

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLYSTONE: HOW TO STICK TOGETHER AND ENJOY THE RIDE

By Marlene J. Pakish



SUNDAY, 26 JULY 2009: After much planning and a day together at Chatfield getting ready for this trip, it was finally time to bring this trip to fruition. Julie Reckart and I had been in the Tetons for the previous two nights so we secured a room at Grant Village for Sunday night. We were meeting the boys at the Ranger's Station at 3:00 p.m.

We all arrived safely: Dick Dieckman, George Ottenhoff and Brian Hunter riding together and Larry Kline, Bernie Dahlen and Rich Broyles in another vehicle; it's a good sign when everyone gets to the meeting place on time. We signed in, got the required permits, watched the required video and planned to meet for our "last" supper that evening.

After dinner we all walked down to the launch site and discussed the meeting time for the next morning. It was breezy and the waves were rolling in and Yellowstone Lake looked huge. Thoughts of, "What the heck did we get ourselves into?" went briefly through my mind but the excitement of the whole trip outweighed those.

MONDAY, 27 JULY 2009: Grant Village to Campsite 7L5, 10.9 miles; stormy with low thunder clouds

We were up at 7:00 am, had breakfast at the Lakeside Restaurant and headed to the launch site to unload kayaks, cars and get everything ready. Launch time was set for 10:00 but we didn't leave until 10:30. Unfortunately with such a late start, the clouds started to roll in and the sky was getting a bit intimidating. We stopped for a lunch break and decided to continue paddling even though the wind was picking up.

About half an hour later, Larry told us all to pull off the water and take shelter on land because the storm was upon us and for safety reasons we needed to be off the water. We waited out the storm at Breeze Point for about 40 minutes and continued to our first campsite. The paddle that day turned out to be 10.9 miles and took approximately five hours although about an hour and a half was lunch and the storm sit-out.



Julie and I were both exhausted and hoped that the rest of the trip wasn't going to be this tough. We were on tap for cooking that night, as were George and Dick. One thing I will say is, "These boys can cook!" I was amazed at the food the guys brought both for sharing at dinner and the elaborate breakfasts that were made. Julie and I had picked up dried food that could be made within the pouch by just adding water. The guys brought fresh veggies (corn on the cob), real eggs, and Spam, of course.

TUESDAY, 28 JULY 2009: Campsite 7L5 to Campsite 5L6, 7.0 miles; light breeze, sunny

We got an earlier start on the water, heading to campsite #2. It was much better weather and the lake wasn't as rough. It was a lot easier to have conversations while paddling since we weren't trying to out-paddle a storm. We arrived at our destination after 7.0 miles of paddling and the mosquitoes were out in force.

We had a bear box at the first campsite but from here on out we had to hang our food. The regulation is that the food has to be 10 feet off the ground so that means the bear pole had to be at least 14 feet off the ground. After a day of paddling, that's a big throw but after about eight attempts, we finally got our rope over—whew.

We also didn't have to cook so we sat back and enjoyed the dinner from Dick and George who made Panag Curry and Rich made a spicy rice and tuna dish. Dishes were done and it started out to be a nice evening, except for the mosquitoes, but the wind picked up and so did the waves on the lake. That meant two things: bye-bye to the mosquitoes but hello to a windy night and crashing waves on the shore.

WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2009: Campsite 5L6 to Campsite 5L3, 5.6 miles; high winds, breaking waves, sunny

This morning there was much discussion as to whether or not to launch. The waves were crashing onto shore, the wind was against us and there were four of us that had not launched our kayaks in waves like that.

We soon learned how to, though, with two of the more experience paddlers launching first and getting past the breakers to wait for those of us that were white-knuckled paddle holders. Two people held my kayak on shore, I got in it and got my skirt on and they pushed me out, at which time I paddled like hell to get past the breakers. Once past those it was a little calmer although not smooth.

We were told by Larry that once we got out farther to turn down the shoreline and head for the cove, which I did. I felt my kayak being pushed into shore again so I paddled my hardest and made it to the cove, where the water was calmer. I looked back expecting to see at least four kayaks behind me and saw no one. Hmmmm, did I hear wrong? Was I the only one told to go to the cove once I got out? Oh, wait, here comes everyone so were all good and everyone made it out safely.



We were staying two nights at Camp 5L3, which made that morning's adventure even more worthwhile. Of course the mosquitoes had followed us and down by the water it was a little breezy. George and Brian continued their fishing derby but were only able to catch cutthroat trout, which had to be thrown back in. Whew, since I'm not a fresh water fish eater the fish gods were on my side.

THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2009: Campsite 5L3, 2 mile paddle to get to the seven mile hike; sunny

This was our day to stay in camp or paddle or hike or both. Dick talked about a hike that we had to paddle to and the trail looped around. Everyone decided to go since hiking was a nice break from paddling. This turned into a seven mile hike and a few of us watched as an osprey dove into the water and grabbed dinner. The hike took us through open fields and into shaded treed areas. We were all amazed at the amount of bear scat on the trails with some of the guys even taking pictures of it! The day was beautiful and the sun was out the whole time.

On the paddle back to camp, a few of the fellows circled Peale Island to get a closer look at the cabin out there and the rest of us headed back to camp to get settled in before dinner time. A fire was built with coals this evening because Brian was making some biscuits in the dutch oven he brought. I really think he had a secret compartment in his kayak since I don't how he managed to get everything in his boat.



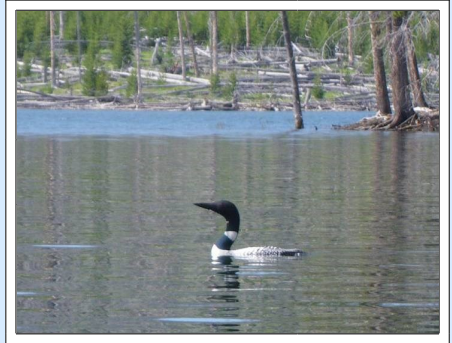
Marlene and Julie protected with mosquito netting over all exposed surfaces



FRIDAY, 31 JULY 2009: Campsite 5L3 to Campsite 7M6, 7.5 miles; sunny in the morning, stormy by noon

The past two nights had been very cold, getting down into the 30s but the stars were out in force. There was frost on the tents and a chill in the morning air. This morning we were leaving everyone's favorite campsite and we got a later start than previous mornings.

Since Larry, Julie and I had not been out to Peale Island, we decided to head over there before meandering to the next campsite. The island had a well-kept cabin on it with wood cut and stacked and a little yellow boat—it looked real cozy. A well kept secret of this paddle was the sighting of two common loons who were talking and diving for quite a while. Larry, being a bird guy, was totally enchanted and I thought they were pretty cool, although the osprey diving for dinner was my favorite. After looking these birds up on the internet, it is totally amazing that we saw any loons since the population in Yellowstone is only about 46 total.



As we continued our paddle farther down the lake, the clouds were building and it was getting a little breezy. Dick, Larry, and Brian would check out different campsites along the way, I'm assuming for another trip to Yellowstone in the future.

Julie, Rich and I were looking at the skies and wondering how far it was to camp 7M6 and shouldn't we be setting our sights on that! A few of the faster paddlers were ahead of Julie and me and there were three paddlers behind us.

The wind picked up, as did the swells on the water, and Julie and I were keeping close to the shoreline, although because of the Yellowstone fire there wasn't a shoreline, just downed trees. Julie yelled she couldn't paddle against the wind and waves and was heading into "shore." I turned back slightly and tried to get my kayak nose in to shore but unfortunately that didn't work so well for me.

My boat ended up parallel to shore with the waves knocking in and over it. I managed to get the front of it partially under a tree and tied but the waves were relentless and quickly filled it with rocks and water. Julie was able to get her boat in nose first and secured.

Somehow Brian, who was ahead of us, knew we had to pull in and marked our location on his GPS. Larry was behind all of us and was making some headway in the three foot waves. Just by chance, out of the corner of his eye, he saw my yellow kayak and then Julie and me on shore. He made sure we were okay and said he would send help once the storm settled down.

Everything in my kayak was pretty much under water but as Julie and I were sitting there we knew we would be okay even if we had to spend the night: she had the tent, the stove and some of the food in her kayak! But the land and water rescue did arrive, with Bernie and Brian coming by land and Rich and Dick in kayaks. Bernie and Brian were brave souls, getting into the pounding lake, fighting the waves to empty out my boat as best as possible, and turning it around so it faced out. I got in and once again paddled like hell to get away from shore. Dick had me follow him to the campsite, which was only a half mile from where we were. Bernie and Brian lined up Julie's boat the same way and she followed Rich back; everyone in kayaks made it to camp safely. Bernie and Brian had the half-mile hike back to camp across downed trees with a bit of bushwhacking, too. It took them an hour and a half to get through that, and they also carried some of our gear back (like my camera).

This was definitely a day for contemplation: what went wrong, what could have been better and most importantly that sticking together as a group is critical. See the following article, titled *South Arm Express*, which is Larry's account of these events.

SATURDAY, 1 AUGUST 2009: Campsite 7M6 to campsite 7M3, 5.3 miles; sunny

After the previous day's adventure, I was more interested in getting to the next campsite, and then paddling if the weather held, than taking my time. The day turned out to be beautiful and the water a lot calmer. Our campsite was in the farthest part of the lake where only hand-propelled boats are allowed...except, of course, for the ranger. Speaking of the ranger, he did visit us at this campsite and pointed out the bear marks on the pole where our food was hanging. We had not seen a sign of a bear the entire trip except for the scat on the hiking trail. Seeing the claw marks made us all realize there are bears in them there woods.

The talk around camp that evening was not about the bears but that there were five of us leaving in the morning to head back to Grant Village. The departing five were Dick, George, Brian, Julie and me, and we had a 13.5 mile paddle ahead of us. Knowing that the storms come up around noon on the lake, we all decided on an 8:00 start, the earliest of the whole week.

SUNDAY, 2 AUGUST 2009: Campsite 7M3 to Grant Village, 13.5 miles; sunny, lake was glass

What a perfect morning and, although we were leaving Rich, Larry and Bernie as they were staying another night here, we were heading to civilization and pizza! Julie and I had not showered the entire time and we were pretty campy so in addition to pizza we were looking forward to a hot shower.

The paddle this day was "Zen like" as Julie described it. The five of us stayed together; we paddled in a line at times and really didn't talk much. Most of the morning the water was like glass and we stopped for about 15 minutes at Breeze Point but, of course, the wind picked up about half a mile from Grant Village. We could see the cars and buildings and decided that overall it was a great paddle, even with the 10-knot winds because we made it to shore in 4 hours, 10 minutes.

That's the end of my story although Larry, Rich and Bernie had a nice day paddling down the Flat Mountain Arm and had another night at camp 7M3 before heading out on Monday to Grant Village.

In conclusion, the trip was awesome: the group dynamics were outstanding and we all learned that to have a successful trip without anyone getting hurt or lost you have to stick together like peanut butter and learn to roll like jelly in situations that test your skill set.

Would I do another trip with this group? Yes, in a heartbeat.



George Ottenhoff,
Dick Dieckman, Rich Broyles,
Brian Hunter, Julie Rekart,
Bernie Dahlen and Marlene Pakish



Dick Dieckman, Marlene Pakish,
George Ottenhoff,
Brian Hunter, and Julie Rekart
set out for civilization on a glassy lake

SOUTH ARM EXPRESS

By Larry Kline



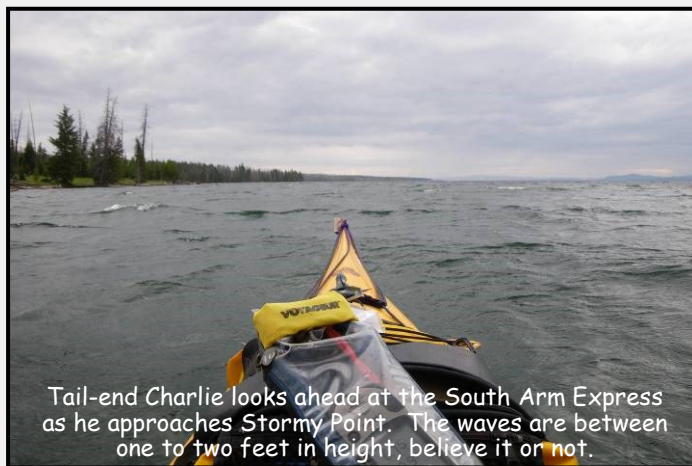
HOW A GROUP OF PADDLERS GOT A NOT SO GENTLE REMINDER TO KEEP A SHARP EYE ON THE WEATHER AND NEVER LET THEIR GUARD DOWN ON YELLOWSTONE LAKE:

The group of eight was spread out some 1.5 miles from head to toe as the South Arm Express roared into the station at precisely 12:40 on Day Five of an eight-day paddle into the South Arm of Yellowstone Lake. It came at them head first.

Two at the head of the group were just 0.2 miles from the destination campsite and experienced only one-foot waves and moderate winds. Tail-End Charlie had stopped for a snack and to put on a spray jacket 1.5 miles back as the first winds arrived there. Those in the middle experienced two-foot waves as they rounded a point of land known here as "Stormy Point," 0.7 miles from camp. Two of them came to a standstill against the wind and waves and decided to head for shore. Unfortunately, the shore was a mass of jumbled, downed timber from the 1988 fires at the Park. One of them found a small slot and shot in bow first while the other got caught broadside; that boat quickly swamped on shore. One of the other middle paddlers had the presence of mind to mark a waypoint on a GPS. It was 0.5 miles from the campsite.

Tail-End Charlie paddled on into increasingly higher waves and thought about stopping in a small sheltered bay 0.3 miles before Stormy Point but didn't. He saw the soon-to-be log jammed duo rounding Stormy Point ahead; the waves were fully three feet high when he arrived and it was often difficult to see over their tops. His boat nose-dived into the oncoming waves. Winds were 20 to 25 mph, maybe more?

After rounding Stormy Point, to his surprise he spotted the two on shore. They gave him the OK hand-on-head signal and he paddled on to the campsite 0.5 miles ahead. By then all the other paddlers were there; he arrived some 30 to 40 minutes after the two at the head of the group. The S.A. Express was still roaring through the station.



Immediately the six at camp split up into a Land Party and a Naval Escort Party, and two stayed at camp with VHF radios to prepare hot drinks and set up tents for the "survivors" and their rescuers. The group learned later from the two that they immediately took steps to warm up, set up camp, and spend the night if the rest of the group could not get to them before morning; a smart strategy to keep one's mind focused away from the "helpless factor".

The Land Party had the toughest job as they had to cross 0.5 miles of fallen timber and swamp land. They set out with a GPS, VHF radios, extra line, food and satellite locator beacons: a well prepared team to say the least. Soon the wind and waves subsided to less than two feet. They radioed to say they had arrived

at the duo's location.

At that moment the Naval Escort Team took off. The Land Party helped unload three inches of pea to golf ball sized gravel from the full length of the cockpit of the broadsided boat and emptied it of water. They then plunged waist-deep into the lake to help the two launch their boats into one-foot waves. From there the Naval Escorts paddled with them back to camp. They arrived safely about two hours after the S.A. Express had first appeared. The Land Party returned 45 minutes later. Needless to say, there were some stories to share, but everyone was in good spirits. Hot chocolate was enjoyed by all.

After dinner they shared experiences and agreed that sticking together (which they had done rather faithfully all four prior days) would have helped make the situation better. Of course, the adventure would have proceeded differently if the group had been together:

- (A) at the campsite when the S.A. Express had first arrived: the best scenario.
- (B) when the group was back with Tail-End Charlie as he finished his snack; perhaps they would have sought shelter in the small bay before Stormy Point.
- (C) when the group was between Stormy Point and camp: probably the most precarious place to be due to the lack of bailout points along the log-cluttered shoreline.

KAYAK CAMPING CLASS'S LAKE GRANBY OVERNIGHT

By Marsha Dougherty

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2009: We gathered at Sunset Point, loaded our boats, and got a brief compass lesson and safety review from our leader, Dick Dieckman. There were ten of us: Dick, Julie Reckart (also a trip leader), David and Lou Ann Hustvedt, JJ Scervino, Mike Anson, Jan Faulkner, Richard and Kristy Webber and Marsha Dougherty. We put in at approximately 11:15 am. The weather was overcast and the lake was smooth as glass: just beautiful.

The orienteering lesson didn't go as smooth as the lake. The search for Harvey Island was a bit confusing and we ended up off course somehow. Later comments about how the mistakes were made mentioned having preconceived notions and not reading our equipment carefully. We got there though, and had lunch. It rained lightly after lunch.

We paddled on to the campsite and some of us set up a tarp, and Mike and Jan served a tasty treat of cream cheese with special sauce and crackers. Kristy, Richard, and Marsha paddled up the Colorado River arm for about a mile and then were scared back by thunder.



They made it back in time to get sheltered by the tarp from a hail storm. Then after the weather cleared most everybody paddled up the river arm again all the way to the end; we saw lots of wild life: bald eagles, blue herons, etc.

We had a bonfire in the evening with plenty of conversation and a song and dance duet from Mike and Jan.

We broke camp Sunday morning and paddled by Deer Island and saw two more eagles. A good time was had by all!

