug Tompkins. He's also a regular staff member of the famous Otter Bar Lodge Kayak School (www.otterbar.com), a skilled sea kayaker with special knowledge of the Chilean coastline and Tierra Del Fuego, and he recently completed a sponsored expedition to a remote "forgotten" arm of the southern Chilean ice cap known as Peel Inlet.

Reg is a quiet, steady presence in the WAKE community; a man who doesn't need to blow his own horn. You can find him tinkering in his garage full of boats, coaching kayakers at the pool, enjoying the company of his life-partner Chris Burkhart (she's an accomplished paddler as well), or working on one of his several slide presentations. He also designed and patented the BrewMug, www.brewmug.com, a clever drip coffee system that lets you brew your favorite cup-a-joe anywhere you can get hot water.

Recently, I asked Reg about his ability to paddle both whitewater and sea kayaks with equal comfort and skill. He said that a friend once called him a good "water man." It's a general term that implies the ability to handle a bunch of conditions in a variety of circumstances. He thought it was a pretty fine compliment.

Dawn: Could you briefly explain about your recent expedition to Chile with Grayson Schaffer?

Reg: I'm still trying to figure out what we did. (He laughs.) I've been paddling coastal Patagonia for over 15 years, slowly expanding myself, being out for longer periods of time, paddling further south. What Grayson and I did this year was nothing like what I did the first year I was down there. I would've been scared to death. We did the trip with a lot of forethought. We made rules for ourselves. For example, every time we left camp we took everything with us. Because of the weather, we couldn't afford to become separated from

our gear. Little things mattered. Having a lighter was as important as having a spare paddle. Nothing was unimportant.

Dawn: Where precisely did you go?

Reg: Let me back way up. In Chile, there's a northern icecap and a southern icecap. In the southern ice fields, it's basically mountains sticking up out of the Pacific. There's just no place for roads. The area is served by a couple ferries. It would be safe to say that there will never be a road through there. There's not much in writing about the area. Logistically, Peel Inlet is in the middle of nowhere. You have to go 50 miles off the shipping channel to reach the heart of it. So you're really tucked up in there. In 2004 I put together a charter boat trip (along with some friends) and we got within 10 miles of the area but there was too much ice. We had to turn back.

So it was on that trip that I decided if I had two kayaks and a month of time, I could do it. It stuck in the back of my mind and I started working on it. I was applying to Gore-Tex for a Shipton Tilman grant, thinking that the Tilman tie-in could be almost irresistible to them. In the meantime I met Grayson and he was asking a lot of questions about it. He was a Class V paddler, very quiet, and accomplished. So I invited him to join me.

I wrote the grant and he polished it and inserted a few buzzwords. He coined the term, "the Forgotten Arm." We were awarded \$6,000. With Grayson onboard and his connection to *Outside* magazine, we could better fulfill our exposure to sponsors; a whole lot of one hand washing the other. We never asked for more than we needed, and we received equipment that we knew, chose, and trusted.

Dawn: \$6,000 isn't much money.

Reg: I know. It was probably a \$20,000 trip but we had most of the gear already. I knew the necessary connections and went down early. I was in Chile a total of seven weeks. Now that I have the logistics figured out, I'd like to do the same trip with one or two people each year. There's just so much going on: the calving glaciers and the area filling up with ice. I want to know if something different is happening two fjords back. I'd like to do a lot of time in there, like I did in Tierra Del Fuego. I did maybe 15 trips in Tierra Del Fuego and no two have been the same. When you get tons of glacial ice moving around, on one day you might paddle fairly close to a glacier and at other times, there's a mile of ice and you can't even get near it.

Dawn: One of my dreams is to kayak Chile. And the Galapagos Islands.

Reg: If the Galapagos are on your list,

you should also add the Falklands. The Galapagos are very well managed sunrise to sunset and you must stay on the trail with licensed guides. In the Falklands, you basically take all your food, rent a little hut, and are responsible for yourself. You can get right up to the albatross colony, watching the birds preening and sitting on their nests. A bird will stand three feet away from you, spread its wings, and fly up into the wind over your head. You'll walk around a shoreline that's littered with animal skeletons and shipwrecks. You really see the harshness of the area. There are no trees except in settlements. It's really a fantastic, wild, windblown place.

Dawn: If you were to advise someone like me on one special place that I should go kayaking, where would it be?

Reg: Oh, I don't know. I wouldn't send somebody down to Chile on their own, for instance. I just think it's fun doing whatever you haven't done before. If you try to duplicate a really good experience, it's never the same. It's the new, fresh stuff that counts. So I'm doing more and more of that—getting into fresh environments, exploring. It's like being a kid when life is expanding and growing. If you're not expanding, you're contracting. I just have to get out and see something new. So I'd tell you, go somewhere you've never been.

Dawn: You prefer kayaking in cold climates?

Reg: I prefer natural environments, not trampled by humans. In Peel Inlet, Grayson described it as being pristine only because it was obscure. There were no footprints. Tour boats would go in, show people the glaciers, and in 15 minutes they'd leave. I guess I like cold places because I keep going back to them. But what attracts me are remote, unexplored locations.

There's nothing like the sound of a glacier as it calves; you hear the roar while you're lying there in your sleeping bag. The place is alive and in motion. But there are no maps, no signage, and no information about it. It was like doing a first descent, in a manner of speaking, because we returned with information that said, yes it is possible to kayak in this place.

Dawn: Is that why first descents appeal to you, because of the unknown?

Reg: I started paddling in 1970. There were no guidebooks at that time and lot of what we did was first descents. What was left when I started was the stuff that had portages in it because all the clean running rivers had been done. There was a hell of a lot of portaging and climbing ...

For the rest of Reg's interview, see Kayaker of the Month at www.wakekayak.org.



WAKE Decals

WAKE decals are here! The 3-inch diameter club decals are self-adhesive and perfect for displaying on your car windshield or boat.

The logo was designed by local artist, Ellen Harwick, and printed by Signs By Tomorrow. Each household will receive two decals free; additional decals are available for purchase for \$2 each.

Pick up your decals at the club meeting.

Coming Up ...

Saturday, Sept. 22 and Sunday, Sept. 23
Lummi Island DNR—overnight camping trip and potluck with Roger Lamb, roger@wakekayak.org.

Want up-to-date info?
Go to www.wakekayak.org for the latest news and events.

Goodbye Sharon...



In August, Sharon Lindsay moved to Tybee Island, Georgia. She has a house on the water and is much closer to grandchildren, who live in the Savannah area. Sharon is already working as a guide and instructor at Sea Kayak Georgia (www.seakayakgeorgia.com), where she is enjoying the warm Atlantic waters.

John Janney in Adventures NW...



John's a star! Read a profile about WAKE's John Janney and Whatcom Creek in the fall issue of *Adventures NW* magazine (www.adventuresnw.com). For more info on John, see his Kayaker of the Month profile at www.wakekayak.org.

2007 WAKE Board Members

Dawn Groves	President	dawn@wakekayak.org
<i>Your name here!</i>	<i>Vice President, Training position is open ... volunteer now!</i>	
Roger Lamb	Vice President, Trip Coordinator	roger@wakekayak.org
Ed Alm	Membership	ed@wakekayak.org
Donna VanderGriend	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
<i>Your name here!</i>	<i>Librarian and Secretary positions are open ... volunteer now!</i>	

Support our advertisers:

Backcountry Essentials
360/543-5625

Body Boat Blade
www.bodyboatblade.com

Brew Mug System
www.brewmug.com

Elakah
www.elakah.com

Island Outfitters
www.seakayakshop.com

Johnson Outdoors
360/366-4013

Moondance Sea Kayak Adventures
www.moondancekayak.com

REI
www.rei.com

Secondwind Sports
www.secondwindsports.net

Sterling's Kayaks and Fiberglass
www.sterlingskayak.com

University of Sea Kayaking
www.useakayak.org

Werner Paddles
www.wernerpaddles.com

Yeagers
360/733-1080