

AMERICAN YACHT CLUB

# SCOTCH CAPS

WINTER 2018 EDITION



40° 56.448N – 73° 41.938W

# How About Some Winter Paddle?

No, I am NOT talking about platform tennis—although I must say our AYC Ladies Paddle team is doing very well.

I am talking about taking full advantage of the crisp air and shimmering blue waters that beckon to us through our frosty windowpanes all winter long. Getting out there for some winter paddleboarding is as easy as grabbing a paddleboard from the rack beside the JAYC house and joining us “mermaids” out on the high seas.

AYC is just so ideally situated to enjoy this perfect change of pace. On rougher days it's great to stay in the oh-so-empty harbor, but on calmer, glassy days it's fantastic to glide out into the middle of the Sound in zero boat traffic to revel in the wintry silence and stillness. The water is colder, more dense, more mysterious, more pacifying and more your own. It's truly exhilarating, especially in the lower temperatures, to hear the glop, glop, glop as your board skims across the salty water surface and you bond with non-migratory birds while keeping an eye out for stray seals.

Yes, as a sailing club we all share a deep love for this beautiful body of water. And yes, most of us do revel in the benefits of sportsmanship on the water during the crowded high season of summer. But some of us crave that “water rush”—a gorgeous mix of uplifting neurochemicals like endorphins, dopamine and serotonin that “happy our brain” out on the water, year round.

And no, we don't live in a warm climate, we live in the northeast. So the available options are to travel

quite far to reach warm water in winter, or to acquiesce, embracing the water that sits at our doorstep, which I have chosen to do for the past seven years. And I've come to learn the importance of strategizing and being safe.

My recommendation is to dress appropriately and take some extra precautions. Here's what you will need:

1. at least one buddy (we prefer the term “mermaid”); never go out alone
2. a dry suit or a 3-5 millimeter neoprene wetsuit, depending upon air and water temperatures
3. 5-7 millimeter booties, as your feet will definitely get wet
4. 4 millimeter neoprene paddle gloves
5. a waterproof means of communication; I use a cell phone inside a waterproof case that floats
6. a leash that secures you to the board
7. a PFD worn at all times with a secure fit
8. a positive attitude
9. a sense of adventure
10. a willingness to fall off your board into cold water

Considering all the holiday stress and the long winter doldrums, it is easy to argue that the benefits of being out on the water are even MORE necessary in winter. Take this simple test: go to the nearest window in the Clubhouse and start with a two-minute stare (while planking!) over the watery horizon, then go to the front lawn of the



Club and do it again, then go to the water's edge over toward Scotch Caps and do it again, then go to the edge of the JAYC dock, with the water on all three sides of you, and do it once more.

I guarantee that you will feel a compelling difference in how invigorating, how calming and how much better you feel overall, the closer you are to the water. Now, imagine that same feeling times ten. That is how it feels to be standing out on the water on a paddleboard on a bright winter's day. It is a great form of exercise (upper body and core) too. Talk about melting away stress, rebooting your brain and chasing away those winter blues.

No reservations required, no plane tickets, lift tickets, hotel rooms or fancy equipment either. But adventure? Check. Therapeutic? Check. No fee to join? Check. Bonding with friends and nature? Check. Simple, easy fun? Check. Good for all ages and abilities? Check. Minimal effort, maximum gain? Check. Bragging rights? Check.

Of course you should still go skiing and frostbiting, but please come try this wild water sport some sunny day this winter while we have the whole Sound to ourselves. Even the fishermen are gone. You will quickly understand why it's the perfect time to get out there.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me: Lisa duBusc Miller 914.217.0777 // Lisa@duBusc.com