Coastbusters

The Cross Currents Newsletter for Mid-Atlantic Paddlers

May 2020

Incident Management: Not Always What You Think!

B Dawson

Hitting the Road

No way around it, I'm a road warrior. I love driving around this country, taking in the grandeur of our vast nation and meeting cool people. There's no better way to renew your faith in the good things of life than be there in person. So when my friend Laurie asked if I wanted to attend the 2019 Golden Gate Sea Kayak Symposium in San Francisco, I jumped at the chance to strap our kayaks on top of my intrepid 1992 partially-restored K-5 Blazer (with 320,000 miles on the odometer!), pack up some camping gear, and hit the road for a cross-country trek to the Symposium headquarters at Marin Headlands Hostel.

February weather in California might be balmy, but traversing the rest of the Continent meant careful planning for winter weather. My preference is to avoid managing incidents whenever possible so I decided I-81 south to I-40 would be a good choice with the option to drop further south to I-10 if snow threatened west of OKC. I would be camping in Memphis and Amarillo, getting a hotel in Flagstaff in case of bad weather, then camping in Visalia before making the final half-day drive to the Hostel, a total of 2,954 miles. I consider myself a pretty good planner - some might even say obsessive - but Murphy and his darn law was determined to chase me down anyway.

Nights were a lot colder than I anticipated and I was glad I had brought a small heater to stave off chattering teeth. The miles were measured by Amarillo (isn't this supposed to be oil country?!), painted-sky sunsets in New Mexico and very little traffic. An Arizona sunrise cast the shadow of the kayak bows on the road directly front of the Blazer, pointing the way west out of Flagstaff through a snow dusted landscape. Climbing the grade out of Needles, CA in the far left lane, ears popping at the 1000+ foot incline, the Golden Gate was only a day and a half away and life seemed good. That's when Murphy showed up.

Uh Oh

The Blazer's engine roared suddenly yet I was losing speed. Glancing at the gauges, the tach was revved to 4000 rpm and was threatening to redline. Reflexively, my foot came off the gas and the tach dropped to zero. What the heck?! Mind racing, I looked in the rear view mirror and saw an ominous cloud of blue smoke belching from the rear of the truck, confirming what I already suspected - the transmission was gone. With Jersey barriers to my left, there were two lanes between me and the safety of the right berm. I was rapidly losing forward momentum on the steep grade and made a near 90-degree turn across the highway. Then I remembered that semi I had just passed, climbing in the truck lane. Oh, crap! Checking the rear view mirror again, I saw the semi wisely backing off and moving left. He passed safely astern and I glided to a stop on the highway shoulder. OK, take a breath. Incident managed and I'm out of danger. But I'm also in the middle of nowhere, what next?

Plan B. Photo: B Dawson

Now What?

Thankfully, there was cell phone service so the University of Google was available for road side assistance. I could go back to Needles - closer but a much smaller city - or pay a king's ransom and find help in Barstow, almost 80 miles ahead. Deciding it was better to keep moving forward, I contacted a tow service in Barstow to take me to a great tranny repair shop. Things were looking good. The hour and a half ride went by quickly thanks to the young driver, a third-generation Barstowian, who regaled me with local railroad and farming history. Remember what I said about meeting cool people?

The transmission shop could do the repair but not in time to get me to the symposium. Simple fix: rent a car and Laurie and I would arrange to rent kayaks for the weekend. But Mr. Murphy doesn't do simple. Our kayaks couldn't stay on the Blazer during the repair; there was no room at the garage to store the kayaks; and it wasn't recommended to leave them outside – even locked! Oh my doG, this was getting complicated. Another incident to manage, thank you so very much Mr. Murphy.

I started calling car rental places. None had anything with a roof rack. It was 3pm. Things would be closing soon. The adrenaline was starting to build. Then a light bulb: Gosh darn it, I'd rent a U-Haul truck! Never in my most anal-retentive planning did I imagine I'd be driving a U-Haul, with kayaks and all our gear safely stowed in the back, up to San Francisco with its' hilly, twisty roads.

The Big Boy. Photo: B Dawson

The office assistant, Stacey, kindly drove me down to the U-Haul lot and - upon my return in the 20-foot beast of a truck - helped me transfer the kayaks and gear. More cool people. The worst possible thing had happened in the best possible place!

After an overnight in Barstow, the next morning dawned sunny and clear - but it couldn't alleviate my trepidation. The U-Haul was the largest thing I had ever driven, and even though the last 500 miles was mostly easy interstate driving, I was nervous.

How to handle this "incident"? Got it! Pretend I have really wide hips and a very large arse! Mood improved with slightly perverse humor, I headed north toward the Bay knowing in the back of my mind that I would need all the humor I could muster when navigating the hilly, curving roads of San Francisco.

Thankfully the symposium hostel had a large lower parking lot that suited my maneuvering skills perfectly. Check in was a preview of things to come. Of course I didn't know the license plate number, but said "it's the U-Haul". A long pause, the staff laughed and said "I think we'll know which vehicle is yours!".

Suspicious Vehicle Approaching

After a peaceful night at the hostel, it was off to the Oakland airport to pick up Laurie. I won't say it was an "incident" exactly, but you certainly get the attention of TSA when a twenty foot U-Haul cruises into the arrivals area! Maybe they thought there was a faint whiff of fertilizer in the air, I don't know, but heads swivelled, bodies stiffened, and hands went to their radios. The officers barely allowed Laurie time to jump into the cab before they were waving us to move on. "This is the most unique ride that's ever picked me up at an airport!" Laurie's chuckled.

The Symposium

Finally! Our gear was there, we were there, and The Golden Gate Sea Kayak Symposium was starting. A bucket list item for Laurie, we were so excited to meet new coaches from around the world and get our hulls wet in the legendary San Francisco Bay.

Based out of the Presidio Yacht Club in the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge, the GGSKS is only offered every two years and it's easy to understand why. The level of organization and scope of classes is astonishing. Class offerings included circumnavigations of Alcatraz and Angel Islands, and the expected rolling skills, but also Practical Navigation, Proficient Coastal Paddler skills, Practical Leadership, Girls Rock!, Boat Control Master Class and several coastal journeys.

Coaches included the well-known (and legendary) Bill Vonnegut of the Neptune's Rangers, Helen Wilson, Sean Morley, and a flotilla of others from the British Isles, Pacific Northwest and even Minnesota. The experience and skill set was jaw dropping and it would be easy to assume a lot of egos were in play. Not at all. Everyone was just a kayaker wanting to share knowledge and learn with equal enthusiasm.

GGSKS Photo: Greenlandorbust.org

Escape to Alcatraz

From day one however, Mr. Murphy was up to his tricks. My much anticipated Alcatraz and Angel Island circumnavigation, planned for Sunday, had to be blended into Friday's journey around Angel Island and Raccoon Strait because, as coach Sean Morley put it, we could GET to Alcatraz on Sunday but we wouldn't be getting BACK because of wind. So we paddled to Alcatraz, around the outside of Angel Island, keeping a close eye on the multiple ferries that run the same area, and then down Raccoon Strait for a little current play and tide race fun.

The author at Alcatraz. Photo: Sean Morley

Sharing the same water with ferries and tour boats keeps you on your toes. The mono-hulled 'Red and White' ferries produce substantial wakes while the 'Blue and White' are catamarans and don't. Sean confessed he would love to pay one of the Blue and White captains to drive straight at him so he could kayak between the hulls and pop out the back through the rooster tail. L5 Instructors are such strange creatures….

Having only seen Alcatraz in various movies, seeing it in person you are struck by the dramatically imposing, if slightly depressing, structure now inhabited by sea birds. From the infamous names once imprisoned there to the headline grabbing escape in 1962, to the Native American occupation in 1969, the history is complex and fascinating. Our trip leaders were positive that the inmates who escaped in 1962 using a raft constructed from rubber rain coats could very well have survived with good knowledge of the tides and currents.

A Lucky (for them) Rescue

During Saturday's Practical Navigation class with Nick Cunliffe, we had so much fun we stayed out on the water late. The symposium's safety boat cruised by just to check up on us, radioing back to base that in fact we were still on the water.

It was lucky the safety boat was in the area because a couple in a tandem sit-on-top got stuck out on the bay due to the wind. A well-intentioned sailboat tried to help by towing them, but succeeded only in capsizing the kayak. While our group wasn't involved in the rescue, it was interesting to hear the radio conversations between the Symposium's safety boats as they worked out how to handle the incident, especially since the couple wasn't dressed for immersion in the 45° water of the bay.

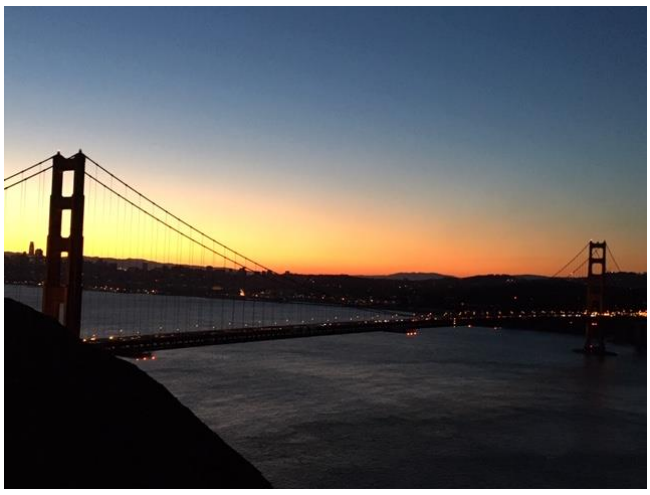
Gale Force Winds Scramble Things

The last day came much too quickly but roared in like a lion. We had been dealing with wind every day, but Sunday brought a small craft advisory and every class had to rework their agenda. Laurie and I, being well-schooled East Coast kayakers had anticipated the 30 kt gusts and already changed to the Boat Control Master Class with Bill Vonnegut.

We never even made it out of the harbor. One guy almost didn't even make it *on to* the water.

I had just tucked my kayak into a protected nook on the boat ramp when I saw a kayak fly into the air and down into the water. Helping the gentleman recover his kayak, I learned that he had placed his NDK against a knee-high wall thinking it would be secure while he fetched something from his car. The wind picked up the 'yak, rolled it over the low wall, and dropped it down 10 feet to the water. I'm not sure which image was more dramatic - that kayak soaring in mid-air or the guy leaping over the wall and into the water to retrieve it.

Yes, Mr. Murphy was in rare form. Our day ended early and dramatically with the US Coast Guard chasing everyone off the water when gale warnings were posted. They wouldn't even let us stay on water in the harbor.



Sunrise. Photo: Laurie Collins

I had hoped Laurie and I would be able to catch rides with other participants to avoid driving the U-Haul down narrow twisty roads to the Yacht Club each day. Turns out sometimes the fix for an incident works in your favor! The cavernous cargo bay served Laurie and I as a private dressing room, gear storage, a place to hang our drysuits and was a superb shelter from the windy conditions that would shape the Symposium. We had to tell the story over and over again as curiosity got the best of folks. People suggested things like 'charge a fee to change out of the wind' or 'host a party'. The high anxiety and drama of a few days ago produced a weekend long stream of laughter and fun with new friends.

We often talk about incident management from a watery point of view, but those skills are universal. Training your mind to think calmly and logically in the moment of crisis and planning ahead so there's breathing room to handle unexpected events, even finding creative solutions for incidents works on land or sea. Those skills could even make you famous. Laurie and I are now legends, at least on the West Coast; we will be forever remembered as "the ones with the U-Haul!"

Wind protection, dressing room, boat and equipment storage and transport, potential party spot. Photo: Laurie Collins

Letters to the Editor:
Incident at Ft. George Inlet

Ed. Note: The March issue of Coastbusters included an article ("Incident at Ft. George Inlet") that described a circumnavigation of Little Talbot Island in Florida in conditions that included 25 – 35 knot winds and an ebbing tide in the inlet. The group of three paddlers ran into serious trouble, but – thanks to their previous training - were able to get themselves out of it. The article generated a lot of feedback.

Editor:

Regarding the incident at Ft. George Inlet article: as an Advanced Open Water kayak instructor (L-5), the author of my own incident article resulting from poor decision making, and an experienced sailor, I think the title of this article should be "Don't Do What We Did." With offshore winds at 25, gusting to 35, and an ebbing tide, the smart decision is not to paddle. These conditions are exactly why beach days are built into expeditions - you just don't go out unless there's an urgent, real-world need that overwhelms safety considerations. In this case, the group achieved the circumnavigation goal but the paddlers put themselves, and potentially others, in life-threatening harms' way for no good reason. I've kept a group of highly skilled L-5 instructors and instructor candidates on the beach in very similar conditions, and they *paid* to be there. While stories like this are exciting reads, it appears this was one bad wave away from being a Coast Guard search and rescue, or an obituary.

Tom Noffsinger
ACA L-5 Instructor

Editor:

This is a great article with a lot of good take-aways for the leader planning to execute a trip never attempted before. Also, I think the group handled the conditions well and did a lot of things right. I think there was a time during the planning and another just at launch that the author felt uncomfortable with the situation. I have heard this referred to as one's "Spidy sense". (Generally used to refer to a vague but strong sense of something being wrong, dangerous or suspicious). I think too often we recognize this Spidy sense but choose to ignore it and push ahead with our plan, mainly because it is our plan. We should know when to pull the plug when things don't feel right. We should always have a plan B and even plan C if things don't feel right at or before launch on our plan A. This will provide options for the day's paddle that will help accommodate the different level of paddlers in the group and hopefully everyone will have a comfort level with the final plan decision.

Larry Meisner
BC Sea Leader

Editor:

I'll echo Kendra's emphasis on training and would urge all paddlers to be aware that their own formal training has likely been limited to the venues prescribed for that level of certification. Until you know more, I would recommend that you stick to them or at least stack the deck in your favor such that any mishaps float or are blown home rather than out to sea This appears to have been a case of L-3 paddlers venturing into conditions that any L-5 trained paddler would have known to avoid. The proportional focus devoted to decision making and on reading conditions (wind, water, waves, geography) increases at each level of training/certification. To get more exposure to the concepts that will help you make better decisions, I would urge everyone to attend upper level trainings. You don't have to be an L-5 paddler to attend as a practice student or auditing participant.

Dale Williams
ACA L-5 ITE

Editor:

What a compelling story. Thankfully it had a good ending. Great job to all three of the folks that saved themselves. They saw what they needed to do and without panic they did it.

Perhaps the hardest thing that we do as paddlers is to change the plan. It is a very difficult decision that can be broken down into smaller pieces. (*con't)*

First, does everyone in the group have the skills to paddle in those conditions? This is not just a question of personal skills. It includes gear, boats, personal experience, knowledge of each other's skills. From the description in the story the group did a good job of evaluating that decision.

Second, do we have the skills as a group to sort out any problem? Can we save ourselves; can we save others? Two swimmers in a group of three would indicate that rescue skills may not have been up to the conditions.

Third, if an incident happens and all rescue efforts fail where will the wind and current take us? Will we be pushed to the beach or to open water with bigger conditions? With an offshore wind conditions are often much bigger. Swimmers in the water separated from their boats with an ebbing current and strong off shore winds are a combination for disaster. This trip was a no go.

I would question at this point what kind of training do we receive in order to make these types of decisions? With the remit of L4 and L5, training for leading a group in difficult conditions really does not start until the upper levels of our skills. We need to learn early on about recognizing hazards and how to deal with them.

Learning skills at the L2 and L3 level are great but an early focus on awareness of the environment and sound judgement deserve more attention than we presently give it.

Another issue is when instructors are selecting a venue for a class, we want the perfect classroom. This selection limits the hazard exposure to the students. If the current is going the wrong way, we select another weekend. If we arrive at the launch and the wind is not to our liking, we head to the sound side to work on personal skills. Can't argue with the choice for safety, but we are limiting our student's exposure to hazards that they may face on trips of their own. Perhaps our courses should push the envelope on the setting for our classes, and include some time learning how to deal with adverse or higher-level conditions.

We are all very fortunate to enjoy a life-threatening sport. But we as leaders in our community (and we are all leaders) should make certain that all of our students are prepared to make those change of plans decisions.

James Kesterson
ACA L5 Instructor

In This Issue

***Incident Management: Not Always What You Think* – B Dawson …… …… 1**

***Letters to the Editor* …… …….. 6**

***Winter In Norway: Photo Essay* – Ted Gormley …… 8**

***Rudders, Skegs and the Pursuit of Paddling Efficiency* – Paul Caffyn …… 16**

Upcoming Events …… 21

Photos of the Month …… 22

***Review of NDK's Rotomolded Sport and Sportive* – Randi Kruger …….. 25**

***UMBLES and SHRIMP: Assessing and Treating Hypothermia* – Rick Wiebush …… 28**

Winter in Norway: Photo Essay

Ted Gormley

This isn't an article about sea kayaking per se, but it is a glimpse into a place I will probably revisit in the future with a paddle in my hand.

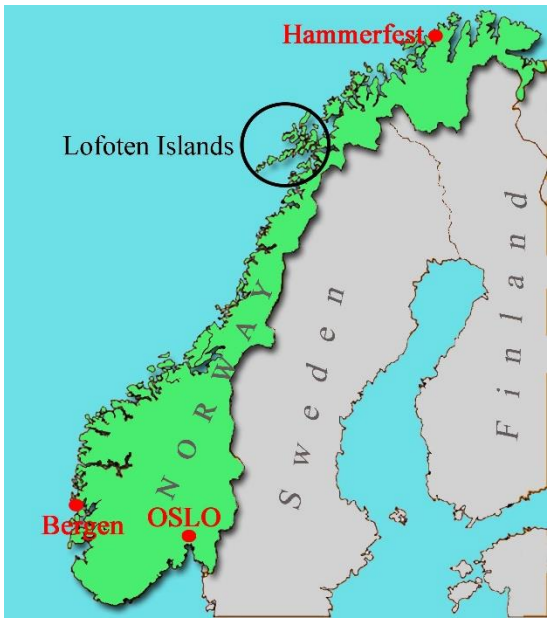
Lofoten, Norway is an archipelago halfway up the long coast of the country. It is above the arctic circle, approximately 1500 miles from the North Pole. It is a place of dramatic mountain peaks rising directly out of the sea, with large, sheltered bays amidst the open ocean. People have lived here for over 10,000 years, and the area is home and breeding ground for an impressive array of wildlife.

In the winter the Islands are usually right in the most active areas of the Auroral Oval, producing some of the most impressive displays of the Northern Lights. Due to the Gulf Stream and Atlantic Current, Lofoten has one of the warmest climates above the arctic circle. It is not uncommon to have above freezing temps most of the winter, and the water can reach the low 60's in the summer.

Lofoten is also where most of Europe and many parts of Asia get their codfish. All over the landscape, fish are hung on huge racks to dry in the open air all winter.

This past February, Medelin, I, and a group of friends went on a photography tour of the islands. The fabled winter weather was NOT on our side. Most of the week we were there was spent in freezing temperatures, leaning into constant 30-40mph winds to hold our tripods steady, and trying to see any bit of the Aurora Borealis through the clouds. Fortunately, this type of thing is right up my alley, and I did get some good shots.

The photos that follow are my artistic take on the place.



Medelin at Haukland Beach, wearing crampons! (All photos by Ted Gormley, except where noted)

After over 24 hours of travel, we landed in Evanes at 22:00. On our drive to Napp, to the houses we were staying at for the first part of our trip, we just pulled over to the side of the road to shoot the Aurora. We had to shoot it every chance we got, as the weather for the upcoming week wasn't ideal. The green in the images is the Aurora. In some places you can see it fade to purple at higher altitude.

Vik Beach in Lofoten. While shooting the cemetery above the beach I kept an eye on the horizon, since I could see the sun about to poke through. Sure enough, just as we were leaving, I ran down to the sand and took this image before it clouded up again. This beach and mountains are the view you see from the cemetery above.

Uttakliev Beach- We came here to shoot the sunrise, but the weather didn't cooperate, which would prove to be the norm. However, the sun did rise and roll along the horizon for a bit behind the mountains, giving us some dramatic light.

Unstad Beach- Billed as the world's most northern Arctic surf resort! The water is actually this color. The rocks you see in this picture are the size of people. When we were here they were filming an extreme surf documentary, and surfers were being towed out by wave runners. The wind was blowing about 40mph.

The three-mile road between Hamnøy and Reine proper is some of the most breath-taking scenery I've ever come across. This is a three story cod drying rack next to a restaurant that made cod burgers topped with the best aioli I've ever had.

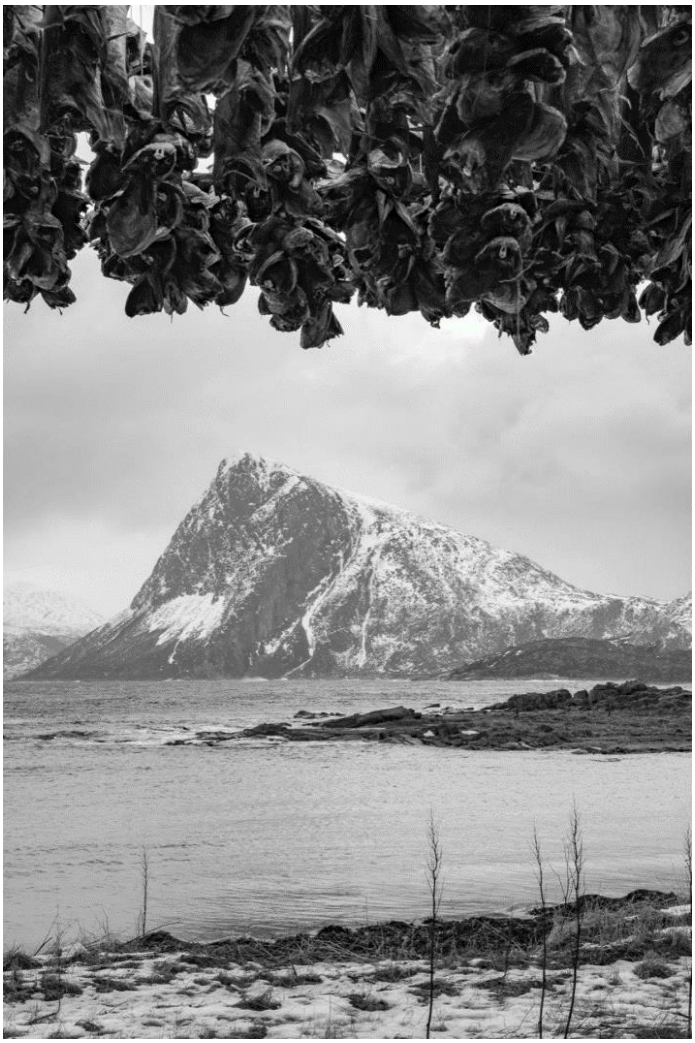
Our house in Napp had a great view, but it was obscured much of the time by rain, snow, and fog. I did manage to keep the tripod steady for a few shots. The weather gave many of the images a moody, vintage atmosphere.

Sea kayaks! Short ones, but still kayaks!

The view in front of our house in Hamnøy. It changed by the minute.

We removed the wheelbarrow because we thought it would make a better picture without it; it turns out it looks more interesting with it in the shot. Or should I say we stood there and watched Medelin run back and forth with it in the rain while we decided ….

The road above Reine



Fish heads drying in the wind

I wasn’t wearing my crampons, so the gusts made standing up here a dangerous feat. (Photo: Medelin Nolasco).

Rudders, Skegs and the Pursuit of Paddling Efficiency

Paul Caffyn

After writing this, I mulled over why, back in 1977 when I first started serious sea kayaking, I was so prejudiced against rudders. Especially since the very first kayak I ever paddled as a nine-year-old school kid was a fibreglass K1 with an under-slung rudder. A small team of teenage paddlers with a local canoe club was training for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic games and they encouraged us kids to try a change from our very stable Canadian canoes to the exceedingly tippy K1s. Entertainment value was high with frequent capsizes till we got the hang of staying upright, paddling and steering all at the same time. Then within a few months, we were surfing the wake from a big ferry, and effortlessly using the T-bar rudder control for staying on course.

I think two factors shaped my opinions in late 1977. The fibreglass sea kayaks first built in New Zealand were not kitted with rudders and the only sea kayak manual then available carried a rather strong anti-rudder bias.

Rudders on British kayaks had been standard kit since the late 1800s after John Macgregor had his *Rob Roy* kayak built. Rudders on touring European fabric and wooden kayaks up to the 1970s were stern mounted, with 'drop down blades', that is gravity only (the weight of the blade) holding them in place. There was no mechanism to retract a rudder blade onto the kayak deck.

In the late 70s, British author Derek Hutchinson was regarded as a guru for sea kayaking, perhaps as his 1976 manual was the only dedicated sea kayaking book in print. Derek was not a fan of rudders: they got in the way of deep water rescues; seal landings and seal launching were made very difficult; towing was almost impossible and he reckoned they broke or bent at bad times. This led to a strong 'thou shall not paddle with a rudder' influence not only in Britain but also in Australia, New Zealand, and North America. Derek claimed his designs were based on Eskimo kayaks and did not require rudders. Which was perhaps true on flat, tranquil waters but for those of us who paddled his boats in windy conditions, it was absolute bollocks.

Enough of the mulling. How did I begin to shed my prejudice against using a rudder? During our very first sea kayak expedition around Fiordland (the southwestern tip of New Zealand), during the summer of 1977/78, Max Reynolds and I were paddling Nordkapp kayaks, a British design based on the shape of a West Greenland seal hunting kayak. The mould, imported into New Zealand by Grahame Sisson in 1977, was an HS model, which had a modest amount of rocker. This was fine for turning on calm water but caused a few issues in following or quartering seas, when the stern wanted to turn upwind. Particularly when surfing in front of following seas, it was difficult to maintain long surfing rides; desperate rudder strokes were never enough to keep the bow at 90˚ to a breaking wave.

<u>Experimenting with Skegs</u>

With that in mind, and with both of us fully aware that Fiordland has the highest number of gale days in New Zealand, we leaned on Grahame Sisson to design a stern-mounted, retractable skeg that would mitigate that trait of broaching off course in following seas. To avoid cutting off the stern horn of the Nordkapp, Grahame designed a 'shoe' or triangular shaped fibreglass sleeve that slid over the kayak stern. The skeg blade, barely the size of a cigarette packet, was rotated into a vertical position once in deep water by the other paddler. When retracted, it lay above the keel line and thus damage to the blade was avoided when landing on gravel beaches. (See photo, next page.)

If there was ever a place to 'road test' a skeg set-up, it was Fiordland. During a very long run one afternoon, we only managed to raft up the kayaks once, to pump out water from breaking seas sneaking through our spray-skirts into the cockpits.

The triangular section retractable skeg used for our Fiordland expedition.

Our kayaks were running virtually out of control in front of 25+ knot winds and breaking following seas. The deployed retractable skeg blades were of little use as they were out of the water much of the time. Much longer skeg blades would have helped.

For the rest of the South Island paddle I tried out a bigger skeg blade, more of a shark-fin shape, that I could pull into place once clear of a beach. The top of the triangular 'sleeve' had a small fibreglass loop, from which I had a cord to pull it into place when seated in the cockpit, and a short length of bungee cord to the stern horn of the kayak – this was for when I needed to release the skeg (knock it out of position with the paddle) for a surf landing.

That solo paddler retractable skeg did help with steadying the Nordkapp's track in following or quartering seas but this was quite frustrating at time, particularly when the skeg was in place and I was trying to turn the kayak.

The skeg in position when paddling; the shock cord stretched tight to the stern horn of the kayak

1980: Around Britain

For the paddle around England, Scotland and Wales with Nigel Denis, Frank Goodman - who had developed the lines of the Nordkapp from a West Greenland hard-chined seal hunting kayak - loaned me an HM model, or hull modified. To counter the HS model's tendency to run off course in following or quartering seas, Frank had extended the keel line to almost under the kayak's stern horn, thus significantly reducing the boat's rocker. It was thus slower to turn on flat water, but tracked better than the HS model in following or quartering seas.

The HM Nordkapp stern, showing the keel line extended to almost under the stern horn

This HM stern configuration aided the kayak tracking in light to moderate winds and light swell, even with a wind 'up your chuff' or quartering from the stern. "*But, on a medium to heavy swell or a decent chop when the stern was out of the sea over half the time, it was useless*." Despite my negative diary note, the HM stern seemed to help with boosting our average mileage achieved on paddling days to 33 mpd (miles per day). For the whole circumnavigation, the all-up daily average for 85 days, including the 17 rest and weather-bound days, was 26 mpd.

1982: Around Australia and the Switch to a Rudder

When building the Kevlar Nordkapps for the Australia circumnavigation, the mould Grahame Sisson used was the HS model. Since I was convinced that the HM stern was superior to my old retractable skeg set-up, Graham added a thin strip of laminated fibreglass under the stern horn to emulate the HM stern model. Straight line tracking was great but turning, unless on top of a wave crest, was rather tedious and slow.

A quick moving 30 knot southerly front created gnarly breaking seas near Victoria. The added strip of fibreglass is visible at the stern of my yellow Nordkapp

Escaping from these breaking seas (above) into the lee of an island, the sea flattened off but the wind maintained its strength. No matter how much we either forward or back-paddled, we were unable to turn the kayaks up wind. We had no option but to run north in front of the wind for a sheltered lee landing.

The loss of rocker with that extended keel HM stern was not only a serious hindrance in this situation, it would be far worse when I was paddling solo. So I hacksawed off that added strip of fibreglass when I reached Sydney and went back to using the retractable skeg system I had used for the New Zealand circumnavigations.

After crossing the border into Queensland, I forgot to release the shark-fin skeg from under the stern and snapped the blade off when surfing to shore one day. Ever since leaving Sydney, I had been mulling over the idea of adopting what I had seen in December 1981 during a visit to Hobart, where I was shown fibreglass over-stern rudders that the Tasmanian paddlers had designed and built. Their deep draft fibreglass rudders could retract 270˚ from when deployed, to lying horizontally on the stern deck for landing and launching.

The following is from chapter 4 of my book about the circumnavigation, *The Dreamtime Voyage:*

Since the skeg was broken, I telephoned Tony Turbett to ask his advice about rudder design and construction. Tony said he would help and asked Lesley and I out to Shorncliff to utilize the facilities of his father's backyard workshop. Stacked alongside and underneath the house was a great Tony was a firm advocate of using rudders on sea kayaks. He'd undertaken many long committing trips, both alone and with his father Tub, on the north coast of Queensland. A near disaster during one of his solo trips, along a 32-mile-long surf beach between Noosa Heads and Double Island Point, fair put the wind up me. Tony had landed for the night, but overnight the surf lifted. No matter how hard he tried, he could not affect a breakout through the surf. He tried for several days but ended up with heavy dumpers smashing his boat during a final attempt.

Tony's rudder blades, constructed of wood, could only be retracted clear of keel line. For landing and launching on surf beaches, I needed a rudder that would fully retract onto the aft deck. The Tasmanian kayakers used such a system but I was not fussed with their fibreglass blades and rudder assemblies. I figured aluminium would provide not only a sturdy assembly but also a blade that would tolerate bending without breaking. One problem was that I did not want to remove the stern horn of the Nordkapp. I was still uncertain how efficient a rudder would be and hence required a system that could be removed if I didn't like it.

Tony had a brilliant knack for improvisation and the solution was rather simple. We moulded a fibreglass 'shoe' or sleeve, 12 inches long, which would slip over the stern. The deck lines would hold it firmly in place. Below the horn, the shoe dropped vertically for eight inches with sufficient thickness of fibreglass to hold a stainless steel hinge, to which we would attach the rudder assembly.

Using scrap pieces of aluminium sheet, we fabricated two sheaves for a rudder assembly and a long slim blade which would project 12 inches below the keel line. The key to retracting the rudder onto the deck was a wheel, grooved to take a cord, which I hacksawed and ground into shape from a sheet of plastic. This was attached to the blade with glue and recessed screws, one of which locked a long length of cord in position. By running the cord along the deck to the cockpit, I could then pull down or retract the rudder. For steering, I made two foot pedals, similar to the system used on a surf ski, which I mounted on a 'T' shaped bracket. On the cockpit floor, I fibreglassed two short bolts into position, so I could adjust the position of the bracket for optimum leg comfort.

The final product looked quite professional. Stainless steel steering cables and short rabbit's ears on deck to hold the blade in position when retracted.

Well, my purist mind-set about not using a rudder disappeared the first afternoon back on the water, with the first long surfing run north of Brisbane. I could not believe how it made my paddling and surfing so **much** more efficient! The rudder stayed in place for the rest of the trip.

The rudder also saved my life on several occasions, the most crucial being the overnighter along the 250-foot-high Baxter Cliffs in Western Australia when I was caught by a savage, quick-moving cold front. When I limped into Twilight Cove at the end of that 106-mile overnight drama, my knees and heels were rubbed bare of skin down to the exposed blood vessels, such was the battle to steer clear of being smashed into the vertical cliffs.

The round Aussie statistics speak for themselves in showing the benefit gained from the addition of a rudder:

- Melbourne to Sydney: HM stern– 30.6 mpd
- Sydney to Brisbane: skeg – 34.3 mpd
- Brisbane to Cape York: rudder – 39.2 mpd

Not quite an additional 10 miles per day, but near enough!

Construction of the aluminium over-stern rudder assembly in Brisbane. The rudder is attached by a stainless steel hinge glassed into a fibreglass 'shoe or sleeve' that allowed the stern horn of the Nordkapp to remain intact – but I could remove the whole lot if I didn't like the rudder!

<u>1985: Around Japan</u>

When it came time to build a really lightweight kayak for the Japan trip, many of the lessons learned from the Aussie trip came into play.

To maximize dry stowage and minimize the amount of water entering the cockpit during an out-of-boat disaster, Grahame Sisson turned the former slung seat into a bulkhead seat, thus creating a third dry storage compartment accessible from the cockpit via a deck hatch immediately aft of the cockpit. Adamant that I now was no longer concerned with the aesthetics of the Nordkapp stern, and that I wanted a rudder as an integral part of the kayak, we cut the stern horn of the Nordkapp off

The rudder blade in its retracted position on deck.

and bogged one half of a stainless steel hinge into the slightly truncated hull.

Was it worth it? You betcha it was! The statistics speak for themselves: 118 days around the four main islands of Japan – 34.1 mpd. Then for Hokkaido, a distance of 1,191 miles, my all-up average was 41 mpd.

Yes, I had a Lesley Hadley on shore as support crew, and the bare boat weighed only 29 pounds, but if there was ever absolute proof of a minimalist weight philosophy along with a deep draft rudder, the Japan trip was it. Being able to achieve 60 mile days, day after day, was the proof.

Alaska and Beyond

For the paddle around Alaska and subsequent trips, including four summers on the east and west coasts of Greenland, around New Caledonia, Malaya to Thailand, and down the Antarctic Peninsula, I have deployed the rudder every time after launching. On the south side of the Alaska Peninsula, the deep draft rudder saved my bacon twice in onshore gale-force winds. It was an absolute boon with the intricate Arctic ice navigation and allowed me to drift really close to photograph two big coastal brown bears.

Fixed Skegs

These are the ones with a slider bar by the cockpit raising or lowering a small-hinged blade from under a slot under the stern. I did give a skeg-equipped kayak a serious try during two multi-day trips in the archipelagos on the west and east coasts of Sweden. The 'vind' blew like buggery, day in, day out, and although there was never a serious ground swell, the white-capping chop was relentless and - whether or not it was my inexperience with the skeg - I remember it as days of frustrating torture and swearing a lot.

Another crystal-clear memory of an issue with skegs, was doing hull repairs to the boat Freya Hoffmeister used going around the South Island of New Zealand. With too many launchings and stones jamming the skeg blade in its slot, she had to string a light cord from the skeg to the cockpit to mitigate this issue!

The system Freya used to ensure her skeg would deploy after launching on a West Coast gravel beach

Do You Need a Boat with a Rudder?

Depends a bit. If you are going to paddle tranquil waters with bugger all wind and no need for rapid manoeuvring, then perhaps not.

Contrary to the notion of a rudder being, as some have argued: *"not for steering, but to trim. Sea kayaks are steered with the paddle, like all kayaks and canoes";* I do use my rudder for steering. My paddle is solely used for forward propulsion. Without an effective rudder, the paddle is necessary for corrective steering strokes, either sweep or paddling on one side, and forward propulsion suffers. The normal paddling cycle is upset with power into the water efficiency.

To Conclude

When I read the list below of situations where, for me, a rudder has been vital, I realize that they do not apply to the majority of paddlers, pretty much only the really serious and committed expedition paddler:
-

- manoeuvring in congested sea ice or iceberg-choked seas
- ferry gliding across channels with fast tidal streams
- coping with boils and eddies in overfalls
- steering when the wind is too strong for paddling
- fast manoeuvring in congested shipping lanes
- hugging a reef fringed coast when paddling into a strong tidal stream flow
- surfing in front of following seas
- paddling when the wind is blowing from any direction

If you want to paddle more efficiently, and impart your energy only into forward paddling strokes, and not use corrective strokes on one side to stay on course, then go for a kayak with a decent rudder.

Irrespective of conditions, if you are a scrawny stripling (a bit like myself back in the 80s) or a slim lass with a low weight to power ratio, a decent rudder can be your secret weapon in keeping up paddling with the alpha males who wear coloured tights, do resistance gym training to impress the girls (or boys), and have massive weight to power ratios.

For me, it was a long haul, and about a squillion paddle strokes, that took me from that initial staunch British 'thou shalt not use a rudder mentality' of the late 70s to now deploying my rudder every time I launch, be it the tranquil waters of a local lake or blustery 'photographing' cold conditions on the Antarctic Peninsula.

What tickles my fancy most is, despite the fact it was the British government that used Tasmania as a dumping ground for their excess bread-stealing prisoner population in the late 1800s, it was two Tasmanian blokes in the 1970s who first developed the first fully retractable over-stern rudder. That stroke of genius had given me so much pleasure with my paddling over the past 44 years.

Upcoming Events

Dates	Event	Location	Sponsor	Website/Contact
5/1 – 5/3	Oceans 20 CANCELLED	Carolina Beach, NC	Chris Rezac	chrisrezac.wixsite.com/kayakoceans
6/19 – 6/22	Adirondack Paddling Symposium	Old Forge, NY	Mountainman Outdoor Supply	Adkpaddlingsymposium.com
7/15 – 7/19	Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium	Grand Marais, MI	The Power of Water	greatlakesseakayaksymposium.net/
9/23 – 9/24	ACA L3 Trip Leader Training/Assessment	Cape Charles, VA	Cross Currents	Crosscurrentsseakayaking.com
9/25 – 9/27	Kiptopeke Sea Kayaking Symposium	Cape Charles, VA	Cross Currents	Crosscurrentsseakayaking.com

Note: check with the organizers re the status of these events!

Photos of the Month

Hurricane: Gulf of Mexico

Photo: U.S. Coast Guard

Photos of the Month

Cape May

Photo: Sid Stone

Photos of the Month

Hey Y'all: Watch This!

Photo: Bill Vonnegut

NDK's Rotomolded Sport and Sportive

Randi Kruger

Inevitably, in every paddler's life, there will come a time when a plastic boat is a useful tool. Whether for rock gardening, river running, or just banging around with students, plastic has endured as a trusted material from which to craft a kayak. Nigel Dennis added rotomolded boats to the NDK line with the introduction of the Romany Surf RM, about a dozen years ago.

The Romany Surf RM was born directly from the unrivalled Romany Surf. Its name has had several re-writes though, and is now labelled the NDK Sport. In catalogues it is still listed as the Romany Sport RM. I refer to this boat as the Sport, and will throughout this article.

The Sport is directly related to the Surf. It has the same knee bumps, length and similar rocker. I will compare the two directly. Paddlers who enjoy the Surf will find the Sport cockpit opening narrower and shorter. Once inside though, many find it just as roomy, if not a tad roomier. It has moderately defined chine, perhaps a bit more than the Surf. The Sport will easily carry paddlers from 180 to 230 pounds, similar to the Surf. It behaves nicely loaded with some gear, even with a top weight paddler. It also accommodates the paddler with larger feet, also quite like the Surf.

NDK Sport Photo: R. Kruger

The Sport offers the advantage of a composite coaming, rather than rotomold, and the seat is the same composite Performance seat found in most of NDK's line. The single layer rotomold construction is durable and surprisingly stiff, allowing for crisp control and acceleration.

In 2018 NDK introduced the smaller version of the boat, the Sportive. It offers all the same features and advantages of the Sport, but in a smaller package.

Sportive logo. Photo: R. Kruger

Both the Sport and the Sportive were designed for rock gardening and coastal play. They both handle easily, taking input and responding quickly. They have defined rocker, making them easy to turn, and offer capable handling in surf. They are both solid performers in waves, making them a favorite for wave play. They were designed with smaller cockpit openings than most other NDKs, something like a 1.2 cockpit on the "Seals" scale. The smaller cockpit is ideal for those wishing to drop pour overs and ledges, making skirt implosion less likely.

The Sportive is the petite version of the Sport. It is designed for the slighter, shorter paddler. Where the Sport is 16 feet 4 inches in length, the Sportive is 15 feet 7 inches. The deck height drops from 11.5 inches at the front of the cockpit to 11 inches on the Sportive.

Green Sport and Pink Sportive. Photo: R. Kruger

The Sportive is certainly smaller inside as well. The real tell on deck height, however, is in the foot room category. For example, my women's size 9 (US) feet in booties barely fit in the boat with the foot pegs placed near the end of the peg tracks.

There are subtle differences between the two boats. As you can see from the above pic, the Sportive has a tad less rocker than the Sport. Its chine is defined, and yet also has a more defined keel line bow to stern. The amount of volume lost in downsizing to the Sportive is noticeable. It behaves best with the sub-170-pound paddler, and only a light load of gear. The cockpit opening is even smaller on the Sportive.

The overall up side of both models: performance, durability, quality, stiffness.

The downside: they don't fit every paddler. They are not lighter than the comparable composite boat in the NDK line. The smaller cockpit opening, ideal for dropping pour overs, means paddlers with less mobility will struggle to enter and exit gracefully. Paddlers have noted they are not as "fast" as composite boats when touring, although they accelerate well. This is not the boat to grind out a twenty-mile trip with a bunch of 17-foot composite boats. It is not a touring boat, and does not shine in flat water.

Left Sport, right Sportive. Photo: R. Kruger

Where these boats do shine is doing the kinds of things we don't want to do in our beautiful composite boats. While not indestructible, they are certainly sturdier and less prone to the kinds of damage that plague composite boats when used in rocks, and with students. Because they offer nearly the same performance as a composite NDK, there isn't much of a down side to paddling them in appropriate conditions.

Rob and I use the Sport and Sportive constantly. They have become our preferred boats for travelling and teaching. I personally love running Class 2 & 3 white water in my Sportive. I enjoy paddling the Sport just as much as the Sportive, and will add a Sport to my quiver soon.

Like me, Dawn Stewart owns a Sportive and has run some white water in it. Dale Williams uses Sports in his livery for visiting instructors, and uses one himself when traveling. Jeff Atkins has used one but finds it a tad tight.

Dawn dropping into a pourover in her Sportive. Photo: Nantahala Outdoor Center.

If I haven't convinced you to look at these models before you buy your next plastic boat, you probably aren't going to need what this boat has to offer. If you do need this kind of performance and durability, I'd advise you to give it a long hard look. Or borrow one of mine and see for yourself!

Until next time when I cover the Explorer family, if we can't meet on the water, stay safe and be well.

Tide race on Long Island. Orange Sportive, Green Sport. Photo: R. Kruger

UMBLES and SHRIMP: Basic Assessment and Treatment of Hypothermia

Rick Wiebush

It was 85 degrees and sunny as our group of 12 paddled along the coast of Cayo Costa is Florida's Gulf of Mexico. Everyone was happily paddling and chatting their way along the wide, white sand beaches studded with palm trees. It couldn't get any better, especially when everyone else from up north was freezing their butts off.

But it could get worse. And it did. Quickly.

Traveling along the north end of the island, threatening black skies quickly rolled up on us from behind, seemingly out of nowhere. Then it started: thunder rumbling and lightning flashing in the distance. Reacting quickly, we pulled up on a small beach and got out. But within five minutes the skies opened up, the drenching rain poured down, the winds kicked up to about 15 knots, and the temperature dropped 15 – 20 degrees.

Everyone was soaked to the skin, chilled. The wind exacerbated the situation as it whipped across our shorts-and polypro – top wearing selves and sucked the heat right out of us. Picking our way through the scrub and getting under a bunch of palm trees did little good. Within 10 minutes, everyone was shivering and within 20 most were shivering uncontrollably. We huddled closely together and that helped somewhat. But one guy was particularly affected, and was basically mumbling when he tried to speak. We huddled around him and gave him the two ponchos that were available, but it clearly was an extremely problematic situation. Fortunately, the whole thing lasted for only about a half hour, followed by the return of the sun, the stilling of the wind, and dramatically rising temperature. We lucked out. Only one of us was undoubtedly hypothermic, but the rest were right on the verge if not actually into it. Thankfully - due to the brevity of the heat-sucking conditions – the situation did not have time to develop into something much more serious for the entire group.

How It Happens

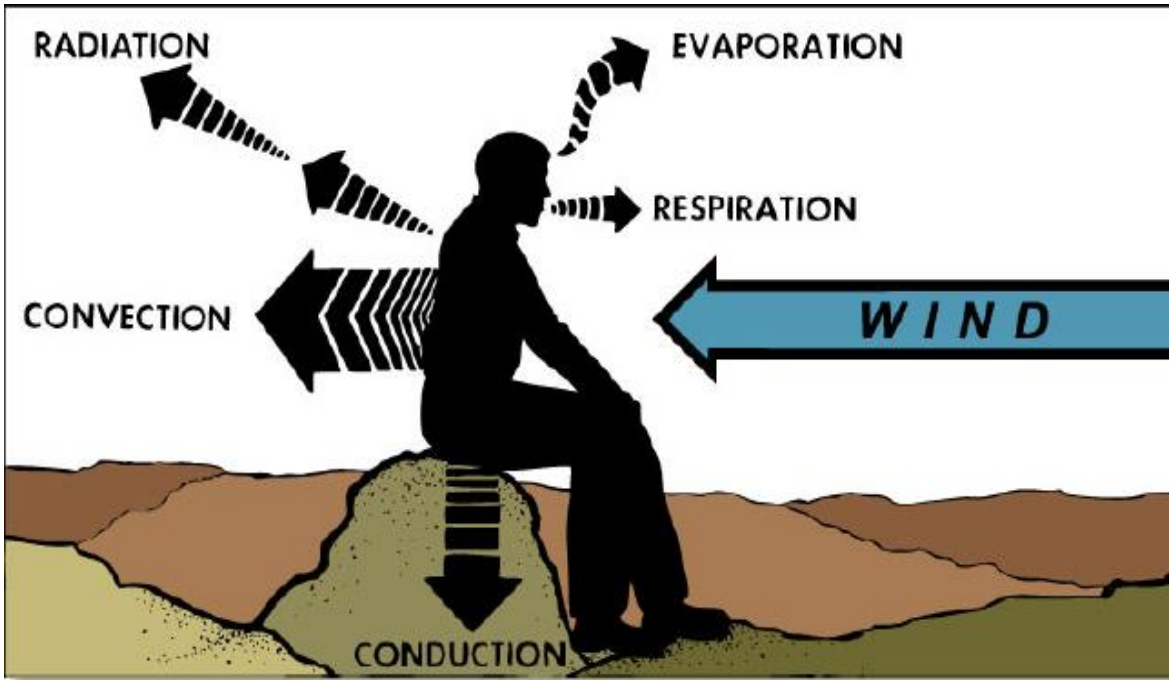
Simply put, hypothermia is the lowering of the body's core temperature to the point that it interferes with functioning. In most definitions that point is reached when our core temperature drops below 96 degrees. That's when blood starts rushing from our extremities to our core in order to warm and protect vital organs. As a result, we start to (among other things) shiver, lose dexterity, stumble, get confused, and make poor decisions. If we get even colder, these symptoms can progress to the extent that we may actually stop shivering, make irrational decisions, have decreased levels of consciousness, go into a stupor, and even die.[1]

As paddlers, we tend to think of hypothermia as resulting primarily from immersion in cold water. We are careful when we know the water temps are below 65 or 70 and dress accordingly with wet suits or dry suits with multiple layers underneath. We know that when immersed in colder water, even the early symptoms of hypothermia – such as loss of dexterity – can be deadly: we can't hold on to our paddle; we can't grab the coaming or deck lines to effect a self-rescue; we can't operate our VHF to call for help. Absent assistance from others (and sometimes even *with* the assistance of others), we spend even more time in the cold water, and our ability to help ourselves deteriorates even further.

Given that we are paddlers, immersion in cold water is a major consideration. But the body loses heat - and hypothermia can occur - in multiple ways including:

- Conduction: loss of heat due to direct contact with cold water OR from sitting or lying on cold ground or metal

[1] In the decade between 2003 and 2013, there were 13,400 deaths in the U.S. due to hypothermia, an average of about 1,300 per year.



- Convection: wind sweeps away the layer of warm air from the skin
- Radiation: loss of heat due to exposure of the skin to colder air
- Evaporation: heat loss due to sweating OR having on wet clothing
- Respiration: with every breath out, warm air is sent out of the body

The multiple ways the body can lose heat leads to a couple of important points:

1) environmental conditions don't need to be extreme to result in significant heat loss. The air temperature doesn't need to be freezing, the water doesn't have to be below 50, and the wind doesn't have to be blowing 20 knots to have a big impact. You've probably heard the story that the state with the largest number of hypothermia cases is Florida. While not true, it does illustrate the point that if you are in 75-degree water, that water is still below the average body temperature of 98.6 degrees, is still drawing heat from the body and, if you stayed in it long enough, would still produce symptoms of hypothermia.

2) A corollary to the above is that a *combination* of relatively mild heat-loss conditions can produce big problems. That is, if you are a little bit wet (e.g., from sweat or spray from waves) and there is a little bit of wind (e.g., 10 knots) and the air temperature is on the cooler side (e.g. 65 – 75 degrees), these factors have a cumulative impact and the stage for hypothermia is set. These are the conditions under which I've become hypothermic and under which I have seen other people become – or be close to - hypothermic. It is almost exactly what happened to the group in the Florida situation described at the beginning of this article.

<u>Severity Classification</u>

Most hypothermia assessment schema reflect multiple stages of hypothermia, from least to most serious. How the different stages of hypothermia are measured vary from model to model. For example, some models use three classification levels (e.g. mild, moderate, severe hypothermia); others use four levels (e.g., mild, moderate, severe, profound), while still others use six levels.

Most classification systems use core temperature "cut-off" points to define severity. While there is

variation across systems in how "Mild", "Moderate" or Severe" is defined, there seems to be a general consensus that is in line with the definition provided by the Wilderness Medical Society[2] as shown in Table 1:

Table 1
Hypothermia Levels of Severity

Level	Celsius	Fahrenheit
Mild	32-35	90 - 95
Moderate	28-32	82 - 90
Severe	24 - 28	75- 82
Profound	< 24	< 75

Assessment: Pay Attention to the "Umbles"

The problem with using core temperature as the basis for diagnosing and ultimately treating hypothermic people is that most of us don't carry the instruments that would accurately measure core temperature. The regular thermometers that we might carry in a first aid kit are not reliable for measuring core temperature and cannot capture temperatures that are below 93F. The most reliable instruments for measuring core temperature are: 1) a rectal thermometer or 2) an esophageal probe. Neither is realistically going to be used in an outdoor adventure environment, whether that is the Alaska wilderness or the beach at Metompkin inlet. That means that the assessment must rely primarily on observation of the person's behavior.

An initial step in the assessment process is to determine whether the person – even if they are shivering – can take care of themselves and is functioning well. If so, they are not likely hypothermic. Getting them hydrated, fueled up with food, covered with a cag, and moving vigorously should be sufficient.

Mild Hypothermia

How do you know if someone is shivering and is *not* functioning so well, thus indicating possible hypothermia? The quickest and simplest way to assess how well someone is functioning is to pay attention to the extent to which they demonstrate the "Umbles". This is shorthand for symptoms of changes in level of consciousness and motor functioning. It is extremely useful in assessing hypothermia because it's easy to remember and it's easy to spot the following symptoms:

- Fumbles – loss of dexterity due to restricted blood flow to the extremities; the person may have difficulty with zippers, or holding a water bottle, or may repeatedly drop things, like a pump.
- Stumbles – lack of coordination; on land, the person has some trouble walking, or may trip frequently. In paddling, the lack of coordination may manifest as irregular strokes or trouble controlling the boat.
- Mumbles – when the brain slows down it will affect speech, so people may slur their words or mumble.
- Grumbles – signs of irritability or hostility, including complaining about having difficulty controlling the boat, the distance they still have to go, or getting pissed off that you are asking so many questions trying to determine if they are hypothermic.

If these symptoms are present, checking the person's pulse and breathing will be helpful diagnostically (both will be speeded up in the initial stages of hypothermia). Checking the extent to which the person is alert and oriented may provide additional information since mental confusion is also a symptom. If they are alert and oriented to some, but not all four domains (who, where, when, what), that is another possible indicator of hypothermia.

Moderate Hypothermia

Should the person's degree of hypothermia fall into the moderate range (82–90 degree core temperature), the extent of the umbles increases and the person will likely be stumbling, have difficulty holding anything, have difficulty speaking, appear dazed and confused, and display more irrational behavior. The degree to which they

[2] Here is a link to a detailed, outstanding article on hypothermia done by the Wilderness Medical Society: https://www.wemjournal.org/article/S1080-6032(19)30173-5/pdf

are alert and oriented is reduced. In this stage, they may start off shivering violently but the colder they get, the shivering may stop and muscular rigidity may start. In addition, although their pulse and respiration speeds up in the initial stages, now it slows dramatically.

Severe Hypothermia

Knowing the umbles isn't a big help in determining if someone is severely hypothermic – they are beyond those symptoms. Instead, shivering has stopped and, since brain activity has slowed due to lack of blood, the person may be in a stupor, responsive only to verbal or physical stimuli (or not at all responsive). The pulse may be weak and irregular, while breathing is likely very shallow. Finally, the person may display extremely irrational behavior. That includes a phenomenon, referred to a "paradoxical undressing", in which a severely hypothermic person will remove some or all of their clothes in an attempt to get warm.

Treating Mild Hypothermia: Remember "SHRIMP"

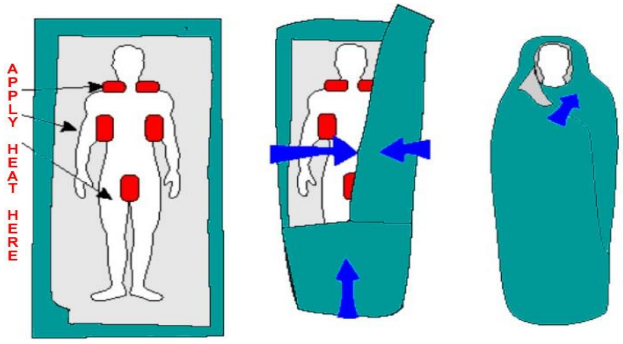
The following applies ONLY to treatment of mild hypothermia. Some of the treatment strategies discussed here apply as well to moderate hypothermia (e.g., insulate, apply heat), but others should not be used in treating moderate hypothermia (e.g., give food, drink), and there are other interventions that apply to moderate hypothermia but not to mild hypothermia (e.g., use warm intravenous fluid; evacuation).

The acronym SHRIMP is one way to remember the types of interventions necessary and appropriate for addressing mild hypothermia:

S = Shelter
H = Heat
R = Remove wet clothing
I = Insulate
M = Monitor pulse and respiration
P = Provide high calorie food/warm drink

S = **Shelter**. Get the person out of the conditions (e.g., rain, wind, cold) that caused and will exacerbate the loss of bodily heat. For paddlers, the ideal solution would be a small group shelter, but jury-rigging a shelter made of paddles plus a tarp/ponchos/cags also would work. If on a multi-day trip, use one of the tents. An added benefit to sheltering is that the person would have to sit or lie down. Keeping the person stationary is important to keep cold blood in the extremities from re-circulating through the heart.[3]

S H = **Heat**. Apply heat to selected areas of the torso, including neck, armpits, chest, and groin. Then if possible get the person into a sleeping bag. Use the inexpensive chemical hand/body/foot warmers that many paddlers carry. An alternative could be to use heated (warm) water in a Nalgene bottle or camelback. If no sleeping bag is available, a bivvy sack with extra clothing packed around the person would work.



SH R = Remove wet clothing. Re-warming won't work well if the person is allowed to stay in damp or wet clothing which, in the case of paddlers, is highly likely. Get that stuff off and replace it with any other available clothing. Obviously, this step

[3] Afterdrop is a term used to describe continued cooling of the core after rescue from cold water or removal from some other cold environment. Excessive movement of - or by - the victim causes the cold blood in the extremities to return to the heart, which in turn can lead to fibrillation and heart attacks. It is a serious potential issue that applies primarily to moderate and severe hypothermia.

would need to take place before the application of heat.

SHR I = Insulate. In cold environments or rocky areas, the ground will suck the heat out of the person, even if they have on dry clothes and are in a sleeping bag. There needs to be some kind of insulation between them and the ground. If you don't have a Thermarest or something similar, use a tarp, a tent's ground cover, and/or a cag.

SHRI M = Monitor pulse and breathing. The purpose of this is to see if the person's condition is improving or deteriorating. In mild hypothermia both pulse and respiration will have speeded up. An improved condition will be reflected in a return of pulse and breathing to "normal" levels (i.e. average pulse is 60-80 beats per minute; average breaths are 12 – 20 per minute). However, should those two measures slow dramatically, that could be a sign of deterioration and movement into a more serious level of hypothermia. Keeping track of these two vital signs is critical.

SHRIM P = Provide high calorie food and warm drink. The body needs additional fuel to help it warm. High calorie foods that paddlers are likely to have with them include nuts and seeds, dried fruit, cheese, salami, chocolate, and granola bars. Drinks – like hot chocolate or even tea – should be warm, not hot.

Conclusion

If you are anything like me, much of the knowledge you gain in a weekend wilderness first aid course disappears after about a month. The intent of this article is to give people an easy way to remember how to identify someone that is hypothermic (Umbles), and an acronym that will remind people how to respond appropriately in cases of mild hypothermia (SHRIMP). We want to stress that last bit: neither Umbles nor SHRIMP are to be used exclusively to identify or treat moderate or severe cases of hypothermia. But to the extent that Umbles and SHRIMP are useful to paddlers in identifying and responding to hypothermia near the onset, the incidence of more serious cases may be reduced.[4]

[4] The use of strategies for **preventing** hypothermia would of course reduce the need for remembering Umbles and SHRIMP. But hypothermia prevention is a different article waiting to be written by one of you.

Contributors

B Dawson **is a free spirit who calls West "Almost Heaven" Virginia home. Her favorite places to paddle are anywhere there's adventure to be found in a 17' sea kayak. She is planning a solo circumnavigation of Lake Superior in 2021.**

Paul Caffyn **lives on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island. In addition to being the first person to circumnavigate Australia in a sea kayak, he has circumnavigated the British Isles, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Japan and has done major expeditions in Alaska (the whole coast) and Greenland. Paul also served for 27 years as the editor of the newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers. Check out his website at http://paulcaffyn.co.nz/**

Ted Gormley **is a retired NYC firefighter and EMT who took up serious sea kayaking in 2009. He currently holds a BCU 3*, and is working towards 4* as well as ACA Trip Leader. His main stomping ground is the East Coast of the US. Ted's formal education is in fine art photography, and he is an avid landscape photographer. Visit his website at www.tedgormley.com**

Randi Kruger **is an L4 Instructor who runs Capital City Kayak and is the NDK/SKUK representative for the metro DC area.**

Rick Wiebush **runs *Cross Currents Sea Kayaking*. He lives in Baltimore and is an ACA L3 IT.**

Coastbusters **welcomes submissions of trip reports, incident descriptions and analyses, skills and "how-to" articles, boat and gear reviews, book and video reviews, and sea kayaking-related photographs.**

We are interested in receiving submissions from all paddlers. It just so happens that some of this month's contributors are instructors. That is not a requirement.

Articles should be limited to about 750 – 1,000 words and submitted in Word. Photos should be submitted in .jpg format. Please send your submissions to Rick Wiebush at rwiebush@gmail.com.

Coastbusters **is a publication of *Cross Currents Sea Kayaking***