

The MASIK

Quarterly Newsletter of QAJAQ USA
The American Chapter of the Qaannat Kattuffiat

www.qajaqusa.org



Editor's Corner

Bobby Curtis

As the fall season approached, I found myself reflecting on the things I did last summer. I would rather have been reflecting on my paddling experiences, but there weren't many. This summer was eventful though, my family history caught me by surprise, and I underwent heart bypass surgery. I've been on the mend for a while now and anticipate resuming paddling in the spring. I'm hoping I'll be able to start up right where I left off. If I keep up with the exercise program I'm on, I might even be able to start ahead of where I left off. I guess I'll find out if getting back in a kayak is just as easy as getting on a bicycle after not riding one for some time. Or will I have to learn how to roll all over again? I must admit though, I have been spending part of my recuperation period learning that relaxation can be somewhat enjoyable. The concept of leisure time has always been foreign to me. I have also had more time to look for QAJAQ USA members who have had some interesting traditional kayaking experiences they were willing to recount. Some of them appear in this issue of the MASIK.

With the cold weather season encroaching upon us; I hope that all of you will take the proper precautions to enjoy paddling in cold water. The article on Montreal Madness By Nicolas Bertrand offers some good advice and references for paddling in winter conditions. While I won't be doing any cold weather paddling this year; I do plan to spend a good portion of the winter months building another kayak. Two articles in this issue about building traditional kayaks compliment the traditional boat-building buzz that is building on the Greenland Kayaking Forums <http://www.qajaqusa.org/forums.shtml>. If you have crafted a traditional kayak or other traditional paddling paraphernalia, consider publishing the results of your endeavors in the MASIK.

Stay dry, and have a happy holiday season.

MISSION

Qajaq USA is a non-profit membership organization that is officially recognized by [Qaannat Kattuffiat](#) (The Greenland Kayaking Association). Qajaq USA is committed to supporting Qaannat Kattuffiat and their efforts to preserve, study and promote the traditions and techniques of Greenland kayaking while seeking to further the appreciation and development of Greenland-style kayaking in the United States.

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Self-Built Traditional Style Boats A Regular MASIK Feature

Number Three

By Jennifer Torres



A HAPPY PADDLER

Several months ago I finished my Number Three boat. I know three doesn't sound like a lot, especially to the likes of Harvey Golden and Gabriel Romeu, whose beautiful boats, among others, graced the beaches at Camp Arrowhead this past October. But for me, it's a grand number, and one that's quickly getting larger. I am already amidst the building of Number Four. Non-the-less, Number Three is important because it's the boat that propelled me solidly into traditional paddling. I had been on this course for few years already; it started when I took my first class with Mark Molina and I never looked back. Since then I have taken my GP to the Hudson River, Cape Cod, and for a long trek on Lake Superior, among other places. I had already built two Chesapeake Light Craft stitch and glue boats and, although they are terrific vessels, they didn't quite complete the picture. I knew in my heart that there was only one solution: build a Greenland SOF. I read Morris and Cunningham, even talked to Mark Starr, asked questions, took notes, and followed the Qajaq USA forum. I learned lots, including that there are not a great deal of lady boat builders out there (which, actually, is OK by me).

The boat has a beam of 21 ½", depth behind the cockpit is 6 ¾", depth under the masik is 9 ½", the length is 16' 7", and it weighs 43 lbs. It is made with white oak ribs, and pond cypress for the rest. It is skinned with 12 oz nylon and finished with white Hypalon.

THE COMPLETED FRAME



I followed someone's advice to seek out local lumber mills and found Frank's Saw Mill in Ovet, Mississippi. He specializes in pond cypress and was willing to let me dig through stacks of green clear lumber. I am sure it was a sight for them; they were completely befuddled by how I was going to build an entire boat out of just six planks of wood. It was easier not to explain. I just said it

was going to be a very small boat.

FITTING THE KEELSON



I surprised myself by taking on this project; the structures seemed so complicated and intricate. After reading Cunningham I began to wonder if I was making furniture or a boat. At first I felt ashamed for not sanding all the parts and not making complicated thru-tenons. I kept looking over my shoulder for the boat building police, who I was sure, were going to give me tickets for all the deck beams that were crooked or off center. So I worked only during the dead of night, being sure not to make much noise and covering my project with a sheet every morning before leaving for work. However, I discovered slowly, that perfection was not in the stars for me. I was going to have to live with all the funkiness of a hand built boat. Imagine that, settling for the imperfection of a handmade object! Actually, it was easy.

Besides a few miscues and re-dos here and there, building and skinning a Greenland SOF was an extremely satisfying experience. The frame went together relatively easily (even if it is way too big, hence the commencement of building Number Four) and skinning was actually fun. A few issues came up with the finish (see the summer issue of the Masik), but nothing could get in the way

of the satisfaction that comes with doing something you never thought you could do. When the boat was finally finished I set it up under the carport where I could see it from the house. Every time I'd go by that side of the house, I had to detour past the window where I could gaze out at my new favorite boat.

I have been paddling Number Three for months now. With it I have mastered a number of rolls I never had before and am well into getting many others. I brought it with me to Delmarva and was in it every day, every hour, until I could paddle and roll no more. Rubber arms and all, I'd drag that thing back on shore, so happy to be in my so un-perfect Greenland boat.

JENNIFER AT DELMARVA



Now, as I move into Number Four, I know I will not hide by the darkness of night, but will build unabashedly by day, proud of the funkiness that will make my boat unique. And since four is not my favorite number, I'm sure Number Five is not far behind. Number Four is planned to be 19 1/2" wide, 17' long, 6" deep at the cockpit and 8 1/4" at the masik, and no Hypalon this time around.

Jennifer Torres lives and works in Hattiesburg, MS where she is a professor and Chair of the Art Dept at the University of Southern Mississippi. She can be reached at jtorres@netdoor.com.



EVENTS CALENDAR

SSTIKS 2004

South Sound Traditional kayak Symposium

When: June 11-13, 2004
Where: Twanoh State Park
Belfair, Washington
Contact: Mike Hanks
E-mail: mike@qajaqusa.org
Web: www.qajaqpnw.org

KAYAK EVENTS

Find them and post them in
The MASIK.

Send your event information to:
bobby@qajaqusa.org

www.qajaqusa.org
www.qajaqusa.org/forums.shtml

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My Iqyaq An Aleutian Kayak

By Aaron Cunningham



AARON LAUNCHING HIS IQYAK



THE COMPLETED FRAME

Launched: Aug 29, 2003

Length: 17-ft, 1-inch • Beam: 21-inches • Weight: 45-lbs.

My iqyaq was built following the directions in Wolfgang Brinck's 'The Aleutian Kayak', along with some extremely helpful advice from the Baidarka Mailing List and the Kayak Building and Greenland Paddling bulletin boards. It took me about 10 months, with a number of multi-month breaks in building, while going to school.

The deck was made of SPF from Lowes, pegged, and lashed with waxed hemp twine. The ribs are 1/4" by 3/4" Red Oak, the cockpit is White Oak, and the remaining members of the frame are SPF. Frame members were lashed together with artificial sinew from Tandy Leather. The frame was sealed with Man-O-War, and Minwax Helmsman Spar Varnish. I'll oil the next frame, remembering to do the individual parts before final assembly.

PADDLIN'



The skin is #10 cotton duck from Seattle Fabrics Inc, <http://www.seattlefabrics.com/> sewn together with doubled unwaxed dental floss. The skin was coated with a 50/50 mix of Minwax Water Based Polycrylic, Satin to get as deep a grip as I could. I then coated it with an additional five coats of unthinned product. The product is labeled as an 'Interior Only' product, so we'll see

how it holds up. I suspended the iqyaq from the ceiling of the garage by the cockpit so I could get to the whole thing in one pass.

The boat was launched and paddled with a Greenland paddle carved during some idle periods from a WRC two-by-four. Floatation bags made with heat sealable fabric, using directions from Chris Cunningham's 'Building The Greenland Kayak', were also in place.

The iqyaq tracks well, except for what may be a tendency to pull to the left, which may be a paddling technique problem. It could also be a keelson

problem. And an excuse to build a new boat... I have found the iqyaq to be more stable than I expected from other's descriptions of their iqyaqs.

I still need to install decklines, using the method described in Cunningham, and sew on the cockpit coaming. Then, I can start on the accessories: a sprayskirt, Kanaglluk (tuilik), and an Aleutian Paddle, using Lew Plummer's excellent diagrams.

Information on Lew Plummer's paddles is available at the following websites.

Aleut paddle layouts
http://www.imaginelan.com/aleut/aleut_paddle.html

Lew Plummer's Reproduction
<http://www.arctickayaks.com/Paddles/Aleut1-Hole/FNM228/LewPlummePaddle.htm>

Aaron Cunningham can be contacted at acunning@seanet.com, and has a website at <http://aaron-cunningham.com>.



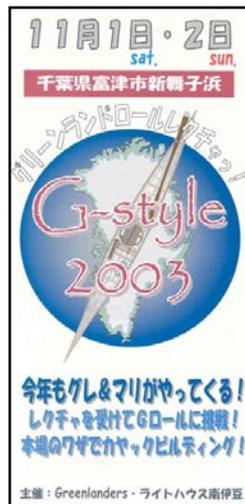
Qajaq Talk

Greg Stamer

In early November, Maligiaq Padilla and myself were invited for the second time to teach Greenland-kayaking skills, just south of Tokyo, Japan. When first invited last year, as the sole guest instructor, I graciously refused, stating that it would be best for the Greenlanders, especially Maligiaq Padilla, to teach Greenland kayaking internationally. The organizer, Mr. Eiichi Ito, generously invited us both.

Mr. Eiichi Ito is no stranger to the Greenland kayaking forum and you may have seen his computer-generated artwork of a Greenland kayak frame gracing the cover of Sea Kayaker magazine. Otherwise, you are sure to have seen his more visible creations, Donkey-Kong and the Super Mario Brothers! If you visit the "Greenlanders" website <http://www5c.biglobe.ne.jp/~kayak/> you can view his efforts to animate the Greenland forward stroke. Maligiaq and I were both quite impressed with the progress that the participants had made, both with kayaking skills and construction of kayaks, paddles and other equipment. Mr. Shiojima, a kayaking instructor and builder of Greenland paddles, wowed Maligiaq with the sheer number of excellent paddles that he had created. The curriculum stressed side sculling last year and this year many of the kayakers had moved beyond this skill to start exploring the numerous Greenland rolls. One student was even successful in learning all three competition hand-rolls. I was equally impressed with the numbers of participants who could perform the basic rope gymnastics maneuvers, including rolling on the ropes like rolling a kayak, and pulling themselves up-and-over the high ropes – a good test of strength. We did not see a single tuilik last year, and Maligiaq donated his garment. This year Brooks tuiliks were as ubiquitous among the participants as they are at a typical Qajaq USA event.

Reflecting on the experience, I was struck by how people with such linguistic and cultural differences could



find it so easy to bond, learn from each other, and forge lasting friendships. This was all made possible simply from sharing the simple, but powerful passion of Greenland kayaking. This experience closely parallels my acceptance as a foreign kayaker while traveling in Greenland. A G-style 2003 photo album can be viewed in the QAJAQ Photo Gallery. http://www.qajaqusa.org/gallery/G-style_2003

Several of the Japanese participants mentioned that they follow the Qajaq USA forums and web site closely, so it's heartwarming to learn that not only are we helping to promote Greenland-style kayaking in the United States, but to lands far outside our borders as well. The Japanese are hopeful to send a team to Greenland in the very near future. They are also talking of pursuing "Qajaq Japan," with the same affiliation to Qaannat Kattuffiat, as does Qajaq USA. These are very exciting developments.

The international community of traditional kayakers and kayak makers is growing, and Greenland is remaining the center of Greenland-style kayaking, as it should. Thanks to your support and efforts, Qajaq USA is doing its part to contribute to this growing international interest.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF QAJAQ USA! WE LOOK FORWARD TO ANOTHER GREAT YEAR IN 2004.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY. SEE THE MEMBERSHIP FORM ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS ISSUE.

Building A Hooper Bay Kayak

By Jack Gilman

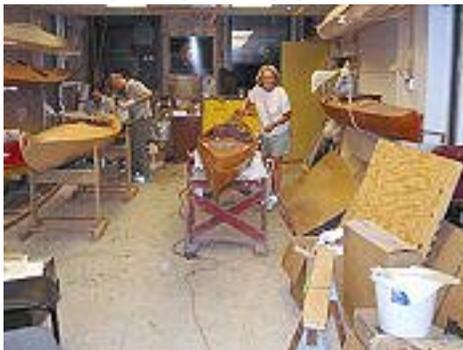
A few years ago we started a paddling club, The Yonkers Paddling & Rowing Club, in the old clubhouse of the defunct Yonkers Canoe Club. It was at this time that a few of us started building boats here, a couple of stitch & glues. It was also the summer that Maligiaq Padilla was touring the USA, and my interest in Greenland style kayaking was started.

YONKERS PADDLING CLUB



I had always needed a better place to build. With the help of the City of Yonkers, we were able to qualify for a community block grant (our club is a 501c3) and plans were made to set up a boat building shop in an industrial development that was being built in the old Otis Elevator works in Yonkers. We would literally be going in on the ground floor, The building was just brick walls & dirt floors. But a few months later we had a well-funded, nice little space to work in. I am continually impressed with the vision of the City planners here. Yonkers is undergoing a waterfront renewal that is bringing a lot of life into the downtown waterfront. With the Hudson River at our doorsteps, it is a project with vision.

BOATBUILDING SPACE



We started building boats here a year and a half ago and have had several successful building seasons. Last year



we started our first group project, a Pygmy Wineglass Wherry. The hull was completed last year and the sail rig, along with other sailing components are ready to be installed for this year's sailing season.

I had been building skin on frame boats for a while, and wanted to set up a group project to introduce skin boat building to our club members. What I had in mind would be a boat that would be beginner friendly, since it would become a "club boat" when finished. The basic Greenland design would be too advanced, as would a baidarka. I had seen pictures of some of the other Alaskan boats, and saw some interesting designs on David Zimmerly's website. I then bought his book, "Hooper Bay Kayak Construction", and realized that this boat would be perfect for our purposes. I also had seen a post by Skip Snaith on the Baidarka list-server, and contacted him about his plans for his "Auklet", a modernized version of the traditional Hooper Bay. I thought this version might work well for us, so we bought the plans.

Skip's plans were made to be scaleable, with the boat drawn up for a 10 ft length instead of the full 15 ft in Zimmerly's book. This original boat was meant to be a working craft, and we would not need the volume. We finally settled on a length of 13.5 ft with a beam of 25 in. It was easy to adapt Skip's plans. Of course, we were making assumptions about a re-design, not necessarily a safe thing to do. But when I looked at several boats in our boathouse, I realized that the commercial boat, which our Hooper Bay would resemble most was a Feathercraft K-Light.

I have several friends who paddle them, and they all like the design. It's not a "high end" performance boat, but it is a happy, comfortable boat.

I posted a notice on our club list-server about setting up a team to do a group project building the Hooper Bay. I got back 3 responses and the project got rolling.

Muriel Conway, Tom Higgins, and Toby McAfee had each been into kayaking for a while, and were interested in getting hands-on experience in building boats. If you are around our club for any length of time, the topic definitely comes up.

We would be meeting every Tuesday night and do a longer session Saturday afternoons. As we got further into the project, we also met Thursday nights.

The most fascinating aspect of building a SOF, as opposed to an S&G, was the amount of problem solving you needed to do. The S&G boats now seem more like a model to be built. It's all pre-cut and designed and your responsibility is to just assemble it. There are no real decisions to be made. But all that changes with a skin boat. We had to decide what materials we would use and what exact dimensions the boat, with all its subassemblies would take. Since we were resizing this boat, and it was halfway between Zimmerly's and Skip's planned sizes, we would need to adapt all the main structures. But that's the fun part! We had a good set of drawings to base our boat on and that would keep us from straying too far from the spirit of the design.

Materials would be easy. I had a lot of wood scrounged from various sources

and we would use this as an opportunity to reduce our woodpile by a good amount.

The gunnels would be made from some long strips of Douglas fir. We had a lot of mahogany as well as some pine for deckbeams and stringers and a friend had contributed a bunch of fresh-cut ash that would make the keel and rear stem. The bow piece would be made from 3/4" marine plywood we had laying around. In the end we only spent \$10 on wood.

We would start each session with an overview of what we needed to do that night. Our team worked well together. They were receptive to new ideas and techniques and had valuable insights into the process.

READING THE PLANS



As we got further into the project, I could just assign a problem and they would make it happen. "We need to design the coaming" and we would go over what information we needed, what considerations would have to be discussed, then the design would be put to paper. In the case of the bow & stern pieces, cardboard templates were made to make sure that we had the design right. After a bit of trial and error, we would be satisfied. We then had to decide how to construct the part and what piece of wood to make it out of. At this time we might start going through the woodpiles in the shop to find that perfect piece.

Another aspect of this building process that was interesting was being able to determine what was important and what was not. There are some parts of the boat that do not have to be perfect to be functional. But with some parts of the boat you have to make sure, as much as possible, that you are keeping a true and clean line. I think experience is the only way you can get a truly good sense of this. Of course, you could make everything perfect, but I feel that level of craftsmanship is not needed to create a perfectly good, functional boat. And it takes twice as much time!

SCARFING THE GUNNELS



We made good use of two 24-in bubble levels through out the laying-up of the gunnels and the setting of the keel. This enabled us to get the two main assemblies: gunnels/deckbeams, and the keel/bow-stern pieces/deck ridge beam accurately square to each other. Making sure of this, and careful attention to the shape of the gunnels and the line of the keel, made it easy to get a fair, sweet shape to the boat.

LASHING IN THE DECKBEAMS



I feel at these times that you are not just building a boat, but creating a sculpture that has to be as aesthetically pleasing as it will be functional. Form and function do compliment each other here. When I was first building boats, a friend told me that making it look good meant it would be good. Very important advice!

Boat building has the ability to be a very satisfying endeavor. You get to work hands-on, and see the results of your work quickly. The boat grows under your hands as it is designed and shaped. There usually is a point in any boat's construction when it changes from a pile of lumber into something that looks like a boat...and then that magical moment when the soul of the boat starts to develop. You look at it more lovingly; you start to imagine what it will be like when finished. And wonder what it will be like when it is finally in the water. Will it be a good boat, or just a pretty object that doesn't get used?

I think that is the attractiveness of

native watercraft. They derive their beauty from their functionality, not from factory-built perfection. Any imperfections that don't detract from their usefulness are allowed, but the boats are all capable of doing a serious job in very harsh conditions. And they all can be reflections of the ideas of the designers, within a framework that accommodates variation as strength, not weakness.

THE RIBS GO IN



For the skin, we bought 15 ft of 12-oz nylon from George Dyson. We used a combination of techniques to get the skin on. First, we created a "pouch" of skin at the bow and then stretched the skin as much as could by hand and pulled it over the stern keel. We were able to get it very tight. We then wet the nylon down so it would stretch, pulled it tight on each side alternately, and fastened it temporarily with pushpins. Then we used the stitch shown in Robert Morris's book, "Building Skin On Frame Boats", with the cord piping. This lets us get the deck skin taut. All sewing was done with the nylon skim wet, using waxed polyester sail twine.

SKINNING THE KAYAK



INSTALL THE COAMING



This boat doesn't get toggles on the ends for carrying. The way the boat is designed, the bow hole acts as the front carry handle and the 6-in extension at the stern serves the rear. Sewing the skin around these shapes was easier than we thought it would be, and it definitely looks great

BOW HOLE



SKINNING COMPLETED



We bought a set of commercial foot pegs, since this boat will be shared by our club and has to accommodate several sizes of paddlers. The gunnels were too high to mount them, so we made two plates of ash 1/4 in x 3 in x 18 in then pegged and lashed them onto the ribs, and mounted the foot pegs onto them. Since the attachment spans 4 ribs, it is quite solid. The coaming was laminated from 1/8 in x 1.5 in strips of Sitka spruce and mahogany

with spruce for the rim. I also filed a round groove into the rim, and we epoxied in a loop of 1/4 in climbing rope to add a little color to the coaming. It was then epoxied and given several coats of exterior gloss urethane. We also installed a set of stanchions to support the middle of the coaming. They run from the inside of the coaming to a chine/rib junction.

FOOTPEGS



The paint used is made up of 3 parts exterior gloss urethane with 2 parts urethane-fortified alkyd oil paint for color. There are five coats on the hull, and three on the deck. Deck rigging is done by screwing nylon strapping onto the side of the gunnels, with lines and bungees in these loops (like what's done in a Chesapeake Light Craft boat). The seat is a foam camp pad, with a backband.

The goal of this project was also to get as many of the building materials from stock on hand in our various woodpiles. In the end, we spent \$15 on the frame, \$40 for skin, and \$15 for paint. We have a lot of heat sealable nylon I bought from Shawn Baker, so we can make our own float bags.

A FRESH COAT OF PAINT



The Hooper Bay was launched in October 2003.

LAUNCHED OCTOBER 2003



Skip Snaith can be reached at his website Kayak Way: <http://www.rockisland.com/~kyak/>.

Toby McAfee supplied the photos. The other two crafts people in the photos are Tom Higgins and Muriel Conway.

Jack Gilman has been paddling for 20 years, and has been paddling Greenland style for the last four. He got his first taste of Greenland style at the 2000 Delmarva Paddler's retreat and has been an avid convert ever since. He started building boats in 1999, with a Chesapeake West River 180 stitch & glue. Then it was a Greenland style SOF from Bob Boucher's video, a Guillemot stripper, an Alaskan recovery boat, a baidarka from Wolfgang Brinck's book, and two other Greenland style boats, one from Robert Morris's book and one self-designed. His next project for later this summer will be a Sea Spirit hard-shell. Jack says, "It's a wonderful addiction."



Montreal Madness 2003

Wintry Waters of the Port of Montreal

By Nicolas Bertrand

“Extreme cold, responsibility, ice, liability, currents” the words are still buzzing in my head. As I walk out of a meeting with Montreal’s Port Captain and the Coast guard, I realize how alien Greenland paddling is and how lucky we are to receive such good cooperation from the authorities. The first Montreal Madness, a Greenland paddling demonstration and competition, will be able to use the wintry waters of the port of Montreal.

A week or so later, on Sunday morning March 30th, all participants gather at Presse-Café Pie-IX. Here are David Miskell, Brian Lewis, Jonathan Long, Todd Wright, Joe Brzoza, Mark Kelley and myself. We discuss plans for the day. The Port Captain, himself an avid sea kayaker, agreed on a rolling demonstration in the Old Port, a group paddle to park Bellerive (an hour paddle downriver), and a rolling competition near the shore in Bellerive. Unexpected conditions - which are always to be expected when you ice paddle - will change the program later, but currently we don’t have a clue about them. For now, the latté is as good as always and the spirits are high. As we look over the Qajaq USA competition-rolling list, I realize the real contenders are Todd, Jonathan, and Brian. Their awesome rolling ability is no match for the rest of us.

PADDLING IN AN ICE FIELD



The issue of the competition is clear, even at this very early stage: each one of them will paddle away with one of the 3 fantastic rubber bath toys to be awarded as first, second and third prizes. After the rolling list, we check the marine radio and cell phones, since they are a Coast Guard requirement for our outing. Skate boarders would laugh at our polite and orderly attitude.

We head off, shuttling and parking cars. We unload kayaks, dress and launch. Fortunately there is a snowstorm going on. It makes for a very wintry ambiance despite the fact that all the ice is already gone from the Old Port basin. Fresh snow becomes a curtain of slush in the cold water, forming a very nice setting for rolling. Upon launching, we warm up by rolling and bracing in icy water. Warm up in icy water? As strange as it sounds, it is what we do first. The black water ninjas begin their strange ritual of kinngusaqattaarneq**, innaqatsineq**,

qasuersarrtoq** and other ways to roll the kayaks.

After the warm up, a few paddle strokes take us to Quai de L’Horloge. We begin rolling and a small but lively crowd of about 12-15 people begin to gather. Then we begin an impressive display of aquatic skills, a coordinated ballet of rolling kayaks not to forget foolishness and ruthless slush fights. The crowd is pleased and entertained with the demonstration, albeit very cold from standing immobile in the fierce northern wind and snow flurries.

We then head off to Bellerive. Our goal is to get out of the giant eddy formed by the Old Port and get on to the St-Mary current, large, fast and powerful at five knots, which today also loaded with ice. I have carefully scouted the area many times, most recently just the week before the Madness. By starting it at the very end of the eddy, we will either

Continued on page 12.

2003 Greenland National Kayak Championships

A Life-Changing Experience

By Mark Molina

I guess I took the long way there. For years I would have nothing to do with kayaking. Open canoeing, especially freestyle canoeing, was my art—and my passion. Skill-intensive, it was what I thought to be the ultimate in paddle sport. Seeing Maligiaq Padilla in 1998 changed all that for me. Being mentored by fellow Floridian and Greenland competitor Greg Stamer helped me develop skills and a point of view that would one day lead me to Nuuk.

MARK PRACTICING ROLLING



I took the long way, indeed: driving our summer teaching circuit across the deep south, then up to the Great Lakes and back east to Ottawa after three weeks on the road. Leaving my family in Ontario, I flew into Arctic Canada and skipped across central west Greenland by small aircraft.

The trip there and back was icing on the proverbial cake. Flying on First Air into Nunavut behind tons of cargo, spending the night at the Crazy Caribou Bed and Breakfast, and walking the dusty streets of Iqaluit whetted this Floridian's appetite for the magic of the far north.

A 5:00 a.m. turbo prop flight across the Davis Strait brought me into Greenland. It was only a two-hour trip, but I began to feel a world away upon my first footfalls on the tarmac walking towards the Asiaat terminal. The airport was reminiscent of 1950's aerodromes. Security was non-existent in the small, neat building.

Asiaat, like most Greenlandic villages, hugs the rocky shoreline, moving away from the deep, clear harbor into surrounding hills. The Asiaat museum devoted one room exclusively to Greenlandic kayaking. Observation of the real artifacts heightened my appreciation



AASIAAT HARBOR

for, and excitement over, the upcoming cultural and historical celebration at the Nuuk championship.

The trip from Asiaat to Nuuk is a milk run, touching down at Kangerlussuaq, Sisimiut, and Maniitsoq before approaching Nuuk, whose population of about 13,000 makes it the largest city in Greenland. Nuuk juts out between two fjords somewhat like an open hand lying in the water. Hans Kleist-Thomassen (the Greenlanders called him "Hansey") picked me up at the airport and took me to my fjord-side dorm room arranged and provided by Qaannat Kattuffiat and Qajaq Nuuk.

MARK DRESSED FOR THE WATER



Hans speaks Greenlandic, Danish, and English and is the primary contact for off-island kayak competitors. Since most

Greenlanders are not fluent Anglophones, Hans and the non-Greenlandic competitors were my primary communication links during the competition. Hans is also the major kayak construction resource for Qajaq Nuuk members. As a strong advocate for modern building techniques and materials, he represents a radical school of thought in traditional kayaking. He is vigorously pro-PFD. He says, "We're not in the 17 or 1800's anymore! The qajaq is now used for recreation. Our lives don't depend on the qajaq as a hunting tool. Why not be safe?" He smiles and chuckles; "One would have about 20 minutes in the water before dying. It is kinder to the families if at least the body is found floating."

LOW VOLUME - EASIER ROLLING



The Greenland time zone is two hours later than Eastern Standard Time, but life there operates on “Greenlandic time,” during which schedules have little or no bearing on the actual timing of the event. When things get off the printed schedule, it is difficult to find out in English what exactly is going on. Being a monolingual with a punctuality obsession, these realities take a little getting used to. The seven days of the competition were, for me, an exercise in being flexible.

ON THE ROPES



Days open with breakfast at the school, usually bread, jam, cereal, and cold cuts. A five-minute walk to the Qajaq house, as the Qajaq Nuuk building was called, usually yielded a scene of enthusiastic preparation. Children’s events begin first, and the 50+ men’s class is always at the end of the day. Lunches of open-faced sandwiches, many including seafood and caviar, are brought to the qajaq house.

Crowds of watchers swell as the afternoon wears on. Television and radio crews provide live play-by-play commentary. Local newspaper photographers are busy catching the action. Local reporters get quotations from both competitors and the audience. The atmosphere is akin to that of a homecoming football game. Competitors from all teams help each other launch and recover boats, stretch sealskin tuilikis and akuilisaqs across cockpit coamings, and provide the occasional rescue.

MALIGIAQ SETTING UP FOR BEHIND-THE-HEAD ROLL



Warm, hearty suppers were served in the school dining hall. Vegetarians would be challenged. Menus included Arctic char, pork, beef, and a lot of reindeer. Following dinner each day was the awards ceremony for the day’s events. A large crowd clapped and hooted as each medal winner, regardless of age or club affiliation, stood on the platform.

On a few occasions, I was invited by fellow competitors to go for a beer at the conclusion of the evening. Upon entering the pub, I realized the magnitude of appreciation for kayaking in Greenland: patrons recognized us and came to our table to shake hands and offer congratulations. Some bought a round of Tuborg. The qajaq competition was the major entertainment on radio, television, and in newspapers throughout the week. My evenings usually ended with a peaceful, sunlit, after-midnight walk back to my dorm room. Long exciting days and the crisp midsummer air made sleeping easy, especially since I’d become accustomed to perpetual daylight.

SHORT DISTANCE KIDS RACE



A Saturday evening banquet, highlighted by food, drink, and music—caps the week’s competitions. Greenlandic finery abounds: many are dressed in vests, skirts, and jackets made of silvery-gray seal fur. Children dance about, enjoying the fellowship. Group singing was popular. The favorite song was translated for me:

QAJAQ

I haven’t tried it myself

To get aboard it

This in spite I will tell you a little about it

About our proud little kayak

It is so small

It is so slender-small

Wherever in the sea you turn

You are supported by nothing

As a toy I don’t consider it

But with a tool such as a hunter’s harpoon

Gigantic animals are slain

As a role model

I respect it

Since it always fights back the threatening ways of ocean waves

It won’t give up

It makes way for nothing

As the man who proudly uses it has learned to maneuver it

*By Gabriel Jessen,
translated into English by
Ditte Friis-Pedersen*

The banquet ended at 6:00 a.m. Greenlanders certainly know how to celebrate.

What did I learn about authentic Greenland-style kayaking? I’ll provide a perilously inadequate synopsis:

1. Most Greenlanders are open to innovation, while still acknowledging and taking pride in their kayak traditions.
2. Greenlanders are adaptable. Most of the kayaks I saw were built along

traditional lines; however, all except museum pieces were covered in canvas or nylon. Modern paints were used. In fact, Hypalon was the paint of choice, where affordable and available. Metal fasteners and urethane glues are used in kayak construction.

3. Most Greenland paddles I saw were shouldered. Many Greenlanders used the canted stroke. None used the low, horizontal, American “Greenland-style” forward stroke.
4. Much to my surprise, many Greenland competitors (there were over 130 of them) did not know how to roll. Some specialized in racing and portaging, others in rolling, and the very best in all phases of kayaking.
5. Most of the kayaks at the competition were extremely low-volume with a

keelson and two chines. Some were multi-chined, more similar to Alaskan and north Canadian designs.

6. Sealskin akuilisqaqs and tuilikis were not the preferred garb of most paddlers—they wore them only to comply with the rules. Sealskin seems to draw heat away from the body. Neoprene seemed to be everyone’s first choice for practicing, and many thought it should be allowed in competition.
7. The qajaq pervades Greenlandic culture. The Nuuk coat of arms features a kayak paddle. Kayak posters and photographs are omnipresent.
8. Some Greenlanders feel that personal flotation devices should be used; others feel that PFD’s are useless.

Greenland kayaking is not represented by a unified, static group of concepts and designs. Rather, it is evolving, as it has been for centuries, and Greenlanders embrace the future with enthusiasm.

My trip to Greenland opened a new world to me. I met new friends, experienced an invigorating lifestyle that prompted me to reflect on my day-to-day existence in the U. S. The world is much broader than our lives lead us to believe.

Floridian Mark Molina won three gold medals in the 2003 Greenland National Kayaking Championships in Nuuk. An ACA Instructor Trainer in Traditional Coastal Kayaking, Mark writes frequently on traditional technique for various paddlesport publications and travels widely to teach and present at paddling events.



MONTREAL MADNESS 2003

be gently pushed back into the Old Port or get a quick ride down river, avoiding turbulence and the eddy line. Also today, the Coast Guard hovercraft is breaking up 40 inch thick ice upriver and that is not helping matters. Quicker than one can say “cheese”, the ice density increases and fills up much of the eddy. Suddenly, five of us find ourselves paddling in an ice field. Jonathan and Brian are quick and wise enough to paddle out before there are no more openings in the field. David is the closest to the end of the eddy. For a moment it seems the ice his kayak is sitting on will drift into the current.

SLUSH BALL FROLIC



We struggle to get our kayaks moving by pushing them on the sides with the hands. After a while, David and I get out of our kayaks. We walk, hop, slide, and crawl over the floating pieces of ice. Meanwhile, Todd impresses us all by his very efficient and fast backward sliding over ice. Mark and Joe are already at a dockside ladder. We climb up and haul out the kayaks. All of our party is soon out of the water.

Ice prevented us from paddling to Bellerive, but we nevertheless had a good time and increased the awareness of Greenland paddling in Montreal. We did not make the roll competition, but had a great experience. Stay tuned for Montreal Madness 2004!

A Word of Caution on Ice Paddling

The conditions in which the Montreal Madness occurred are a little extreme. Most participants are members of the Frostbite Paddlers, a group of experienced paddlers from Champlain who are used to and prepared for subfreezing conditions. All wear proper cold-water protection. They are a bold, hard group, not mindless fools.

If you intend to do some ice paddling yourself, become better informed on the specific challenges of this environment.

For more information on the dangers of cold water, read the Champlain Kayak Club article, “Cold Water Paddling And Hypothermia”, available online <http://www.ckayak.com/coldwater.html>, and Nicolas Bertrand’s article, “Breaking The Ice: Winter Paddling”, available online from Sea Kayaker <http://www.seakayakermag.com/02Dec/ice01.htm>.

Even with proper preparation, experience, and knowledge, ice paddling is risky. Despite the risks, or maybe because of them, you might discover that with the right equipment and the proper skills, the snowy months of the year can be great for paddling.

****Greenlandic words for rolling, side sculling, and balance bracing.**

Nicolas Bertrand is a schoolteacher from Montreal. Beside teaching and spending time with his lovely wife and son, kayak tripping is what he loves.



Rolling, Rolling, Rolling

Re-awakening, My Favorite Pastime

By Cheri Perry

I've been a sea kayaker for the past fifteen years. In addition to my real job, I have taught other people how to paddle. Courses in basic kayak skills, Eskimo rolling, and guided trips filled my spare time. As a single mom and sole provider for my son, Josh, there were few spare moments for personal paddling. A highlight for me was escaping from work for a few hours with Josh. We would challenge each other as to how long and tall we could stand up in our kayaks, followed by the inevitable rescue practice. During these times, I learned to enjoy the brief moments when I could hang upside down, undisturbed by ringing telephones and the pressures of life. I learned to delight in the simplicity of submersion, to enter a darker, silent, more peaceful world, perform a roll, breathe air and feel sunshine on my face, flip over to quiet darkness, roll, breathe warm air, down, and up, and down again. Roll, roll, and roll.

The small child grew and no longer comes out to play with Mommy. Life ticks on. A burning desire to travel to far-off exotic places where I could paddle on forever burns deep within me. I fuel it by attending slide shows and reading books by others who have paddled the Maine Island Trail, Alaska islands, or the coast of Labrador. Rolling still calls to me as my inexpensive alternative to such high adventures.

IN BILL WHITCOMBS KAYAK



One roll leads to another. One day Jay Babina encourages me to roll with a Greenland paddle and says "Hey, Greg Stamer is coming to town this weekend for a demo, classes, and a slide show

START POSITION FOR THE ELBOW ROLL



FINISH POSITION FOR THE ELBOW ROLL



of Greenland. Why don't you come?" SLIDES of GREENLAND echoes in my head. I'll be there! I attended the Saturday evening slide show and when it was announced that there was an opening in his class the next morning, my hand shot up!

Frustration was the best word for the morning portion of Greg's class. Since my only experience with a stick consisted of a couple of rolls and no forward stroke, using the West Greenland paddle had me literally going in circles. Fortunately, the afternoon went better, and we moved onto the fun stuff. I balanced, sculled, braced, and rolled. I found a new toy in that funny little stick thing. A whole new world opened up for me that day.

One year later, I am the proud owner of a low-cut North Bay. This year I met Greg again at Arctic Boat Weekend in Mystic and it was with passion that I watched the rolling demo, absorbing

every move. At Greg's suggestion, I purchased John Heath's video "Rolling with Maligiaq" and watched it over and over, until my family rose up in revolt. Although a smooth forward stroke still eludes me, I have learned more new rolls. Recently I did the elbow roll. Just the other day I was able to start and end a roll on the forward deck, using the throwing stick. So thanks Jay, Greg and Bill (my inexhaustible rolling buddy) for re-awakening my favorite pastime.

Cheri Perry lives in Connecticut and has been paddling for 15 years. She has worked at the Maine Island Kayak Company as a guide on occasion, and currently does a small amount of personal instruction.



Tuiliks

Versatile garments with variety

By Shawn Baker

By now, most Qajaq USA members are already familiar with the tuilik. (Pronounced “do-ee-leek”) If you haven’t noticed this versatile garment yet, it is the Greenlanders’ long, traditional paddling suit, which provides the function of a drytop, hood, and sprayskirt in one elegantly simple piece.

Traditional tuilit (pl.) were constructed of sealskin and cut in a manner so as to not only minimize seams, but also place them in a position where their bulk would not be uncomfortable. Seams were also minimized in areas where water could pool, like the tops of the shoulders.

The tuilik was first softened by soaking in seawater, stretched to make them more pliable, rubbed a long time for softness, then rubbed with blubber for water-proofness. Pavia Lumholt mentioned that, “Sealskin tuiliks are very wet and cold.” Donning a wet, clammy leather garment, then submerging oneself in near-freezing seawater isn’t an enjoyable experience. Many modern Greenlanders wear a wetsuit or drysuit under the sealskin tuilik required for the annual Qaannat Kattuffiat competitions.

PAVIA WEARING A BROOKS TUILIK



Outside of competitions, most Greenlanders wear the Brooks neoprene tuilik. The Greenlandic word for a neoprene tuilik is tuiliusaq, or “tuilik-like”. Angela Lee, of Brooks Paddle Gear,

told me that they have been making the neoprene tuilik for about 10 years now.

Hans Kleist-Thomassen and Thomas Quinn of Vancouver had the first neoprene tuiliks made for their own use. Angela writes, “Thomas came to our factory and spoke to my father-in-law who owned our business at that time. George Brooks thought the whole idea was crazy and it took much persuading to get him to make the first few tuiliks.”

Hans Kleist-Thomassen says, “Basically the neoprene tuilik is made as simply as possible, based on the old one made of seal skin, combined with Georges experience in manufacturing neoprene garments, and Thomas’s ability to bring our thoughts to George, the Brooks neoprene tuilik is, after my opinion, the best rolling garment of today.”

Neoprene tuiliks then caught on in Nuuk, soon spread to the rest of Greenland, then Scandinavia and North America.

SHONA LALONDE WEARING A BROOKS TUILIK



Mark Rogers of Superior Kayaks began in 1991 with a pattern “originally based on HC Peterson’s book and modified to provide extra room for a PFD under the jacket and also to allow more range of movement,” writes Celeste Rogers, “We introduced our first tuiliks in canvas sealed with a mixture of linseed oil and beeswax. These proved to be too bulky.” They have since begun producing Goretex tuiliks, and have recently released a Goretex/Neoprene tuilik with neoprene and gaskets to provide better seals.

For those wishing to try their hand at building a tuilik, Christopher Cunningham provides instructions in his book, “Building the Greenland Kayak”. Chris writes, “I shifted the pattern and the style used for the traditional Greenland cotton anorak. The hood is no longer a piece of the back and it is much easier to make.” Chris credits “the protection the tuilik provides for the neck and ears,” for making rolling demonstrations possible. These instructions produce a nice, anthropometrically sized tuilik, but work best for non-stretch fabrics like nylon, Goretex, or canvas. With stretchier neoprene, the pattern can be taken in so the tuilik isn’t excessively baggy.

With sealskin being difficult to obtain in the US, I decided to try building a canvas tuilik, which would have similar in-water performance. I began with H.C. Petersen’s diagram, and had to scale the hood significantly to fit. Perhaps there was some difference in size between my Anglo-European head and the Inuit it was designed for; maybe the original pattern was optimized for sealskin use. I needed to make the hood much shorter, the neck longer, and slightly reduce the depth of the hood behind my ears. The hood pattern is available at: http://www.qajaqusa.org/common_images/tuilikhood.gif, and works well in both canvas and neoprene. Celeste Rogers noted that they had also started with the H.C. Petersen pattern, “Hood fit is such an integral part of the tuilik that each Superior Kayaks jacket is custom sewn for proper fit.”

SHAWN SEWING NEOPRENE TUILIK



Brooks' hood pattern is more similar to a surf or dive wetsuit hood. Hans Kleist-Thomassen mentioned that, "I think the hood on Brooks tuilik is fitting perfect, better than the original in sealskin. And the way it is manufactured is good for movements, etc. We have troubles with sealskin tuiliks, where the hood is not fitting perfect, and have to use thin ropes to adjust it, and what ever you do, it always leaks."

It has been difficult to find a waterproofing agent for canvas that is sufficiently flexible, durable, and still waterproof. Mark Young, of Colorado, had some success using Butcher's Wax on his canvas tuilik.

MARK YOUNG IN CANVAS TULIK



Using the same pattern I developed for my canvas tuilik, I also created a neoprene tuilik, which I greatly prefer. Some know this suit as "The World's Longest Tuilik". A sheet(4ft X 7ft) of economy grade neoprene, which is enough for one tuilik, can be purchased for about \$50, including shipping. Sizing your own tuilik takes some guesswork, and the glue needed for a waterproof seam is stinky stuff. 'Rolling your own' is a rewarding process, but buying from the pros is recommended if you want a guaranteed, no-fuss fit.

Neoprene is a fabric which is much more forgiving of fit, and is much more comfortable for that reason. It is also significantly warmer in cold water. The Greenlanders "do not make tuiliks of canvas, I have seen few tries, but maybe because of their capabilities, they were not so successful with them," said Hans Kleist-Thomassen, "Tuiliks of canvas are not common here."

For wintertime use, a drysuit must be worn under a canvas or Goretex tuilik. However, the thinner Goretex Superior Kayaks tuiliks are much more comfortable

over a drysuit than neoprene. Neoprene tuiliks are well suited to cold-water use, but consideration should be given to immersion protection for the legs and torso in the event of a wet exit.

SHAWN BAKER IN HIS NEOPRENE TULIUSAQ



I asked Richard Nonas—who owns both a Superior Kayaks Goretex only tuilik, and a Brooks neoprene tuilik—about his preference. "I like the Goretex tuilik, but it is no substitute for my neoprene one. It is certainly wetter; that is, much more difficult to adjust to the point of stopping all face and cockpit leakage. But it doesn't leak enough to bother me. I use the Goretex when the water and air is too warm for the neoprene, but too cold for the Brooks half-skirt --and it's the best solution I've found for that. Neoprene in summer, or fall here, is quite uncomfortably hot. --I also sometimes wear the Goretex over a dry-suit in winter; its much less restricting than the Brooks tuilik over dry-suit combination is. They are basically different kinds of garments; different tools. It is worth remembering that seal-skin tuiliks are much more like Goretex ones than neoprene ones; they do not stretch or comfortably cling like neoprene, but are, in fact, a sort of stiffer, harder to adjust, more painful to wear, roughed-up, greasy, thickened, extremely beautiful and bad-smelling Goretex."

RICHARD NONAS IN HIS GORETEX TULIK



Thomas Quinn noted that, "When the sealskin is in proper condition, it is wonderfully soft, and almost as limp as neoprene, but still greasy and stinky. The tuiliks condition is dependent on the grandmother!"

MALIGIAQ A IN SEALSKIN TULIK



It is worth noting that tuiliks were not originally designed for PFD compatibility. The US and Canadian Coast Guards require an accessible PFD for every person in any watercraft. Kayakers are not exempt. It is a highly personal decision not to wear a PFD, and should not be taken lightly. The Superior Kayaks tuilik is sized to wear a PFD underneath. A PFD is a snug fit under the Brooks neoprene tuilik, and a bulky feel over it. I have tried both Mustang and SOSpenders over my neoprene tuilik, and they seem to be a good compromise. The SOSpenders can be orally inflated.

In the event of a capsize and wet exit, a sizeable air bubble can be held near the upper torso. You can also draw your legs up inside the tuilik for warmth. The air bubble provides a great deal of flotation, and is a great side benefit, but it is not up to standard as a substitute for a PFD.

Rolling and sculling with a tuilik almost seems unfair. It's unpleasant at best to go back to a restrictive sprayskirt. Wearing a tuilik to learn the roll is an unexpected bonus. With air in the tuilik, you will find even greater buoyancy than from a PFD, and a much greater range of motion. I cannot recommend tuiliks highly enough. If you don't already own one, consider the various options for purchasing or buying one; get it, get out there, and get wet!

For additional information:

Brooks Wetsuits Ltd.
www.brookspaddlegear.com

Notes from the Regions

THE NORTHEAST

If you're in the Northeast, feel free to send in more tidbits for the next issue. keith@qajaqusa.org

FROM THE NORTHWEST

Filed By: Mike Hanks
QAJAQ USA PNW Regional Advisor

PLAY DAY ON LIBERTY BAY

Play Day on Liberty Bay, hosted by **John and Tess Doornink**, 9/13-14/03.

Several new SOF kayaks launched there, belonging to **Andrew Doornink**, **Marcel Rodriguez**, and **Shawn Baker**.

Three kayaks were launched with temporary skins, including **Ken and Jeff Jenkins**, and **Tammy Hanks**. Great night paddle with bioluminescence. Ropes were also set up for practice. Lots of kids and adults were kayaking and playing on the ropes.

WCSK SYMPOSIUM

Tim Mattson instructed at the WCSK Symposium, 9/19-21/03.

DELMARVA PADDLERS RETREAT

Harvey Golden, **Cathy Tucker**, **George Dyson**, **Mike Hanks**, and **Shawn Baker** all took a wrong turn somewhere near central Washington and were seen in the vicinity of the Delmarva Paddlers Retreat. **Shawn** and **Mike** launched their folding Anas Acutas there, 10/3-5/03.

TUILIK PARTIES

Tuilik party at **Ken Jenkins's** house, 11/1/03

Tuilik party at **Shawn Baker's** house, 11/2/03

If you're in the Northwest, feel free to send in more tidbits for the next issue. mike@qajaqusa.org

THE GREAT LAKES AREA

If you're in the Great Lakes Area, feel free to send in more tidbits for the next issue. dave@qajaqusa.org

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Ph: (920) 732-3784

AnorAK – 2002
Tuilik article by Dubsid
<http://members.aol.com/gokayak/anorak/index.html>

<http://seacanoec.org/tuilik.htm>
MASK 'The Drift' Newsletter - THE TUILIK - THEN and NOW, by Tom Carroll

Sea Kayaker - "Tuiliq Review" by Christopher Cunningham, Issue 72, Oct. 1999

Building the Greenland Kayak: A Manual for Its Construction and Use
By Christopher Cunningham
ISBN 0071392378,
Ragged Mountain Press, 2002

WaterBug Products Co
<http://waterbugproducts.com/>
– Neoprene Sheet

Shawn Baker is an Instructor, kayak builder, and Sisimuit QU-2005 hopeful from Kalispell, Montana.



SHARE THOSE HAPPENINGS. Publish Your Experiences in the MASIK.

Any traditional kayaking related material is encouraged (e.g. baidarkas, etc).

On average articles would be one – two pages in length.

Longer articles would be acceptable.

Best if composed with a word processor

CRAFTSMANSHIP • TRAVEL SKILLS • ADVENTURES ACHIEVEMENTS • OTHER

Accompany Your Text With Photos

The optimal format: JPEG, 300DPI color, 4-6 inches wide.

Material submitted doesn't have to be flawless.

Grammar and spelling will be reviewed.

Typos will be corrected.

Changes deemed necessary will be made only upon approval from author.

A draft will be available to the author for review prior to publication.

Send your material as email attachments to:

bobby@qajaqusa.org



QAJAQ USA

Membership Application



We welcome members outside of the US, and overseas.
Please print your information and send in form with payment.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership: New Member Renewal

Please make check or money-order, in U.S. Funds, payable to **Qajaq USA, Inc.**

Subscribing \$35 Supporting \$50 Sustaining \$100 Patron \$150

Corporate members please consider sustaining or patron membership. Sustaining and Patron members will be recognized in newsletter.

- Member Items:**
- Subscribing** (two logo stickers)
 - Supporting** (two logo stickers + embroidered patch)
 - Sustaining** (two logo stickers + embroidered patch + Qajaq USA T-shirt)
 - Patron** (Sustaining perks + Signed Kayak Survey Drawing by Harvey Golden)

Qajaq USA silk-screened cotton T-shirts are available for \$15 each. (One shirt is complementary with Sustaining and Patron memberships)

T-Shirts: Quantity/Size: ___ Small ___ Medium ___ Large ___ Xtra Large

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