

# California Kayaker

#6



Magazine

California's source for kayak information

Always Free

Summer 2011

INSIDE:

**EPPIE'S TIPS**

**BAJA SURF CONDO**

**PADDLE ERGONOMICS**

**SWIMMING FOR KAYAKERS**

AND MORE...







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*California Kayaker Magazine* is an independent magazine available for free at paddling shops, sports retailers, outdoor stores, fitness clubs, marinas, and events, available free on the web, or individual copies can be mailed for a nominal charge to cover postage and handling.

Kayaking can be a dangerous sport. Dress appropriately, always wear your PFD, and paddle within your skill level.



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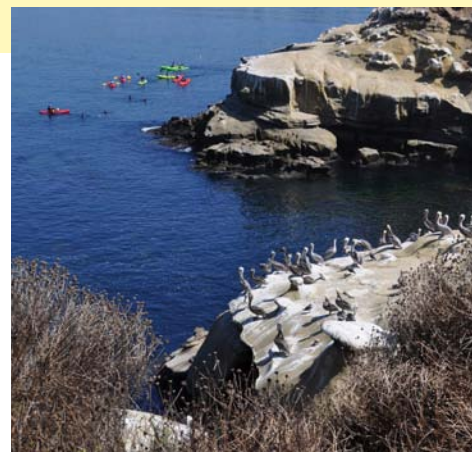
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**Cover Photo** - kayakers enjoying the protected waters and wildlife of La Jolla

Photo by California Kayaker

Camera: Nikon D5000





# Editor's Note



Break even! I know, you are reading this for the kayaking content, but the magazine is also supposed to be a business. And this issue is the first where the magazine's ad revenue is covering the cost of printing, distributing, and paying for the articles and photos. Couldn't have done it without the advertisers who have shown their belief in the magazine.

The downside to more ads is less room for content, so some articles I hoped to run had to get pushed to the next issue... but this gives you something to look forward to! I try to find a balance between the number of ads with total pages, and it won't take too many more ads before I will increase the magazine page count—which will then allow for more content for you to read.

The added revenue has allowed me to increase the print quantity for this issue to over 11,000 copies. And we added some distribution locations, so we are now in over 200 outlets! And I hope to continue to grow the magazine even more.

Happy Paddling!

**Peter Donohue**

Editor

[editor@calkayakermag.com](mailto:editor@calkayakermag.com)

The advertisement features a circular logo for 'THE HEADWATERS KAYAK SHOP' with a wave design. Below the logo, a kayaker in a red kayak is shown on the left, and a blue and green kayak is on the right. Text on the left lists 'Sales', 'Rentals', 'Trips', and 'Classes'. Text on the right says 'The most complete Pro Shop in the Central Valley'. At the bottom, it says 'Your Home for eddyline Sterling's Kayaks' and provides the website 'www.headwaterskayak.com' and phone number 'Lodi Ca, (209)224-8367'. The background is a dark, moody image of water.

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## ▷EVENTS

### **AquanFest**

San Mateo, CA

June 11-12

[www.aquansports.com](http://www.aquansports.com)

### **California Canoe & Kayak Paddlefest**

Racho Cordova, CA

June 18

[www.calkayak.com](http://www.calkayak.com)

**See ad on page 23**

### **Eppies Great Race**

Rancho Cordova & Sacramento, CA

July 23

[www.thegreatrace.org](http://www.thegreatrace.org)

### **US Surf Ski Nationals**

San Francisco, CA

Aug 12-14

[www.ussurfski.com](http://www.ussurfski.com)

### **American River Festival**

Coloma, CA

Sep 9-11

[www.americanriverfestival.com](http://www.americanriverfestival.com)

### **Feather River Festival**

Tobin, CA

Sep 23-25

[www.chicopaddleheads.org](http://www.chicopaddleheads.org)

### **Traditional Arctic Kayak Symposium (TAKS)**

San Simeon, CA

Oct 14-16

[www.shamankayaks.com/shaman/taks/](http://www.shamankayaks.com/shaman/taks/)

### **Wavechaser Paddle Series**

Various NorCal locations

Various dates

[www.wavechaser.com](http://www.wavechaser.com)

To submit news or an event for consideration to *California Kayaker Magazine*, please send basic information to [editor@calkayakermag.com](mailto:editor@calkayakermag.com).

## ▷NEWS

### **Raising Money for Charities While You Paddle**

There are many events where you can tie in exercising and raising money for charities—Support Strokes, Eppie's Great Race, Sea Trek Regatta, etc. You can have great fun while raising money for good causes. One caveat is that they all require you to hit up your friends for donations, pony up cash of your own, or both. That's how the charity makes money.

Now, an online service has started where just exercising alone can raise money for charities, without any cost to you. Plus 3 Network ([www.plus3network.com](http://www.plus3network.com)) brings together corporate sponsors, charities, and exercisers.

Here is how it works. You select a sponsor-charity pair, and then start logging your miles or time. Based on the type and amount of exercising, the sponsor donates money to the paired charity. For example, when I do a 10-mile paddle, shoe company Sidi will donate \$0.75 to Surfrider Foundation Monterey chapter. And if I used a GPS and directly transferred the data to Plus 3, they currently will double the amount donated to \$1.50, as they consider this verified information.

And to make it more user-friendly to the people exercising, Plus 3 Network has added social networking aspects to the site. You can connect with friends and see what activities they are doing, and even see GPS tracks of their activities mapped out. If you join, feel free to connect with "Peter CalkKayakerMag".

And they have apps for iPhone and Palm smartphones (Android is supposed to be coming soon) that make tracking your activities easier.

The money may seem like small change—one paddle won't make hunger go away, but a regular exercise routine does add up. California

*Continued on Page 24*

## ▷RESULTS

### **Santa Cruz Paddlefest**

The 2011 Santa Cruz Paddlefest (formerly Santa Cruz Surf Kayak Festival) was held on Steamer Lane in Santa Cruz on March 18-20. Kayak surfers were scored based on their best 2 or 3 waves in each heat. Full results can be found at [www.jmh.com/kayak/scsc11.htm](http://www.jmh.com/kayak/scsc11.htm).

#### High Performance Men's

- 1 Galen Licht
- 2 Stephen Farthing
- 3 Dave Johnston

#### High Performance Women's

- 1 Kate Duncan
- 2 Devon Barker
- 3 Rachel Krugman

#### Masters Open

- 1 Dan Crandall
- 2 Ken King
- 3 Dave Johnston

#### International, Men's

- 1 Jim Grossman
- 2 Stefano Bellotti
- 3 Dan Crandall

#### International, Women's

- 1 Rachel Krugman
- 2 Devon Barker
- 3 Morlee Griswold

#### Wave Ski Open

- 1 Ken King
- 2 Blair Moore
- 3 Tyler Lausten

#### High Performance Intermediate Open

- 1 Doug Hudson
- 2 Gabriele Dellacasa
- 3 Barry Hughes

#### Production Plastic Intermediate Open

- 1 Gregory Lee
- 2 Steve McConnell
- 3 Shane Way

#### Sit-on-Top Intermediate Open

- 1 Dave Romeike
- 2 Sam Narens
- 3 Jim Lohr

*Continued on Page 15*



# Swim First, Kayak Later

by Eric Soares

**Y**ou are kayaking down the rapids in the upper Sacramento River south of Castle Crags and crash into a rock, capsize, and fail to roll. The cold water makes you gasp for breath. Your boat gets away from you and heads downstream. Your friends are a hundred yards or so downriver, waiting for you. What do you do?

If you are a good swimmer, this is no big deal. While in the shallows, you turn on to your back, put your feet up, and look downstream for obstacles. You are ensuring that your feet do not get trapped in rocks. Once you reach a deep pool, you breast stroke over to the easiest side of the river and scramble up the bank. You then walk on shore down the river and join your friends, who have retrieved your boat. A happy ending.

But here's another scenario. You and your friends have kayaked from Princeton Harbor near Half Moon Bay, have easily made it around Pillar Point in three-foot waves and are heading north at Ross' Cove. You are all



*Swimming in a cool creek on a hot summer day  
Photo by Eric Soares*

enjoying the view just close to the surf zone. Suddenly, a seven-foot wave forms up outside. One person yells and everyone turns seaward to get to safety before the wave breaks. Everyone makes it through but you. The wave dumps on top of you. You know how to brace and stay with the wave as it bounces you all over the place. Then it flips you over and you fail to roll up. Next thing you know, your boat is sitting serenely on the beach a hundred yards away while you bob around inside the surf zone. What do you do?

If you are a good swimmer, this is no big deal. You signal to your friends that you are okay and, clutching your paddle, smoothly swim sidestroke to the shore and retrieve your boat. You wait for another small set and then paddle out and rejoin your friends. All's well that ends well.

I've been canoeing and kayaking for 50 years. This does not make me an expert, but I have learned valuable lessons over the years. One essential lesson I have learned is that swimming skills are more important than kayaking skills. Let's see why.

Back in 1972, the movie *Deliverance* sparked the river running craze. Every yahoo I knew crunched their canoes in their local rivers. We all wore cotton, no lifejackets, and many of us could not swim. A week after I capsized and destroyed my canoe, one of my high school buddies drowned in the cold water of the upper Sacramento River, near where I wrecked my boat. He could swim in a pool, but not in a raging river.

A dozen years later I taught myself how to kayak in the surf in lovely Santa Barbara. When I moved to Half Moon Bay, I played in all the local waters. I was amazed to learn that many boaters were not proficient swimmers in swells at sea or in surf. A few years ago, two hours after I left the surf, a kayaker died at Pillar Point in three-foot waves, with occasional seven footers coming in. Nobody saw him die, so we don't know for sure what happened.

*The author practices swimming with his paddle. He doesn't just carry the paddle, but uses it to help him move through the water.*

*Photo by John Lull*



But his lungs were filled with salt water. I thought to myself, why did he not just swim in a hundred yards? My question will never be answered.

Over the decades, dozens of kayakers have told me they don't plan on capsizing when they go kayaking (who does?), which they use as an excuse to not dress for immersion. Another excuse is that they have faith that their nominal or even non-existent swimming skills are enough. Then you read the kayaking accident reports: time and time again the kayaking victims got cold and could not swim, often with fatal results.

### Learn to Swim Well

If you are not a competent swimmer (i.e. cannot swim 500 meters in rough water), right now is a good time to hone your swimming skills. If you already know how to do the crawl, breast stroke, side stroke, and back stroke, then just work on improving your form while increasing your swimming stamina (which keeps you in kayaking shape). That's what I do. Each stroke has its strengths. Use the crawl for speed, breast stroke in deep rivers or a following sea, back stroke against waves, and side stroke with your face away from the spray when moving perpendicular to wind.

If you have trouble with one or more of those four strokes, then go to a heated pool and have an instructor teach you. Community colleges, the Red Cross, and YMCA offer inexpensive classes, or you can find an underemployed swim team member to coach you. In a few weeks you should have the basics down and be ready to practice in rougher water.

In summer, when the air and water are warmer, practice distance swimming in a local lake and engage in adventure swimming in nearby creeks and rivers. And don't forget to swim in the sea (if you want warm seas, go to Hawaii or the Caribbean). Get used to swimming in current, rapids, surf zones, and in big swells. Learn in increments in controlled conditions. For example, learn to



body surf at Waikiki and swim across relatively safe creeks and rivers, such as the American River in Sacramento. Then graduate up to Los Angeles beaches and more challenging rivers. In time, your swimming skill and confidence will increase.

Be sure to practice swimming with your paddle. Should you tip over and lose your boat in the wind, current, or surf (it can happen!), you don't want to be up the creek without a paddle.

### Dress for Immersion

River and sea kayaking attire is a personal thing. One cannot tell a kayaker what to wear while paddling. So let me just say this: dress for the water, not the air. "But what if I get too hot?" someone always asks. Roll a couple of times, and you will cool off. What? Can't roll? Ah, another skill to master. But until then, you can just splash yourself.

The main thing is to suss out the conditions you will paddle in, and then dress appropriately. In the photo above, taken last winter at Pillar Point where the infamous Mavericks

*The author dressed for immersion  
Photo by John Lull*

wave resides, I'm wearing the gear I will need to paddle in 50F water and air, 15-knot winds, 5-foot waves, and sharp rocks. I'm wearing a full, custom-made wetsuit; two thin neoprene scull caps, one with a visor; helmet; PFD; neoprene divers' booties with a hard gripping sole to protect my feet from urchins and sharp rocks; and thin neoprene gloves.

Note that I do not depend upon my PFD to "keep me afloat" until help arrives should I capsize and lose my boat (a real possibility in these conditions). A PFD is an accessory that will assist you in floating, but will not keep your face out of the water if you are unconscious or numb (either from impact, hypothermia, injury or illness) in rough water.

### Test Clothing, Accessories, and Swimming Skill in the Water

It is good to evaluate yourself and gear in the water without your boat. If you will be paddling in calm cool water on a pleasant summer day,





don't trust the illusion that it's "mild outside" so you don't need to test the waters. Just wade out and swim around for about three minutes or so, no big deal. Does your paddling jacket fill up with water and impede your mobility? Uh oh—better put on your dry suit. Does your dry suit leak? Better make sure the zippers are fully closed. Your head is cold?

Put on the neoprene hood stuffed at the bottom of your gear bag. Your rubber boots fill up with water and make it almost impossible to tread water? Swap the boots for those extra thick divers' booties. PFD hike up around your face? Readjust it or try out the spare.

In the photo to the left, taken at Pillar Point in Half Moon Bay, California,

I'm swimming in the surf and rocks where I plan to paddle. It turned out that after five minutes of body surfing on the reef, I was still warm and my gear worked. I played with my kayak in the rocks behind me in the picture. I was confident that I would stay warm and could swim in those conditions.

As I said before, swimming skills are more important than kayaking skills. So be sure to work on both equally. I leave you with these words of wisdom, spoken by the late storm sea kayaking king, Steve Sinclair: "Kayaking is an in-water sport!" ♦

*Eric Soares is a member of the Tsunami Rangers, an ocean adventure kayak team. Eric has written two kayaking books and produced three kayaking DVDs. To find out more, go to his website [www.tsunamirangers.com](http://www.tsunamirangers.com).*

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## Avoiding Paddling Pain in Your Upper Body

by Marna Powell

*Proper paddling form will allow you to paddle longer distances while avoiding injuries*  
Photo by California Kayaker



Once upon a time, I accidentally came home with a kayak. Three feet from shore the angels sang, the Earth shook, and my life changed forever. Having no experience or instruction, and not even knowing another kayaker had me clueless about everything. I finished my paddle excited and happy and so darned sore I could not lift my arms. Luckily it had a cockpit I could drag my paddle across for leverage because I seriously could not lift my arms. Fast forward to today and my quest to teach ergonomics to anyone who will listen. Avoiding injury, paddling efficiently and ergonomically are subjects about which a very thick book could be written.

This article will address one piece of paddling ergonomics—paddleshaft and feather angles using the “Euro” paddle. Now would be a good time to brush up on all that forward stroke technique stuff about rotating your torso and using your lower body for leverage and strength.

**The Myth:** For years paddle manufacturers have “feathered” the paddle blades at various angles supposedly to allow the paddler to cut through the wind and waves with the blade in the air while the blade in the water does its job pulling the boat to the blade. Okay, what happens if the wind is from the side? Do you never turn?

The long sea kayak paddles are made for that low in your lap “touring stroke” which is (supposedly) easier to maintain over distance for long periods of time, while the short whitewater paddles are meant to be used with a high shaft angle “power stroke” which is (again supposedly) more difficult to maintain over time and causes more strain on the wrist, arm, and shoulders due to the bigger bite it takes with each stroke.

**The Truth:** Any paddle will hurt you, perhaps causing permanent injury if you repeatedly use it without proper

ergonomics [ərgə-nāmiks]

plural noun [treated as sing. ]

the study of people’s efficiency in their working environment.

ergonomics. More Truth: Any paddle can be used ergonomically for your body. This is about *your* body!

So what do the “experts” say about paddle length and feather angle? Cascade Canoe and Kayak Center’s founder and former USA Canoe/Kayak National Development Coach, Dan Henderson, conducted biomechanics (physics applied to human movement) research while working on a Masters’ thesis. Henderson found that for racing efficiency a feather angle of 55° to 75° (with 60° being the most common) and a very high shaft angle is the way to go. Henderson used science, data, paddling expertise, and ergonomics on his research, and for racing I would hang on every word he has to say.

Are you doing “Park & Play” whitewater? Freestyle whitewater experts say to use an unfeathered paddle for bow stalls and such. Surf kayaking experts say that an extremely feathered paddle will act as a super bracing tool plus allow the non-driving blade to cut through when you punch through waves to get to the outside.

But for most paddlers, it depends on your personal position of comfort. We all have different bodies with different histories and it also depends on what you want to do in your kayak. I am not racing anyone and I began this sport after experiencing injuries to most of the joints in my body. For me to have a nice time paddling, my position of comfort, even in a sea kayak, is a short, fat whitewater paddle with a 45° feather and a high-shaft angle. This is the combination for my body (5’6” all legs, no torso length) that does not hurt. Adding good forward stroke technique to the combination of feather angle, shaft





*Setting up for "catch" with the left blade. Good shows straight wrists and relaxed grip. Bad shows cranked right wrist and bent left wrist.*



*End of the power phase with left blade. Good shows the relaxed grip of the right hand pushing while rotating torso and leveraging by pushing with left foot. Bad shows pulling with left hand and arms doing all the work.*

angle and shaft length means I can paddle comfortably for long periods of time.

So what does all this actually mean? Whether you are racing, day-tripping or in an expedition, you need to pay attention to your body mechanics and not get hurt! Here are some places to start:

**Straight wrists:** Your hands on the paddle should be a little farther apart than your shoulders. Look at your hands. Your wrists should not be bent inward or outward. If your grip is too tight this will cock your wrists inward. A death grip will also give you sore arms no matter what else you do! Try it without a paddle: put

your arm straight out in front of you and make a tight fist. Do you feel the muscle tension in your wrist, in the tendon bundle above your elbow, up the back of your arm and into your shoulder? Do you think maybe this could be bad for you? Now relax your grip in the air. Feel better? If you have a bent-shaft paddle then put all



## TERMS:

**Feather Angle:** The angle of difference between the two blades.

**Shaft Angle:** The angle between the water and paddle shaft. 0 degree paddle angle is parallel to the water (extremely low shaft angle). 90 degree paddle angle is vertical paddle shaft (extremely high paddle angle).

**High Shaft Angle:** Shaft is more perpendicular to the water, blade is high in air.

**Low Shaft Angle:** Shaft is sort of across my lap, more parallel to the water.

**Control Hand:** The hand that controls the rotation of the paddle. Right-handed paddlers use a right-hand control feather angle.

of your fingers on the paddle, if you use a straight-shaft try letting up on the pinkies (sort of like holding a teacup). Unless you are punching through surf or upside-down in a gnarly class IV hole, relax that grip. In fact, unless it is too windy, you can open the hand that is in the air and just push forward with every stroke.

**Keep em' straight:** If you feather your paddle, your "control hand" is most likely your dominant hand. The large knuckles of this hand will be aligned with the top of the paddle blade next to this hand. When your control hand takes a stroke do you now have to cock that wrist to take a stroke on the other side? If you must continually cock your wrist up and down then your shaft angle is wrong. The right combination of paddle feather angle with shaft high/low angle and paddle length should allow you to rotate your torso, take a stroke on your control hand side, and be set up to take a stroke on the other side without cocking your wrist. Try it in the air (not putting the blades into the water) and then adjust how high or low the paddle shaft angle should be. If your blades are feathered more than 30° you will need a higher shaft angle to avoid repetitive wrist cocking. A smaller feather angle will dictate a lower shaft angle. For example, when the wind picks up I lower my paddle into a low-angle stroke and change to a 15° feather angle from my normal high shaft, 45° feather. This allows me to just alternate raising each arm as I rotate my torso. I am never cocking my wrists. You should figure out which combination of shaft and feather angle is most comfortable for your body.

**Stop all that pulling!** If your car dies do you sit on your butt and pull it or do you plant your feet and push it? The theory is the same in your kayak. Your body is a big crowbar of leverage. Use it! Hold your arms out away from you. Keep them out there. Turn your torso to the right, raise your right arm to put the left paddle blade into the water (keep those hands out in front of you) and as you unwind your torso PUSH the right hand (the one in the air) forward and PUSH against your left foot brace. Your body has just turned into a big crowbar with great

mechanical advantage. Do not pull that left arm back (the one near the blade in the water). Stop it! I know you want to, but DON'T! Lift the paddle out of the water at your hip for a "neutral" exit that will slice out of the water, and also set you up to do this pattern again on the opposite side. Feel's a bit robotic but if you push, rather than pull the paddle you will use larger muscles to move the kayak, avoid injury and not be sore. Another benefit is that this technique tightens up the stomach and butt muscles!

When possible, try a lot of different paddles with different lengths and play with the feather angles to see what suits your body. Wait to buy that \$400 carbon graphite paddle until you know intimately what your body is comfortable using. Have a friend videotape while you paddle away, toward, and back and forth so you can see what you are doing to your upper body. Checklist: Wrists straight? Wrists not cocking? Hands a little farther apart than your shoulders? Hands in front of your body? Pushing, not pulling? Relaxed grip? Clean entry and exit? Abductor muscles sore? Feel those "buns of steel" developing? Congratulations, you are on your way to a comfortable paddling experience! ♦

*Marna Powell is an ACA Open Water Instructor with the Adaptive Paddling Endorsement and the owner of Kayak Zak's ([www.kayakzak.com](http://www.kayakzak.com)), an instruction, tour, and rental company based just north of Arcata.*

*Photos not otherwise attributed are by Kayak Zak.*

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## Dos and Don'ts of Eppie's Great Race

By Dan Crandall

**T**here it is! I can see the footbridge that marks the finish line! I've made it this far through the rapids and currents and now, with  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile left to go I can hear friends and family yelling at me from shore. Time to pick up the pace. At 200 yards I can hear people screaming from the bridge and the finish—time to pick it up a little more. “Don’t screw up NOW” is repeating itself loudly in my head as I put the pedal to the metal for the last 100 yards. I’m at max rpm now, paddling with everything left in the tank and nobody is going to pass me! I drive my boat right at and through some of the hundreds of unselfish and friendly folks who volunteer their time to help make this annual event happen. I feel a little bad (but only a little) as they scurry out of my path once they realize I am not stopping in knee deep water for them to take possession of my boat and paddle. I drive my boat at full speed right up onto

the beach as I jump out to navigate the ten yards up to the actual finish line and the spectator and media lined finishers chute. I stumble as I hit the sand and realize that my legs are not working! I’ve been driving the kayak so hard with my legs that the transition to running erect is just not happening. After all of this, will someone now run past me from behind? I will my legs to carry me the last few steps and suddenly—it’s done. I made it all the way through without screwing up and in the process, gave it all that I had.

This scenario, or something like it, is repeated every July in the minds and bodies of over 2000 athletes. They are all a part of the popular Sacramento tradition that is Eppie’s Great Race! Known far and wide simply as “Eppie’s”, this event has inspired thousands of folks over the years to get out and run, ride, and paddle their way to some form of fitness so they could participate in this race. You can see them every year as spring turns to summer, the days get hotter and the Great Race draws ever closer. They are on the residential streets around Sacramento and on the bike and running trails or the Ameri-

### ABOUT EPPIE’S GREAT RACE

The Eppie’s Great Race is the “World’s Oldest Triathlon” and the country’s largest kayaking event. It includes a 5.82 mile run, 12.5 mile bike and 6.35 mile river kayaking elements. This event has categories for male and female individuals in multiple age grouped “Ironperson” categories as well as many different team options, including open, family, corporate, adaptive, tandem kayak, sit-on top kayak and many, many more. Kids can join the fun with the US Bank Kids Duathlon, a 2-mile run and 5.75-mile cycle for kids 17 and younger.

According to founder Eppie Johnson, last year’s race had 2070 entries with over 1200 kayaks or canoes in the race! This year’s race is on Saturday, July 23rd and Eppie is expecting and hoping for over 2200 entries.

All proceeds from this event go to Sacramento County Therapeutic Recreation Services to help those with physical and mental disabilities.

Information can be found at [www.TheGreatRace.org](http://www.TheGreatRace.org)





can River itself as it winds its way through the fabulous 26 mile long American River Parkway. The County of Sacramento manages this urban parkway on a paper thin budget, and it is only fitting that the proceeds from The Great Race go to support the County's Therapeutic Recreation Services.

The triathlon's kayaking founder, Eppie Johnson, began this race 38 years ago with a couple of his buddies. The course has changed, and the participant pool keeps growing, the boats and bikes changing with the times, but the basic idea is still there: get out with some of your friends and have a great time physically challenging yourself, perhaps hoping to win something. But basically it's "the doing of the thing" that really makes it so addictive and fulfilling.

If you are looking for paddling fun and are interested in getting up to speed for the kayaking portion of Eppie's Great Race, as either part of a team or an iron person competitor, a few things to point your paddling in the right direction might be in order.

- Have a boat that is appropriate for your skill level. It may be true that longer and narrower boats are faster, but they are only faster if you can stay upright in the traffic and swirling currents and the few rapids

that exist on the course. One swim in a fast boat is a lot slower than no swims in a slower boat!

- If you need to rent a kayak for this race—get it reserved early! Check the Eppie's website ([www.thegreat-race.org](http://www.thegreat-race.org)) for options.
- Get some appropriate training from experienced providers. Even if you only get one good session on the river course with an Eppie's veteran instructor, it will be well worth the cost and time.
- Practice on the actual race course. My first year, having discovered the event and entered just the day before, I participated never having been on the course and not even knowing how far I had to go at any point! Knowing where the fastest water lines are and what your options in the rapids are going to be (especially with a few hundred other folks on the same path as you) is huge in terms of having a successful race.
- Be in shape for a 6.35 mile paddle, but also know how to pace yourself under the influence of adrenaline. Many folks go out too fast and hit the wall just as they get to the more crowded and squirrely parts of the course. Also be aware that drafting is an appropriate option in this event.



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- Know the logistics of the transition parts of the race. Many racers, both as individuals and on teams, have lost incredible amounts of time, or have even been unable to complete the race, because they did not do a little work in advance to determine the technical elements of getting their bike or kayak set up early on race morning or know how to find equipment or team-mates among all the other competitors at the transition points. Participate in other races in the area prior to The Great Race. These include races through River City Paddlers and Current Adventures. The Eppie's website features other nearby options as well as race information.
- Bring a fun attitude! This event is highly competitive for some, but it's also all about camaraderie and is lots of fun for everyone—just like when Eppie and his buddies did it the first time. ❖

*Dan Crandall is owner of Current Adventure Kayak School and Trips in Lotus, CA and has raced in the last 22 Eppie's Great Races, including winning the overall race and open team title four years in a row at one point, and placing in the top five another 15+ times. Along with offering whitewater and sea kayak trips, classes, and rentals, Current Adventures also offers on-water training specific to the needs of participants of Eppie's Great Race. [www.CurrentAdventures.com](http://www.CurrentAdventures.com)*

*Current Adventures also partners with Eppie's Great Race and local kayak race club the River City Paddlers to host the Eppie's Pre-Race clinic the Saturday before the event and then the Eppie's Pre-Race on the Sunday before the Great Race. The Pre-Race is the largest local paddling-only race each year, and like the clinic the day before it covers the actual Eppie's Race course and offers a chance for paddlers to learn the course.*

*Photos provided by Eppie's Great Race.*

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## Kern River Festival

The 2011 Kern River Festival was held in Kernville on the weekend of April 18-20. It is a series of races down the Kern River, and is run as a benefit for the non-profit Kern Valley River Council. More information can be found at [www.kvrc.org/festival.htm](http://www.kvrc.org/festival.htm).

### K1 Mens Expert Elite

1. Eric Giddens
2. Eric McKee
3. Andy Wagner

### K1 Mens Expert Other

1. David Curran
2. Tom Schiller
3. Brett Duxbury

### K1 Womens Expert Elite

1. Svetlana Platonova
2. Rebecca Gidden
3. Lynne Siodmak

### K1 Womens Expert Other

1. Kim Johnson
2. Liz Brackbill

### K1 Masters

1. Bob McConachie
2. Alex Izmailov
3. Tom Cormack

### K1 Seniors

1. Gilbert Siegel
2. Gary Valle
3. Darrel Lang

### K1 Mens Intermediate

1. Peter Hargreaves
2. David Christie
3. Andrew Walters

### K1 Womens Intermediate

1. Nancy Dagle
2. Nancy Murbach

### K1 Mens Novice

1. Daniel Welborn
2. Andrew Webberly
3. Steve Tete

### K1-Cadet Girls

1. Sage Donnelly
2. Kara Campbell

### K-2

1. Izmailov/Platnova
2. Hargreaves/Muczynski

### C-1

1. Matt Robertson

## Reno River Festival, May 6-8

The 2011 Reno River Festival was held in downtown Reno on the week-end of May 6-8. It is a series of races and events on the Truckee River. More information can be found at [www.renoriverfestival.com](http://www.renoriverfestival.com).

### Juniors Freestyle

1. Hannah Kertez
2. Sage Donnelly
3. Emery Tillman / Daniel Wellbourn / Jeffrey Steehler

### Women's Freestyle

1. Ruth Ebens
2. Emily Jackson
3. Erin Clancy

### Men's Freestyle

1. Stephen Wright
2. Eric Jackson
3. Dustin Urban

### Women's Slalom

1. Svetlana Platonova
2. Jessica Subido
3. Sage Donnelly

### Men's Slalom

1. Eric Jackson
2. Bob McConahee
3. Andrew Peterman

### Women's Boatercross

1. Amanda Marusich
2. Emily Jackson
3. Elaine Campbell

### Men's Boatercross

1. Colin Kemp
2. Dave Fusilli
3. Michael Tavares

### Stand Up Paddle Board

1. Dan Gavere
2. Taylor Robertson
3. Michael Tavares

### Run Amuck

1. Team #154: Bi-Winning: Russell Smithson, Brandon Nied
2. Team #161: Jupiterscac: Justin Martin, Joshua Martin
3. Team #59: Super Friends: Kraig Kimlar, Kathryn Baltierr

### Biggest Little Homebrew Challenge

1. Alan Goldman: Goldman's Chocolate Coffee Stout
2. Jave Patterson: Tangerine Dream
3. Andy VanNostrand: Kickin' Amber IPA

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# Center



At the 2011 Santa Cruz Paddlefest, these competitors were waiting for their round to start when the sea otter decided to come over and join them. Top 3 finishers for each category are listed in Results starting on page 5 (and no, the sea otter did not make it into the top 3).

Photo by Dominick Lemarie

Camera: Canon EOS 1D

Have a photo that shows the beauty of kayaking or otherwise makes people think?  
We'd love to see it. Send submissions to [editor@calkayakermag.com](mailto:editor@calkayakermag.com).  
Include the background story and what camera was used.



# Hatch

Jack Brisley at Chute Rock, off of Newport Beach. He got stuck in the chute when the wave he rode in wasn't enough to get him through, so he had to wait for another wave with enough water to let him out. But sometimes you get more than you ask for...

Photo by Mark Sanders

Camera: Pentax Optio W10



# Surf Kayaking from a Baja Condo

by Steven Malone



*Practicing rolls in the condo's pool*

**T**he surf was fierce that November morning. Paddling into the surf, I had expected moderate-force waves, but this wave hit hard. And, preparing only for the main wave, I had ignored the other wave refracting off the cliff. Capsizing, my helmet slammed the sandy bottom. Humbling me more, hours later when showering, I found my ear canal filled with sand.

It was much easier to treat my ear staying in an oceanfront condo than if I were tenting. Over the next two days I poured dishwashing liquid and vinegar into the ear, letting streams of water from the showerhead hit the ear canal, and laid down on the couch on my side. All while listening to ocean waves. After frightening thoughts of a ruptured eardrum, I saw a local physician. For \$6 he examined my ear and said the eardrum was fine.

My wife and I are campers. We tent in national forests to avoid the high-density campgrounds. Hotels and condominiums had been alien worlds. Others stay in condos but outdoor people like us stay in tents, we thought. Sunny winters were also foreign. Tenting and rainy winter months may only be tolerable sometimes, but that discomfort was good for the soul. Wasn't it?

Over time, our interests drifted to new arenas. Sea kayaking competency demands surf kayaking skills, then

surf kayaking became a pleasure unto itself. Two-week Mexican vacations while working led to retiring in Mexico. Renting out our Oregon home led to wintering in Mexico. Kayaking was no longer sandwiched between work shifts, but became a daily option. It may seem odd to bring a surf kayak up and down a high-rise condo elevator, but it works!

Oceanfront condos have advantages for surf kayakers, and not just for nursing sand-filled ears. It's nice to have a gym for strength building. The biggest advantage is using the swimming pool for perfecting rolls. Many condos have no rules against kayaks in swimming pools. Once a building's units are sold and a homeowner's association is formed, it's hard to institute new restrictive rules. Who would think of writing that rule anyway?

I can build skills essential for the ocean in the safety of the condo pool. After each surf session, I do daily homework of 20 onside and 20 offside rolls. And if I found while surfing that I need confidence for a second roll after a failed first attempt, I would add practicing failing my first roll, and making my second roll. If on my last combat roll I had difficulty getting into the set-up position, in the pool I roll over in unusual positions, and practice getting into the set-up position underwater.

Beyond the rolls, I practice a version of the paddle-float



re-entry, where paddle floats are put on each blade, and the paddle is parallel to the kayak; and practice pumping water out of the cockpit. I practice putting on swim fins, getting out smoke and sky flares, using the sea anchor, and using neoprene hand paddles. The point of the practice session, as the ocean waves are pounding, is clear and gripping. Pool practice makes surf kayaking safe enough for an average guy like me.

Make no mistake, the ocean can be a dangerous place. I may want to love the ocean and have it love me, but some days it could kill me without a second thought. Every contingency must be mentally rehearsed, even if it requires a morbid imagination! All self-rescue procedures must be defined and refined. Surfing alone without community support means self-rescue techniques must be flawless.

Still I keep being drawn to the sea. Paddling along the coastline, the built-up Northern Baja coastline looks peaceful. Nature still has a voice; migrating pelagic birds are surprised to see me on their turf. Local dolphins check me out. I sit on the water, rocking with each swell.

Sometimes at night I dream of rocking with the swell.



When I close my eyes at night, I more typically see myself surfing. Sometimes it's an image of successfully catching a wave after a messy start; I particularly like having to throw my torso back to the stern of the kayak to avert a head-over-heels. Mostly the image is of catching the wave, and turning to skim along the length of the wave. When I watch the green wave build, in both mental images and in real-life, it's always in slow motion.

Skill building is an eternal pursuit. For example, one skill is to spin the kayak from forward to reverse on the wave, but my off-side spin currently needs improvement. Once on the wave, my ability to cut towards the ocean and get off the wave before it crests also varies by side. I see my stronger side as the teacher, modeling for my weaker side on how to make moves: then my off-side picks up the skill.

#### Vancouver Island Circumnavigation Speed Record

Name: Joe O'Brien  
Launch Point: Brechin boat ramp, Nanaimo, B.C.  
Direction: CCW  
Start: August 19, 2010 8:08 AM PDT  
Finish: September 4, 2010 8:22 PM PDT

OFFICIAL TIME  
16 days 12 hours 14 minutes

*The paddle of choice of professional sea kayaker, Helen Wilson*



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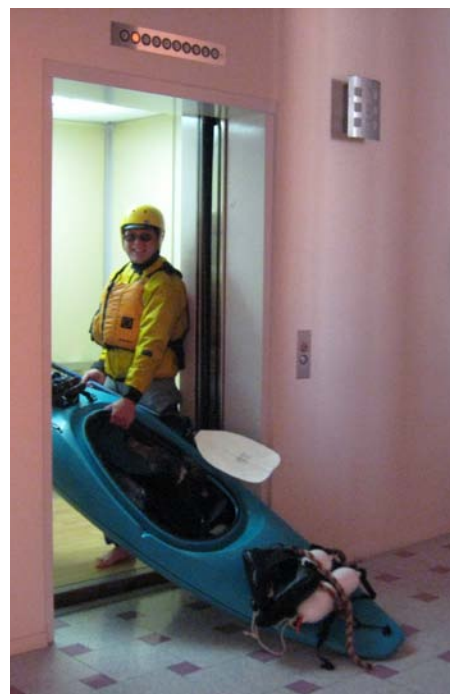
It helps to be here awhile, as not all days are good for surfing. Five foot waves at 11 seconds are ideal: I can get through the soup zone, and handle whatever the cresting wave does. Eight feet 10 seconds is tops. These numbers don't do waves justice, as wintertime waves have more force than summertime waves with identical numbers. Also, tidal stage matters; waves dump the most at low tide. Whether the sun is out is also important; it may be an illusion, but on sunny days the ocean feels safer and I have more fun.

Which beach to go to depends partly on season and wave direction. Since winter waves pull the sands off-shore, many good summertime beaches have dumping waves in winter, although one unique sandy beach has more spilling waves in winter. Wave direction is a surprisingly important factor in post-capsize analyses. Fortunately, choice of beach is not affected by surfer popularity. Jockeying with other surfers in

the States used to impede my ability to identify the best spots to wait for waves. With few surfers here, there are more rides and a clearer focus on reading waves.

'Intermediate' best describes my skill level. Static descriptions are deceptive, however, as my abilities vary greatly on a given day. Maybe because I am 55, some days rolling leaves me woozy, or my reflexes feel delayed, and it is better to pursue other interests. Other days I feel strong, athletic, and eager to be on the ocean.

Watching surfers' maneuverability, accomplished solely through body positioning on the board, is inspiring. Kayakers should be able to do much of what they do, even without paddles. Shouldn't the addition of a paddle, in theory, increase our abilities exponentially? Butt-surfers can certainly catch waves farther out than board surfers can, but I suspect we kayakers have a surfing potential not yet realized.



*Kayak transport Baja-style*

Watching waves from the condo is also inspiring. Sometimes I am like our cat. He will look through the window at the birdfeeder, with his jaw twitching as he envisions catching a bird. When watching waves, I typically picture myself riding them. The comfort of the condo often leads to a romanticized and playful vision of what could be.

Friends say I have romanticized Mexico as well, and I'm not attuned to the violence. Perhaps they are right, as violent news reports are unsettling. But hard-nosed analyses say the murder base-rate per thousand residents in Tijuana is below that of some California cities and equal to that of Richmond, California and Washington, D.C.

Mexico looks peaceful in our small city of Rosarito Beach, just south of Tijuana. Locals smile, especially when we ride our bicycles. Perhaps they miss tourists, so we get special treatment. Even if I were invisible, I'd notice how people stroll together as families, and dogs don't bark much. People are friendly and relaxed. We love street markets where average people buy food. We love how fruits come from local sources, and chicken taste like chicken without broth

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and hormones added. Society is not as car-oriented, small businesses thrive, and the world makes sense.

My wife was right about how nice it would be to see the sun in the wintertime. In what was once a foreign land, we are now at home. Even when carrying a kayak in a high-rise elevator. ❖

*Steve Malone is a retired psychologist who is enjoying the surf kayak life in Mexico. He has completed a dozen two-week sea kayaking trips in British Columbia, six in Alaska, two in Baja, and three in Belize.*



*Photos by Marlene Malone.*



*Riding the waves in Baja*

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# Basics of Buying a Recreational Kayak a.k.a the Rec Boat



*Photo courtesy of Delta Kayaks*

**A**s a retailer, I've seen a whole spectrum of buyers. At one end was the guy who wanted a green kayak. Within fifteen minutes of telling me his one and only parameter for buying a boat, he drove out on his way to the Russian River with a new green kayak on his minivan. At the other end was the couple who came back to the store every four months mostly complaining that they hadn't bought a boat for her the last time they were in. Then we would pull all the boats off the racks so they both could sit in them again. Long after my lunch had cooled (buying a hot lunch is my hugely successful technique to get people into the store) they would ask for a fresh set of catalogs and go have lunch on the river watching the happy people paddle by in the water below. When they missed their next four-month appointment I soon forgot about them. Then one day after I had just picked up a nice hot slice of pizza, they wandered back into the store, bragging about the great deal they got on Craigslist. The boat was short. The boat was light. The boat was inexpensive. And unfortunately for her, the boat was built specifically for a child of no more than a hundred or so pounds. There was no point in me saying anything but congratulations. She'd find out soon enough without me. And besides, I had cold pizza waiting.

Buying a recreational kayak is one the easiest purchases you can make. Why? Because with few exceptions, you can't go wrong. A rec boat is by definition nothing more

than a way to get on the water and have some fun. Some are lighter. Some are faster. Some track better. Some are more comfortable. But unless you have a really specific use (like taking your dog) that requires a really specific feature (like an extra large cockpit), don't stress it, almost any rec boat is going to give you years of paddling fun.

Things to think about: cost, weight, comfort, tracking and safety.

### **COST:**

If you use it, it doesn't really matter what it costs, it's a great deal. If you don't use it, it doesn't matter what it costs, it's a bad deal. That is to say, a thousand dollar kayak that gets on the water once a month is a great investment while a two hundred dollar kayak that becomes a permanent fixture in the garage is not.

### **WEIGHT:**

If you can't put the kayak on top of your car, you're probably not going to go kayaking very often. You're going to pay more for less weight. There's simply no two ways about it.

### **COMFORT:**

Just like paying more for less weight, a more comfortable seat is going to cost money also. Why? Because they cost more to make. And unfortunately you can't just put a better seat into a cheaper boat. Kayak manufacturers with über comfy seats usually build their kayaks around the seat. The seat is really the selling point of the boat.



After all, if your plan for the weekend begins with a few hours kayaking Tomales Bay on Saturday morning, you probably don't want to spend the rest of the weekend massaging your aching back because of it. A comfy kayak is one you're more excited about using. People come back to the shop all the time raving about how great the seat is. Never once has somebody come back in the shop wishing they had saved a few bucks on a less comfortable boat.

#### TRACKING:

My favorite comment I hear about a kayak is that it doesn't turn very quickly. Congratulations. Unless you're a whitewater kayaker, you don't want a boat that turns quickly. It's not like you're out there dodging dolphins at 50mph. What you want is a boat that tracks easily in a straight line. Rec boats have been notorious over the years for not tracking very well, mostly because they're so short. But today's recreational kayakers are considerably better. They're better thought out, with sharper entry and exit lines on the hull. The materials are more rigid so the boats don't flex as much in the water. What this means is simply you'll work less and enjoy your time on the water more.

#### SAFETY:

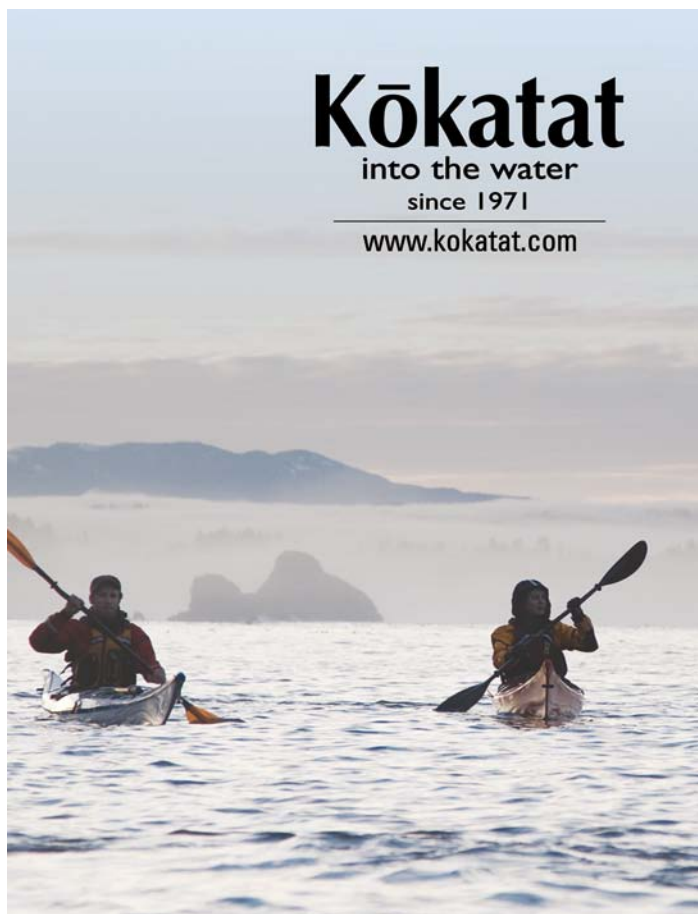
Here's the deal: recreational kayakers are for general recreation. They're not meant for surfing Bolinas. They're not meant for making the Inside Passage to Alaska. They're designed for even the first time kayaker to sit flat on the water comfortably on relatively pleasant days. Rec boats are wide and stable. Most people don't wear spray skirts. A lot of people bring their dog. As a result, the vast majority of these kayakers have the very bare minimum of emergency flotation, which makes it difficult at best to get the water out of a swamped boat. A flooded boat won't sink, but it also won't float high enough to get back in. Manufacturers build boats like this for three reasons: keep the price low, keep the weight down, and also because the chances are very small that you would ever tip the boat over (if you paddle in the conditions the boat was built for).

For added safety, at an added price, you can get a rec boat with watertight bulkheads and hatches in the stern or (better yet) both bow and stern. The additional flotation provided would make getting back in to a flooded boat from the water easier (with proper training of course). Another option that adds more safety but has the rec boat's ease-of-use is the slightly wetter ride of a sit-on-top kayak. ♦

*This column is based on a blog post by Scotto Galbreath, from Clavey Paddlesports, a kayak retailer and outfitter in Petaluma. You can read their blog at [www.clavey.com](http://www.clavey.com).*



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*News - continued from page 5*

Kayaker alone has logged enough to donate over \$250 to charities.

I am sure we all agree that exercising is good for us. And perhaps knowing that your exercising will also help others may motivate you to exercise just a little bit more.

And for kayak and gear manufacturers, signing up with Plus 3 Networks will help stretch your donation dollars further by not just helping a charity, but also helping keep people active.

### **Rules for Paddlers to Protect Lake Tahoe from Aquatic Invasive Species**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are spreading in waterways throughout the West. Non-native species, such as zebra mussels, quagga mussels, and New Zealand mud snails, threaten the ecological balance of Lake Tahoe and its famous clarity. AIS can be easily transported through water in the bottom of kayaks or water in hand pumps. Aquatic weeds, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, can cling

to a rudder and are also part of the problem.

Tahoe Resource Conservation District has set up a program called "Tahoe Keeper" to help compliance with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the state's requirements that address this serious threat while continuing to allow paddlers the freedom to launch at informal sites around Lake Tahoe.

A Tahoe Keeper is a paddler who is trained and certified to inspect and decontaminate their own boat and gear. Paddlers will be required to decontaminate their watercraft prior to launching in rivers or lakes in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Decontamination is accomplished by cleaning, draining, and drying watercraft and gear.

A 10 to 15 minute training program that demonstrates the "Clean, Drain, and Dry" self-inspection and decontamination techniques is available at inspection stations around Lake Tahoe and online. Boaters who

successfully complete the program receive a Proof of Training card valid for one year and become a member of the Tahoe Keepers stewardship community. Paddlers will be required to carry the Proof of Training card while boating in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Staff at developed launch sites such as Baldwin Beach in South Lake Tahoe, and roving inspectors at informal launch sites will be checking for certifications and helping paddlers to comply.

Non-motorized watercraft registration and inspections are free during 2011.

Paddlers play an integral role in helping to protect our regional waterways and preserving our non-motorized culture. This training is required for paddling on Lake Tahoe, but is also good for paddlers of other areas to learn, as the AIS issue is relevant throughout the State.

Learn how to become a Tahoe Keeper at [www.TahoeBoatInspections.com](http://www.TahoeBoatInspections.com) or [www.TahoeKeepers.org](http://www.TahoeKeepers.org).

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### Qajaq Japan Sticker Sales Supporting Japan

Qajaq Japan, a traditional kayak club in Japan, is selling a very interesting sticker to raise funds for the victims of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan. The sticker is about 4" in diameter and shows a Samurai with a Greenland paddle, instead of the more traditional Samurai sword, standing in front of the Japanese rising sun. Words of support for Japan are printed around the outside.

Each sticker costs \$9, which includes shipping. Of this, about \$8 goes to charities. Most likely, someone within Qajaq Japan is subsidizing this effort, as printing and mailing is likely more than \$1 per sticker.

Information can be found at [www.qajaq.jp](http://www.qajaq.jp).

### Potential State Park Closures

California has released a list of 70 parks that are slated to be closed due to the state's budget deficit. This list is preliminary, as it has not yet been signed by Governor Brown, so it will likely change. But the parks still on the list when the bill is signed will be closed on July 1, 2012.

The list includes a few that are popular with kayakers, including:

- Candlestick Point State Recreation Area
- China Camp State Park
- Mono Lake Tufa State Recreation Area
- Moss Landing Beach State Recreation Area
- Russian Gulch State Park
- Salton Sea State Recreation Area
- South Yuba River State Park
- Tomales Bay State Park

The news announcement and list of parks can be seen at [www.parks.ca.gov/pages/712/files/2011ParkClosures\\_attachments20110513.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/712/files/2011ParkClosures_attachments20110513.pdf)

### New Guidelines for Eating Fish Caught in San Francisco Bay

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has released an updated health advisory and safe eating guidelines for fish and shellfish from San Francisco Bay. "OEHHA's guidelines and advisory should help anglers choose the safest kinds of fish for their families to eat and the safest ways to prepare fish they catch in the San Francisco Bay," said Dr. George Alexeeff, Acting OEHHA Director. OEHHA is part of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

The advisory and guidelines replace an earlier 1994 advisory, and draw on over a decade of more recent data showing San Francisco Bay fish contain mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). They also incorporate nutrition science showing that fish provide dietary protein and essential nutrients, including Omega-3 fatty acids that promote heart health.

Some kinds of fish have more mercury and PCBs than others: sharks had the highest levels of mercury, and shiner perch had the most PCBs. High exposures to methylmercury (the form of mercury prevalent in fish) can affect the nervous system and harm learning ability, language skills and memory. PCBs are common contaminants known to build up in fish. They have been found to cause cancer in animals and also cause health problems in children and adults.

OEHHA recommends avoiding shiner perch and other surfperch species from San Francisco Bay. Women of childbearing age and children, who are most sensitive to mercury, should also avoid eating San Francisco Bay sharks, striped bass, or white sturgeon. In addition, because of heavy contamination by PCBs and the pesticide dieldrin, OEHHA recommends that no one eat any fish or shellfish from the Lauritzen Channel in Richmond Inner Harbor.

The complete guidelines, a fact sheet, and the fish advisory report may be viewed at [www.oehha.ca.gov](http://www.oehha.ca.gov) ❖



# Head to Head: Pentax Optio WG-1 vs. Olympus Tough TG-610

**H**ave you ever been out paddling and had a dolphin surface right in front of you? That would be something great to get a picture of. Probably you think water and cameras don't mix, so you didn't bring one. Or if you did, you have it safely locked away in a dry box or bag and not accessible in time to get the shot.

For a few years now there have been "waterproof" cameras. At first, they weren't always waterproof enough for kayaking needs or they did not take good enough photos to make us happy. But over the years, waterproof cameras have improved to the point where they are viable for use on (and off) the water. With that in mind, California Kayaker contacted a few camera manufacturers to get "kayak ready" cameras to test and report the results back to our readers.

Our focus of this review is cameras that you would use holding in your hand (we will be doing a review of "mountable" cameras, like the HD GoPro and Oregon Scientific ATC9K, in our next issue). We wanted cameras that were reasonably priced, would fit in a PFD pocket (so always accessible), and waterproof enough to withstand what we may dish out in more aggressive kayaking situations (such as surf or whitewater). And we focused on the features and attributes of these cameras that would be important to kayakers.

This review covers the Pentax Optio WG-1 and the Olympus Tough TG-610. To help you decide which of these cameras you may prefer, we have posted on our blog ([calkayakermag.blogspot.com/2011/05/camera1.html](http://calkayakermag.blogspot.com/2011/05/camera1.html)) raw images and video files taken under a variety of conditions that would challenge any camera. We set up the cameras side-by-side with similar settings and tried to press the shutter buttons at the same time. We then posted the files exactly as they came out of the cameras, unedited, so you can see exactly how they would look (and also read Exif information, if you know what that means and how to access it).

OK, on to how the cameras did...

**Picture Quality:** both were good, but the Olympus pictures were a little better. In addition to being visibly able to tell when you look closely at the photos, we had a hint that this would be the case when we saw that the Olympus file sizes were larger. The Pentax photos seem to generally have a little too much green in the picture, where the Olympus was on the edge of being washed out (overexposed, so too bright). Both the extra green and the washing out are easily adjusted with software, if you find the need to do so.

*Kayak photography tip—California Kayaker Magazine is always looking for good photos, and we prefer that the photos be taken in the highest resolution possible. To do*

*Blow up of an action photo of Lucy O'Brien going over a pour-over off the Sonoma Coast taken with each camera (Pentax on left, Olympus on right) at the same time. These pictures show both how the Olympus has better quality, and the Pentax faster shutter speed (having caught Lucy earlier on the wave).*







SPECIFICATIONS	Pentax Optio WG-1	Olympus Tough TG-610
Dimensions	4.6" wide x 1.1" deep x 2.3" tall	3.9" wide x 1" deep x 2.6" tall
Weight	5 ounces	6.7 ounces
Waterproof Rating	33 feet	16 feet
Shockproof Rating	5 feet	6 feet
Max Photo Resolution	14 megapixel	14 megapixel
Zoom	5x optical zoom + 6.7x digital zoom	5x optical zoom + 4x digital zoom
Max Video Resolution	720p (1280 x 720 30fps)	720p (1280 x 720 30fps)
Video File Format	AVI	MP4
Video File Size	~68 megabytes per minute (720p, 30 fps)	~68 megabytes per minute (720p, 30 fps)
Max Video File Size	2 gigabytes	4 gigabytes
Options	GPS model (WG-1 GPS), remote control	33 foot rated waterproof model (TG-810)
MSRP (as tested)	\$349	\$299
URL	<a href="http://www.pentaximaging.com">www.pentaximaging.com</a>	<a href="http://www.olympusamerica.com">www.olympusamerica.com</a>

*this, choose the highest megapixel option the camera allows and also choose the finest detail (least compression—which for both of these cameras was a choice between 1 star, 2 stars, and 3 stars, with 3 stars being highest resolution). This is what we did for the photo tests.*

**Shutter Lag:** digital cameras are known for having shutter lag, and this can make the difference between whether you capture the picture of the dolphin surfacing, or just the splash of its tail. Shutter lag is the time it takes from when you press the shutter button until the camera figures out what settings to use (focus, shutter speed, flash or not, etc.) and then takes the picture. In full auto mode (where the camera figures everything out, which would be the mode with the longest shutter lag), the Pentax was significantly faster (shutter lag of about a half second versus almost a full second for the Olympus). Other modes also revealed the Pentax to be faster.

*Kayak photography tip—with point and shoot cameras, you can reduce the shutter lag by turning off the flash and pre-setting various settings (shutter speed, aperture, etc.), if you know what would work best for the conditions. Or try taking the picture in an Action/Sport mode setting, if your camera has one.*

**Video:** the Olympus has a very nice one touch video button to start/stop recording, greatly speeding up the time it takes to change between taking still photos and videos. But even

though both are rated at 720p (a high definition rating), the Pentax video resolution was better. The Olympus benefited from being able to take longer continuous videos, given its max file size of 4 gigabytes (versus Pentax's 2 gigabytes) and that its files were about 1/3 the size per minute.

**Shape and Form:** We liked the larger LCD screen on the Olympus, but saw good and bad about its automatic lens cover. The cover did protect the lens from water drops when the





*Pair of photos of Gregg Helton at a pool roll practice session (Pentax on left, Olympus on right). The Olympus chose to use a flash and shorter exposure time, where the Pentax opted for no flash and longer exposure.*

camera is powered off (and cover closed), but we were worried that it would jam if exposed to dirt or sand, which are likely in kayaking environments. We did not have any problems with this during our test.

The Pentax wouldn't have a risk of jamming because it doesn't have a lens cover. Instead the lens is coated with a vapor-deposition fluorine compound meant to repel dust, water and grease, but we still did have issues of water droplets forming on the lens.

**Kayak photography tip—water droplets on lenses are common problems with waterproof cameras. The best solution we have seen is to check for droplets before taking a picture, and if so, to dunk the camera underwater and then hold it so the lens is vertical (and drops can roll off).**

We preferred the Pentax's battery/memory card compartment cover, as it had an auto lock on it. If the compartment opens by accident in a wet environment, the camera would be ruined, so having the compartment automatically lock when shut provides added security.

Neither camera had a viewfinder, instead opting to use the LCD screen. But the LCD screens can be hard to read in the sunlight. The best suggestion to get around this is to take multiple pictures, each aimed slightly differently or with slightly different settings, and then delete the ones where you did not have aimed or set correctly.

Both cameras use removable, proprietary lithium-ion batteries. The Pentax comes with an external charger, where as the Olympus has to be connected to a USB to charge the battery. For long trips, many prefer cameras that use standard batteries (like AAs, which could be bought inexpensively anywhere), which neither of these two use. But of the two, the Pentax was slightly better in that you could

use the camera while recharging a spare battery (the Olympus could not be used while it is charging).

**Kayak photography tip—tie a 2 to 3 foot long line to the camera's wrist strap and connect that to one of the key attachment points built into most PFDs. These cameras don't float, so a leash will prevent you from losing it.**

**Software:** Both cameras use proprietary software to help you transfer files from the camera to your computer, and to perform minor edits. Neither stood out as anything very powerful or user-friendly, so we instead went back to transferring files using a memory card reader and using Google Picassa for our minor edits and file management.

**Final thoughts:** We did not review these cameras against a non-waterproof point and shoot camera, but the general agreement amongst photo buffs is that the non-waterproof versions take better pictures. But they can only take pictures in dry conditions, and that isn't the norm when kayaking. Putting one of these non-waterproof cameras into a specially made dry bag would be an option that may work. Or in some cases, specially made dry boxes can be obtained, but usually at a significant price.

Also, we have heard from *California Kayaker Magazine* readers that cameras, along with many other electronic items, seem to have a significant number of issues that require warranty returns. This seems especially true of electronics with waterproof ratings. It may be worth purchasing your electronics from a vendor that has a good return policy, just in case you get one of these lemons.

Both were good cameras, and the differences weren't enough for us to say to buy one and not the other. But we do recommend buying one so you have a camera on you during your paddles. ❖



# Yoga for Kayaking DVD

When you talk to advanced paddlers about how to improve at kayaking, something that often comes up is to increase flexibility through practicing yoga. So much so that yoga almost seems a requirement for anyone who does Greenland rolls.

I am an on-and-off (more off than on) practitioner of yoga. I see others who get a spiritual benefit out of it, but I mostly do it for the flexibility benefits that comes from the stretching.

I know that yoga is beneficial for me and wanted to get motivated to do it more. So when I heard about the *Yoga for Kayaking* DVD, I immediately picked up a copy to use as an impetus to practice more—and it worked. I started doing one or the other of the two routines in the DVD four or five days a week for a month.

What is yoga? Wikipedia says “In the West, the term ‘yoga’ is typically associated with Hatha Yoga and its asanas (postures) or as a form of exercise.” Practition-

ers run through a series of poses that involve pulling with some muscles while stretching other areas of your body.

The DVD focuses on working on areas that become tight in kayakers—your hips and shoulders. Anne Levesque is a long-time white water kayaker and yoga instructor. Joe Taft, also a white water kayaker, started yoga as a way to relieve some back issues he was having. He liked it so much he also became an instructor.

The DVD contains two major routines, and a couple of short side-bars (5 minute meditation, details on how to open your hips, and out-takes). The first routine is led by Anne, is about 30 minutes long, and focuses on seated postures. Anne says that it is “designed for beginners and it allows people to stretch and strengthen at a pace that is not intimidating.”

The second routine, which is lead by Joe, is about 45 minutes and contains standing postures. Anne describes this routine as being “for those who want a more vigorous workout. It also gives paddlers with more experience in yoga an opportunity to grow their practice.”

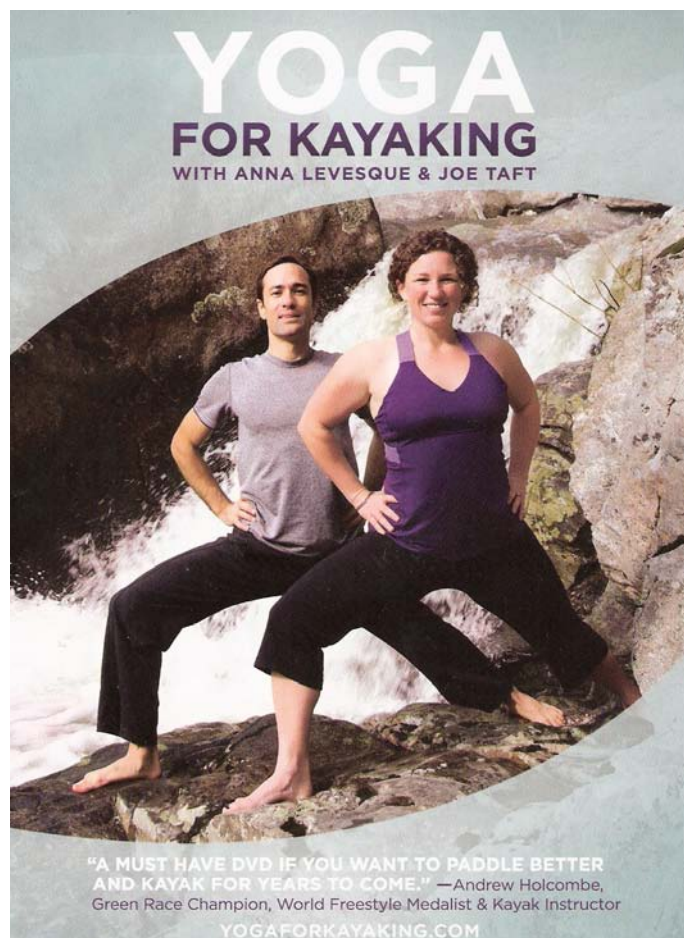
So, do the routines work? I own a boat that has never been very comfortable for me to sit in. In just a short while of sitting in it, my legs would fall asleep. But after two weeks of doing the routines, this sleepy-leg syndrome was greatly reduced. Of course, these routines won't make up for bad outfitting (see articles in Winter 2010 and Spring 2011 issues of *California Kayaker Magazine* on boat outfitting for tips), but they do seem to help with reducing problems due to tight muscles.

Truthfully, I suspected that the routines would work, as they use a variety of poses that are the same as my chiropractor had recommended to strengthen my lower back to help alleviate some issues I was having.

Overall, the film work, the locations, the soothing “yoga-like” background music, and the editing are all excellent.

But, I am not an expert, and figured it would be good to get the opinion of one. So I passed the video on to Mary Ann Furda, yoga instructor and owner of High Health Studio in Palo Alto, CA. She reviewed the video and reported:

“I found the physical environment on-camera to be lovely, particularly with Anna’s sequence, where the gentle lapping of the waves and the softness of the sand support her in guiding her audience into a sense of ease and releasing, creating space in the body. Her voice adds yet another layer of gentling into opening, with instructions that are clear and concise, so that



one could actually do the poses without looking at the screen. Her precautions, such as how to safely practice if the viewer is hypermobile, are excellent. Her choice of reclining poses are a good, rich blend of hip, thorax, and flank openers, excellent for kayakers after paddling to ease post-paddling stiffness, as well as to provide the opening over time that will allow for greater freedom in range of motions that can prevent injury and allow for better, more efficient paddling. This section of the tape could easily be done by anyone who'd never had a yoga class.

Joe's section presents more challenging poses and more challenges overall. He builds naturally on Anna's recommendation to pay attention to the breath, and to move with it, and his analogy to kayakers and their boats moving with the water I found most satisfying and apt.

I did find that even as the pose are more complex, the verbal directions are less clear, so that the viewer needs to look to the screen often to

understand what to do, which can be problematic when in a pose. Generally, the specifics of lower body positioning and action were presented in good detail. But little mention was made about positioning of head and neck, or spinal alignment and rotation in the standing poses. For a sport that so heavily relies on torso rotation it would have seemed natural to add such detail in the verbal directives for the poses. Fortunately, Anna's modeling of the poses fills in the blanks."

So, who would this DVD be good for? I agree with Mary Ann that the video would be good for both a beginner and also those who have practiced yoga for a while. For someone entirely new to yoga, this video may be good to work with in conjunction with classes or to take a few classes with a trained instructor first to get the basics.

The *Yoga for Kayaking* DVD has a suggested retail price of \$24.95 and can be purchased from [www.yogaforkayaking.com](http://www.yogaforkayaking.com) or at many kayak retailers. ❖

## WET EXIT

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