

The MASIK

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



www.qajaqusa.org

Editor's Corner

Bobby Curtis

The old adage "Variety is the spice of life" has brought a refreshing change to my paddling experience. I've been paddling my latest kayak creation. It's 17.5 ft long with a beam of 20 inches. It has about 2 inches of rocker at the bow and stern, something I wasn't inclined toward building until I paddled some SOF's last year at the Mystic Arctic Festival. Those kayaks were very easy to maneuver and yet also tracked quite well. The kayaks I'm used to building tracked like a train and were not very maneuverable unless they were leaned quite heavily. I'm finding that it's more enjoyable paddling a kayak that turns readily and also can track when I want it to.



Variety is also the theme of this issue of the MASIK. Articles on traditional kayaking building, design, Greenland competition, rope gymnastics, and touring with an SOF further demonstrate the diversity that is emerging among our members. While I'm not inclined to competing or learning rope gymnastics, traditional kayaking continues to be the fuel I use to revitalize my life and fend off those senior moments that frequently look for a way to intrude. If traditional kayaking has added value to your life, let our readers know by publishing an article in the MASIK.

Recently, the MASIK also has added another traditional kayaker to its staff. Please welcome Wes Ostertag from Milan, NY who has signed on as a proof reader.

MISSION

Qajaq USA is a non-profit membership organization that is officially recognized by [Qaannat Kattuffiat](http://www.qajaqusa.org) (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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In this Issue

Page 2

Qajaq Talk

Page 3

Misterie and the Necromancer

Page 7

My First Kayak

Page 9

My Highly Rockered Greenland Kayaks

Page 11

Rope Gymnastics 101

Page 16

2004 Greenland Competition

Page 17

Kayak Design DVD Review

Page 18

Skinboats of Costa Rica

Link to other Masik issues.

<http://www.qajaqusa.org/QUSA/newsletter.html>

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Qajaq Talk

Greg Stamer

In this issue of the MASIK, Dubsid presents his impressions of the 2004 Greenland championship. Past editions of the MASIK have included championship articles by Cheri Perry and Mark Molina. I feel that Qajaq USA needs to publish as many of these accounts as possible, because the Greenland competitions are still very poorly understood by many kayakers, including even Qajaq USA members.

The annual Greenland kayaking competition, QAANNAMIK UNAMMERSUARNEQ (QU), was first opened to kayakers outside of Greenland in 2000. According to a Greenlandic informant, the championships were "opened" to allow the Greenlanders to hone their skills. During one Qaannat Kattuffiat board meeting, someone suggested that if the Greenlanders want to ensure that they are the best kayakers in the world, that they must invite the world.

During QU-2002, I had a discussion with Qaannat Kattuffiat president, Jenseeraq Amondson ("Jens"). When I asked Jens how Qajaq USA could best support

Qaannat Kattuffiat, he replied that we need to get more kayakers to participate in the championship. Jens does not just want Qajaq USA members who are expert racers or can perform most of the rolls – but everyone who wants to visit Greenland, share, and participate.

The Greenland competitions are not the Olympics. You will find kayakers of all ages, skills and capabilities -- ranging from kayakers who can perform only a few rolls, to expert kayakers who can perform all of the rolls. Everyone is welcome, including you! This is not a rolling competition. Rolling comprises just two of the competition events. Rules for foreign participants are still evolving, so expect some confusion. During the competition, forget schedules and allow things to happen when they happen. Realize that this is their competition -- you are a guest. The competition is a cultural and social event. Combine a family picnic, with the fun you have with friends at an event like SSTIKS, Delmarva, etc, and then throw in a very challenging competition. Add cultural elements and a profound reverence for kayaks (that is difficult to understand if you haven't been to Greenland), and you might start to get a vague idea of what the competitions are all about.

Following are some short impressions by people who have attended the competitions. I hope that these snippets give you a flavor of the true meaning and experience of the competition. I also hope that this whets your appetite for visiting Greenland in the future.

"There are no professional paddlers in Greenland, only recreational paddlers. ... Our kayaking National Championships is held as a family gathering and kayaking feast. Of course we compete and shout after each other when the competition is going on, but afterwards we are good friends again." From the competition FAQ at http://www.qajaqusa.org/QK/competition_faq2/competition_faq2.html.

– Hans Kleist-Thomassen, Qajaq Nuuk, competition organizer

What the competition is like? Well I went last year and I'm going this year and I still don't know what to expect! It teaches you things!! How to slow down. About people ... about caring about people, how to have fun...kayaking is interesting too! It's a chance to immerse yourself in another culture. By competing you are IN it as opposed to watching from afar. It's kind of like, dropping back into the fifties, except that there are picture phones! It's a world of contrasts! You get to meet the most relaxed, courageous people!

"I guess it just indescribable???" – Cheri Perry. Cheri participated in QU-2004

What's the competitions like and what's it not like? I think, the truth is, that you can't really know for sure until it's over. I understand why people, traveling thousands of miles, want to prepare themselves for a unique event in a remote country. The problem is, it's not possible to nail down exactly what's going to happen. But from where I'm standing it is very easy:

"There is going to be a gathering with some of the best kayakers in Greenland. There is going to be a competition, and you will be in it somehow.

Now: Enjoy!"

– Pavia Lumholt. Pavia participated in QU-2000

Information on the Greenland competition can be found on the Qajaq USA website at <http://www.qajaqusa.org/QK/QKmain.html#competition> .

Self-Built Traditional Style Boats

A Regular MASIK Feature

EVENTS

CALENDAR

Misterie and the Necromancer

Qajaq for father - Qajaq for son

By Andrew Elizaga



At my first sea kayak class my instructor George said, "Your kayak is too big for you." He said it more than once. I was paddling a stitch-and-glue Pygmy Osprey purchased over a year earlier from a builder at the 2003 West Coast Kayak Symposium. Typical of the Pygmy boats, the Osprey has a cavernous cockpit. I had glued blocks of minicell foam inside to lock my hips and knees and improve my boat control. I was still having a difficult time learning how to Eskimo roll and began wondering if it was even possible in my barge of a kayak.

MISTERIE'S HORNS



MISTERIE'S TOGGLES



George happened to be the first non-Greenlander to take the Greenland Qajaq Club's two-week training camp in 1990. He earned their prestigious gold pin for demonstrating rolling expertise. During our lunch break, he demonstrated Greenland paddle technique standing by the picnic table. He had a pile of Greenland paddles which he encouraged us to try out at the end of the class. No one seemed interested. I have to give George credit for introducing me to Greenland padding, but at the time all I wanted to do was learn a

GREENLAND NATIONAL KAYAKING CHAMPIONSHIP

The Greenland Kayaking Association welcomes kayakers from all countries and of all skill levels to participate in this event. Please join your fellow Qajaq USA members in this exciting and educational contest in Greenland.

Qaannat Kattaffiat Event

When: July 12-19, 2005
Where: Paamiut, Greenland
Contact: Hans Kleist-Thomassen (Qajaq Nuuk)
E-mail: thomassen@greenet.gl
Website: www.qajaqusa.org/QK/QU-2005/QU_2005_schedule.html

WEST COAST WOODEN KAYAK RENDEZVOU R2K5

A gathering of kayak builders with demonstrations on kayak and paddle building, plus rolling using the Greenland paddle. Bring the whole family.

When: August 5-7, 2005
Where: Fort Worden State Park Pt. Townsend, WA
Contact: Redfish Custom Kayak & Canoe Co. 153 Otto St, Ste G Pt. Townsend, WA 98368 (360) 808-5499 or 379-1131
E-mail: joe@redfishkayak.com
Website: www.redfishkayak.com

QAJAQ TRAINING CAMP '05

Instruction geared for traditional "Greenland style" paddling. Food & lodging available onsite. Meals prepared by Michael Gray of Uncommon Adventures. Demo Betsie Bay Kayaks. Win a Greenland Paddle from Midwest Kayak. Win equipment from Brooks. Attendance is limited to 50, and you must register early to ensure a spot. Please use our registration form. Camp Lookout is on Lower Herring Lake & Lake Michigan south of Frankfort, MI.
Qajaq USA Event

When: August 26-28, 2005
Where: Camp Lookout Frankfort, Michigan
Contact: Dave Braun
E-mail: dave@qajaqusa.org
Website: www.waterholic.net/qajaqtc/

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A page has been added for the new QAJAQ USA Online Store— http://www.qajaqusa.org/QUSA/merchandise_online.php. The store has a selection of apparel, membership items and publications. Profits from the sale of these items help fund Qajaq USA in our efforts to support the

Qaannat Kattuffiat and promote Greenland-style kayaking. The store is managed by Jennifer Torres and her team. Visit it often as they are at work designing additional items for the store.



reliable roll with a Euro-paddle.

At the next year's West Coast Sea Kayak Symposium (2004), I met Chris Cunningham. A crowd waited on the dock as he slipped into his black Elasto Seal-coated canvas skin-on-frame Greenland folder. "Watch – this is going to be good," a friend told me. Chris performed the multitude of Greenland rolls and demonstrated use of the harpoon and floats. "I want to learn how to do THAT," I said. I bought an autographed copy of his book "Building the Greenland Kayak" and ordered a custom Greenland paddle from Don Beale. The forward stroke with a Greenland paddle seemed so easy and smooth, especially when paddling with a head wind. It also made a huge difference in my roll. I decided that I needed to build my own skin-on-frame qajaq. Although comfortable for touring and camping, my beamy Osprey had difficulty doing all the things I wanted it to, and I finally had to admit that I had outgrown it. I wanted a lightweight, low-volume narrow kayak with a custom fit that I could hand carry to the beach, put on edge to carve turns, balance brace, and do all the Greenland rolls and parlor tricks.

Sometime in October 2004, my paddling season ended and boat building began. In addition to Cunningham's book, I also read Morris's "Building Skin-On-Frame Boats" and visited Corey Freedman's Skin Boat School in Anacortes, Washington. Although Corey wasn't there at the time, I met a student named John, who graciously showed me around the workshop, occasionally stopping to sprinkle sawdust on droppings from their pet goose. "Have you heard of Qajaq USA? I'm a member," he said. John was up from California and living in a tree house nearby. I was in awe of his kayaks, which were beautifully finished with carved caribou antler toggles and leather seats. I snapped plenty of pictures for future reference.

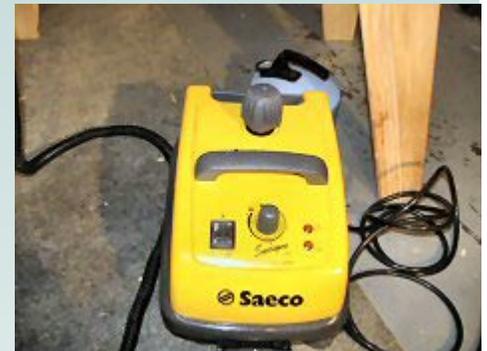
NECROMANCER'S TEETH



My first step in construction was to make a few trips to the landfill to clean out my garage. Then I ordered several rough cut 18 ft boards of green quarter-sawn Alaskan Yellow Cedar (much more than I needed), and bought a few hand tools. The woodworking started at a glacial pace: I ripped boards with a circular saw and hand planed each surface, doing it all in my cramped one-car garage. The wood was a pleasure to work with, incredibly clear and intensely fragrant.

When the time came to steam bend the ribs, I put together a simple steamer from a tea kettle and electric hot plate. This gave off a little more than a warm mist -- I clearly needed a better way to generate steam. I remembered that I purchased a Saeco steam cleaner some months ago in a desperate moment trying to find an appliance to clean mildew off the bathroom shower tiles. It turned out to be an effective, safe, and controllable source of very hot steam.

SAECO STEAM CLEANER



When the frame was completed, I raced through Christmas Day to get the plastic on for the plastic wrap test. The event was a family affair: My wife carried the camcorder and I hung the kayak on my shoulder as we walked down the street to the neighborhood beach. Our two kids followed, trying not to look too embarrassed for their crazy dad and his plastic wrap/duct tape boat. Curious strangers watched from the fishing pier as I squeezed into the cockpit. As expected with the V-shaped hull, it seemed tippy at first, but not too bad. It tracked well. Four minutes on the water was enough for me to decide it was time to stitch on the skin.

In January, 4 months after I started boat building, my qajaq was ready to launch. The tuilik I ordered from Brooks had just arrived and I was eager to try rolling. There was no elaborate naming ceremony or champagne –just my wife standing on the fishing pier again with a

camera. I got in and paddled – again it felt a little tippy, but not too bad. It was a problem with the paddler, not the qajaq, and I would get used to it, like riding a bike. I tried side sculling -- that was easy. Then I slowed the sculling motion down and froze in a balance brace. I felt like I could have floated on my back forever. I put on nose clips and tried a roll. I splashed onto my side, but couldn't get under – with all the floatation of a tuilik and pfd, I was stuck face down in a balance brace! After a short struggle, I pushed myself under and rolled up effortlessly. The doors to the world of Greenland rolling had just opened up for me! On that foggy winter day, I gave my qajaq a name -- “Misterie”.

MISTERIE



It took another month or two of minor modifications until I was completely finished with my qajaq. I cut out the floor boards and substituted a Thermarest camping pad and minicell foam back rest for a seat, painted her with a mix of brown and black marine paint – a color my wife dubbed “French Roast”-- installed leather thongs and maple toggles for the deck rigging, and pegged/epoxied steam-bent oak rub strips into the stem and stern. As expected, I grew accustomed to the initial instability. After trying her out on trips around Puget Sound in currents and waves, I can say that I'm happy with the way she handles.

“...I wanted to build another qajaq. My excuse was that my 11 year-old son, Joel, needed one.”

NECROMANCER FRAME



Ultimately though, I wanted to build another qajaq. My excuse was that my 11 year-old son, Joel, needed one. A voracious reader and enthusiast of video games and Japanese manga (Japanese style of comic books or animated cartoons), Joel suffers from an overwhelming fear of dogs which makes him reluctant to spend any time in wide outdoor spaces, like parks and beaches. His normal habitat is in front of a computer. My gamble was that kayaking might get him outside, but away from dogs on the relative “safety” of the water. Also I really wanted another chance at boat building,-- an opportunity to do a better job the second time around.

NECROMANCER FRAME FITTING



Joel's kayak would be 15 feet long with a 19 inch beam – traditionally proportioned to his size but still large enough for an adult (meaning me). By using readily available dimensional Western Red Cedar, I avoided having to rip and plane every surface. I reduced the weight of the frame considerably by cutting the gunwales and thwarts thinner, spacing the ribs farther apart, and omitting the first and last ribs. I aimed for a hull with

THE VELUWE RALLY QAJAQ EVENT

On the 24th of September, enthusiasts and builders of traditional sea kayaks will gather to share experiences and knowledge.

The location is the start (and campsite) for the Veluwe Rally, with sandy beaches. The location is very well suited for rolling workshops as well as ropes gymnastics. The 25th we will be paddling the Veluwe Rally.

When: September 24-25, 2005
Where: Recreatuikak area
 Rhederlaagneer Arnhemthe Netherlands
 Giesbeek, Netherlands
Contact: Tom Steenberg
E-mail: veluwerally.qajaq@hetnet.nl

DELMARVA RETREAT 2005

This is one of the first all-Greenland events in the United States and the best known event of its type. This event is also known for bringing in guest instructors from Greenland. In the past Kaleraq Bech, Maligiaq Padilla and Pavia Lumholt have been guest instructors.
 Qajaq USA Event

When: Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2005
Where: Camp Arrowhead
 Rehoboth Bay
 Lewes, Delaware
Contact: Robin Snow
E-mail: robin@qajaqusa.org
Website: www.studiofurniture.com/delmarva/

Kayak Events

Find them and post them in
The MASIK.

Send your event information to:

bobby@qajaqusa.org

QAJAQ USA

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Dave Murphy Ontario, NY
James Tibensky Berwyn, IL
Steve Ulrich Houston, TX
Duncan R. Winning, OBE
 Largs, Scotland

a flat bottom for maximum stability and moderate rocker for better maneuverability. This time instead of marine paint, I dyed the nylon skin prior to spreading on the two-part urethane. I expected that Joel might want it bright red or blue, but he surprised me by requesting that it be black, with the traditional styling of leather thongs, and bone toggles. He named her "Necromancer".

JOEL BENDING RIBS



JOEL INSTALLING RIBS



We took Necromancer for her maiden voyage at the local university kayak club pool session. I was carving "bone" toggles (artificial ivory) and pegging in the leather rigging literally minutes before putting her on the car rack for the drive to the pool. Among all the curious whitewater kayakers (hasn't anyone here seen a homemade Greenland qajaq before?), I had Joel practice capsizing and wet exits until I was confident he could exit safely. He loved it and played in the pool until they turned the lights off on us. (A word of caution for any parent planning to put kids in a tippy homemade Greenland qajaq of their own: From hard experience I've learned that even though a child can wet exit in a pool doesn't mean that he will be able to do it after a sudden capsize in murky, cold salt water. In addition to continual wet exit practice, I recommend having kids paddle without a spray skirt, and installing outriggers. Also, paddle close by and be prepared for a rescue.)

PRACTICING A WET EXIT



PADDLING WITH OUTRIGGERS



NECROMANCER CLOSE-UP



I enjoy paddling short sea kayaks and was ecstatic the first time I paddled Necromancer in Puget Sound. I love the improved stability and maneuverability compared to Misterie. To impress inquisitive strangers on the beach, I would invite them to pick her up with one hand – she weighs 24 pounds, ready to paddle. Later, I installed outriggers that fit under the aft deck rigging when Joel is paddling. This makes a much more relaxed kayaking experience for both of us. I also experimented with a removable skeg which dramatically improved tracking. With a skeg, it is possible to have a kayak with both good maneuverability and strong tracking. Necromancer has become my favorite qajaq.

Kayak Specifications

“Misterie”

- Length Overall: 17 ft 6 in
- Depth to sheer: 7 in
- Beam 19 in
- Frame: Alaskan Yellow Cedar
- Skin: 8.9 Oz nylon and two-part polyurethane
- Weight: 35 lbs

“Necromancer”

- Length Overall: 15 ft
- Depth to sheer: 7.5 in
- Beam: 19 in
- Frame: Western Red Cedar and Alaskan Yellow Cedar
- Skin: 8.9 oz nylon and two-part polyurethane
- Weight: 24 lbs

Andrew Elizaga is an anesthesiologist. He and lives with his wife and two kids in Tacoma, Washington, and started sea kayaking in 2003. “Misterie” was his first woodworking project. When not building kayaks he can be found paddling around Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands.



My First Kayak

I paddle this kayak all the time now

By Richard Best



I built my first kayak in the winter of 2002-3. I followed Petersen’s “Instruction in Kayak Building”, reading it many times before actually getting to work. I wanted to use natural materials as much as possible, and found some heavy duty untreated cotton (denim!) fabric for the skin. I planned to paint it with linseed oil. I was intimidated by steam bending, so I decided to use green willow branches for the ribs. These were easy to find locally, and quite easy to bend, trim and fit. Judging the line of the keelson was very tricky and, as a beginner, this is where I found the book becomes less detailed. It states that, in Greenland, the average depth at the back of the cockpit from the top of the gunwales to the keelson is 15-20cm. I took the upper estimate. But the line towards the stem and stern is not really discussed. So I just looked, thought, wondered and GUESSED. A few times, when the lines of the ribs didn’t look right, I took 3-4 out again and replaced them

with new ones. Many ribs broke, but as I worked I found I could recognize the willow branches that were going to snap, and was more successful choosing the good ones.

COAMING AND AVATAQ



I lashed the keelson and chines with braided nylon cord, and painted the completed frame with linseed oil and turpentine (2:1) twice. I made the coaming from ash, 1cm x 4cm, which soaked (in the garden pond) for about 10 days beforehand. I used boiling water and gloves, and gradually bent the heated wood. The first two attempts failed, cracking where the wood grain ran out, but the third was a success.

Skinning the finished frame was a bit daunting. I tied the stern end of the frame to the wall of the building. I made a pocket in one end of the canvas and hooked it over the stern tip. With the frame supported, I clamped the other end of the canvas between wood offcuts and used the G-clamp as a hand hold to pull and tension the skin lengthways along the keelson. I tensioned it about 3 times in 24 hours, pinning it in place each time and finally sewing it over the tip of the bow.

I used nylon cord in a zigzag stitch across the deck, using an awl to make holes in the canvas, threading the cord through and tightening many times, until the skin was completely taut. I had read of a variety of stitch types that could be used for the centre seam. In the end I decided to use a pattern I had used before... in my work as a vet. The “suture” in question is used to close internal organs, without leaks! This seemed very appropriate. It also results in a seam which is quite flat on the top surface of the deck of the kayak, which looks neat.

I painted the skin with linseed oil/turpentine (2:1), and powdered chalk, and allowed it to cure (in about a week). Then I coated it with a warmed mix of linseed oil 500ml /turpentine 250ml /beeswax 150g. To this mix I added burnt umber pigment, to give the skin a more leathery look. The result was completely watertight, although I have applied extra wax/oil mix to vulnerable places like the seams on the deck. This took another ten days to cure.

On launching the kayak, it was obvious that there was a little too much volume aft. I also found getting into the cockpit excruciating, and had to shave a bit off the underside of the masik. And the footrest deckbeam was too close. After getting used to paddling it for a few months I decided to move the cockpit aft, by about 4-5 inches. This wasn’t as major an event as I feared, and it had the double

effect of greatly improving the trim and giving me a useable footrest. I had to patch the deck in front of the coaming, but that looks fine (to me).

Sewing The Deck Seam

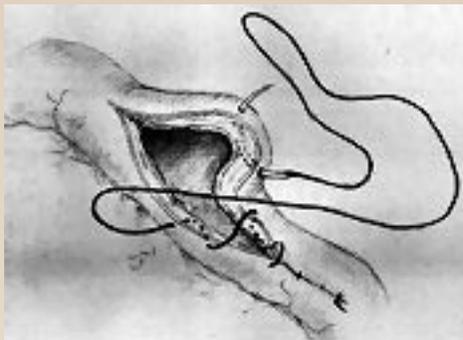
I'm a veterinarian and, having no books to refer to at the time, I just applied my professional knowledge to find a solution. Basically, to achieve a watertight seam in the (canvas) deck I used a "continuous inverting suture" exactly as I would use to close the stomach or intestinal wall of an animal (where obviously leaks are not a good thing!). Having tightened the skin I trimmed the edges down the centre of the boat, leaving an inch or two of spare material in case I made a mistake. I folded the edges down into the kayak. I anchored the sewing threads at bow and stern and sewed towards the cockpit, using a temporary batten as a guide to keep the seam reasonably straight.

The technique is simple enough. You make a stitch on one side, parallel to the edge, into the material from the top surface. The thread is then crossed to the opposite edge and repeats. Each subsequent stitch is set back by about half a stitch relative to the previous one. As this continues and is pulled tight the effect is to invert the edges of the skin into the kayak. In animals we sometimes put a second layer of stitching over the first, using exactly the same method. I had intended to do this on my boat, but was too impatient to start painting. I think that as long as the individual stitches are fairly small, say, not more than 1 cm, one "layer" should be effective. I haven't had any leaks yet, although I don't roll the kayak and it gets only light use.

THREAD IS STITCHED



THREAD IS PULLED TIGHT



I should point out that my theory has a flaw in that in animals this method stops fluid leaking OUT of the organ concerned, not INTO as in the deck of a kayak. However, it seems to be effective in both directions and the deck seam is flat and neat.

STITCH CLOSE UP



I paddle this kayak all the time now. I added a small skeg, lashed to the aft keel strip with bungee cord, to overcome slight weathercocking. My paddle is Cedar, with plastic (Corian) tips. I made a canvas tuilik, proofed with linseed/turpentine/wax/pigment. It looks good, but I much prefer my Reed Chillcheater <http://www.chillcheater.com/index.asp> tuilik if I'm going to be rolling. I have also made a canvas *avataq*, a bird dart and throwing stick, a harpoon and throwing stick, and a linerack. I'm currently working on a second, lower volume, kayak.

PADDLE IT ALL THE TIME NOW



Kayak measurements:

- Length - 565cm (18 ft 6 in)
- Beam - 53cm (20 7/8 in)
- Depth - 20cm (7 7/8 in)(at backrest)
- 28cm (11 in)(at masik)

Richard has been kayaking now for about 4 years, and did a little many years ago when in his teens. He lives in Kent, in southeast England, where there's plenty of sea kayaking locally. His E-mail address is rich.bestie@btinternet.com



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 E-mail attachments to:

bobby@qajaqusa.org

My Highly Rockered Greenland Kayaks

Just perfect for canoe ballet

By Bryan Hansel



“Every time I look at my skin-on-frame, I grin and think ‘Boy that kayak has a lot of rocker.’”

Every time I look at my skin-on-frame, I grin and think “Boy that kayak has a lot of rocker.” From the amount of rocker, it would appear that my 16’11”, 22” wide Greenland style kayak is related more to my whitewater boat than many of the kayaks from which it descends. It has so much rocker, that when I was building the boat and about half-way finished, a friend and I looked at my kayak wondering how it would paddle with all that extra rocker. It has about five inches in both the front and back – both of us had never seen such a long kayak with that much rocker. Before I covered it, I almost changed it to remove some of the rocker, but I’m glad I didn’t.

Why so much rocker? This is the main question that I receive when kayakers see my craft and I’ve wondered the same on several occasions, but a little background about me may come in handy when trying to figure out why I built a kayak like this. I like to turn. In almost all

the boats that I own, they have a tendency to favor turning over tracking. This is mainly because when I lived in Iowa and I built this skin-on-frame, I paddled on rivers which, although not whitewater, would turn abruptly and often. Iowa’s rivers also have an abundance of strainers, logs across the water, and electric fences to dodge, so it’s important to have a responsive boat to avoid these obstacles. But this isn’t the only reason that I favor a craft that turns; the other reason is that I paddle freestyle, which is often called canoe ballet. I’ve always enjoyed being able to spin a canoe in unending circles on small water. My main solo freestyle canoe is my favorite boat to paddle, and when compared to every long kayak that I had paddled, it was like comparing turning on a dime to turning on a tractor tire. In my skin-on-frame, I wanted to duplicate that ability to turn.

The second question that I get

asked after explaining that, is why not just use your whitewater kayak and, although it would have fit the bill, there were reasons to avoid it. The main reason was because I paddle with kayakers who have touring boats, and I didn’t want to have to work too hard to keep up with them. I figured that with a small investment in money, I could build a kayak that would turn and have a respectable speed to it. I never expected to tour out of a highly rockered kayak.

So, I went to work building the kayak. I used a combination of Mark Starr’s, Cunningham’s and Morris’s methods with some estimation and fudging on the rib sizes to gain some more rocker. I also left the ribs slightly more rounded hoping that it would gain me even more rocker. My methods worked producing a kayak with 5” of rocker front and back, but

before I was ready to completely commit to covering it with skin, I took it out to the lake and did a saran wrap test. Between the two of us that paddled it that day, we decided that while it was not the fastest kayak out there, it had a good combination of characteristics. The surprising characteristic was despite its ability to turn quickly, it also seemed to track on par with boats like the Romany. So, I covered it, hoping that our brief time spent on the water with it before it started to fill with water was enough to give me a good feeling about how it would end up.

SEWING ON THE SKIN



After a weekend of sewing and urethaning the skin, it was ready to go

FRAME AT LAKE MACBRIDE



and out to the lake it went. We paddled on a nearby lake, in slightly cold conditions – both water and air, but I decided to try and roll it anyway. My first attempt ended badly with me bailing out, and it was a slight struggle to get back into the small cockpit, but the second roll was a charm. I popped right back up without a problem.

My first attempt ended badly with me bailing out, and it was a slight struggle to get back into the small cockpit, but the second roll was a charm.

Over the next few months of paddling, the highly rockered skin-on-frame proved to be moderately fast with a good cruising speed, a strong turner, and borderline stable. It ended up meeting all my hopes that I had worked out in the design process. In waves it exceeded my expectations. From the smallest boat wake to three or four foot wind formed rollers, this kayak becomes extremely playful and predictable. It surfs fairly well, but I find that with the quick turning ability, I can be riding a wave and instantly turn back on it to meet the next head on. It does dive into waves and has proven to be a wet ride, but it seems to pop up quickly.

Those few months of paddling the skin-on-frame kayak convinced me that for my next long distance kayak trip, I would use a stitch and glue kayak based on my skin-on-frame. I took the lines off of the kayak at three locations and the stems. I then input them into Carlson Designs' Hulls program. This program gave me points that I could hand plot onto plywood. Two sheets of luan for the hull, left over cedar strips for the deck, and three weeks of work later, I had a stitch and glue kayak ready for my 560-mile trip down the Mississippi.

Over those 560 miles, I built up a good comparison between the boats. The stitch-and-glue is slightly longer at 17'6", but it doesn't seem any faster. It has slightly more volume above the water, than the skin-on-frame, so in waves it rides higher and drier. For some reason it seems to roll significantly easier than the skin-on-frame, even though the deck is slightly higher. They both turn equally well, but the stitch-and-glue isn't as fun in waves as the skin-on-frame. In the later, I can feel the boat move and change shape slightly as it rides over the crest and through the troughs of the waves. The

former doesn't change shape and I expect this difference in design changes the performance in waves.

My main learning experience from the Mississippi River trip was I love a boat that turns, although it isn't always the best for touring. On the river there were seldom days with waves higher than a foot, and the current tended to be pushing from behind. Because of the rocker, I worked harder at keeping the kayak going straight. Over those 560 miles, I wished for less rocker on several occasions, but the worst was when I crossed Lake Pepin. The wind was quartering for two days and it was a beast of a time to keep the kayak pointed where I wanted it to go.

Overall, I'm extremely satisfied with this highly rockered design. Although I wouldn't build it again as a touring boat (I have another design I'm going to build this year for that). I'm glad that it is one of the many boats in my fleet. For playing in waves, it can't be beat, and as a plus, it looks really cool.

Measurements For Hulls Input

Hulls is a free boat design program from Carlson Design <http://www.carlsondesign.com>. Despite its somewhat difficult user interface, it is a powerful marine design program. For converting you skin-on-frame into a stitch-and-glue, its simplicity can't be beat. Hulls works by using five control forms, called bulkheads, to define the shape of a boat; two of these are used to shape the stems, and three are used to determine the shape of the boat. Because of this, when taking measurements off of a kayak, only three locations need to have measurements taken from them.

Taking the measurements is a fairly easily process, if you have a few tools: a tape measure, a framing square, and a speed square. First, level the boat to the waterline and from gunwale to gunwale. After you are finished leveling, you are ready to take measurements.

LEVEL THE KAYAK



For the stems, I start at the point where the stem turns to the keel. Measure the height above the floor to this point. Then measure the distance back from the stem's tip to this point. To get the next measurement, imagine that your chine goes all the way forward to the stem. Take a height measurement from the floor to this imaginary point. Then, measure the distance back to this point from the tip of the stem. Do this for each chine and the sheer line. For complete accuracy, you can use your square, but you will probably revise these points to get a straight line in the program itself. These points then are entered into Hulls using the Offset Table Box.

It does dive into waves and has proven to be a wet ride, but it seems to pop up quickly.

TAKING MEASUREMENTS



For the three center bulkheads, you will need to pick three sections of your kayak to take measurements from. Run your tape measure down the length of the floor. The middle bulkhead should be

taken at the widest spot on your kayak. Then, for the other two, split the difference from the widest spot to the stems. Record these locations, because they will become the “Z” measurements in the Offset Table Box.

At each of these bulkhead locations, set your framing square on edge and butt it up against the sheer line. Then use the speed square to ride up and down the framing square. At the keel, each chine, and the sheer, measure the height from the floor, and distance from the framing square. You will have to subtract the distance from the framing square from half of the width of the kayak at each point in order to find the distance from center for each point. Make sure you are consistent in where you measure from on the chine. I measure from the center of the chine. These points will become the “X” and “Y” points in the Offset Table Box.

After you finish entering the points into Hulls, you should fair the boat by turning off “True View.” To learn more, read Dave Murphy’s detailed article that appears in the Winter 2004 issue of the Masik. <http://www.qajaqusa.org/QUSA/newsletter.html> There are also several good tutorials that teach Hulls available on the Internet.

Bryan Hansel is a writer and photographer living in Grand Marais, MN. You can learn more about him at www.bryanhansel.com. His hobby site devoted to paddling is www.nessmuking.com

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 or renew online at

http://www.qajaqusa.org/QUSA/membership_online.html

Rope Gymnastics 101

Allunaariaqattaarnek for Beginners

By Dubsida

The indigenous people of the far north not only fashioned kayaks entirely out of driftwood and animal parts, they also devised a complete workout gym and fitness program based on nothing more than braided sealskin harpoon line. The surprising variety of maneuvers possible on two horizontally suspended lengths of rope has evolved over many generations to serve as a training discipline, a competitive sport, and a learning aid for rolling. Today Greenlanders consider this activity such an integral part of kayaking that it is the only event in their National Kayaking Championships that takes place on dry land.

Rope exercises are good clean fun, they'll keep you fit, and the cost is a mere fraction of what you can spend on a kayak. In Greenland kids as young as 7 or 8 years old enjoy this activity, and both women and men of all ages participate. If you haven't given rope gymnastics a try, here's a basic introduction to get you started.

Recommendations For Beginners:

Forget about the “high ropes” for now.

There are two sets of maneuvers, one done on lines strung very tight above head level and the other hanging loosely down past chest height. Stick with the loose set-up. The high ropes require significantly more upper body strength, and structurally the increased rope tension puts much greater demands on the safety margin of your rigging. It's simpler to leave your ropes in the low configuration initially. The high maneuvers aren't in danger of extinction so you can get to them at a later time.

Don't go by the official measurements.

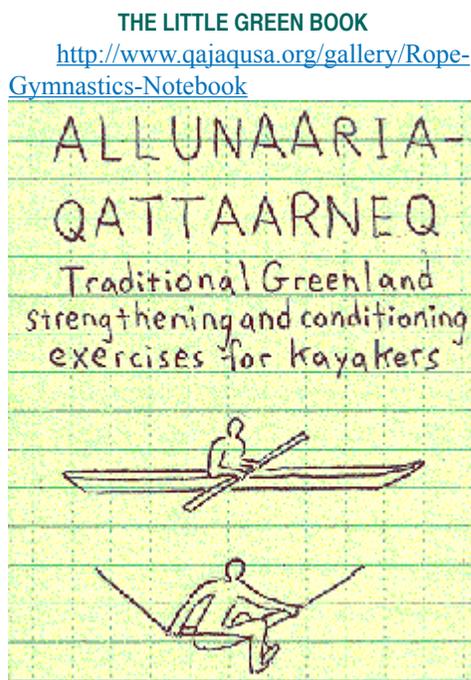
The more sag the rope has the easier most of the moves become. The *Qaannat Kattuffiat* “Rules For Kayaking Competition” specify that the low ropes should be 2 meters high at the attachment points and sag to 1.4 meters off the ground in the middle when pulled tight. But at the 2004 Greenland Championships the ropes sagged considerably lower than that. Also the spacing between posts and the thickness of the rope were influenced more by what was readily available than what the regulations dictated.

I recommend anchoring the ends of your rope at points as high as you can reach from a standing position or up to 6 inches higher (higher will make the exercises easier). Adjust the rope lengths so that both pieces are even with each other and when pulled tightly come down to about your naval. That will leave adequate clearance for your head when swinging upside down. The width of the span can be anywhere from eleven to

fifteen feet, but as wide as eighteen or as close as nine will work too.

Avoid sliding your hands along the length of the rope.

As you perform a maneuver the two lengths of rope may rotate within your fingers, but don't let them slip across your palms. This is often the cause of failure for some of the harder moves, and even if you succeed in spite of it your hands won't take this kind of abuse repeatedly. A big factor affecting slippery hands is the type of rope used. Thicker rope is easier to grip as well as stronger and therefore safer. Cold, dry palms can contribute to



slipping. You can counter this by applying climber's chalk to your hands or just plain water. To some extent sweat provides a bit of traction too, so indoors or during the summer you may not notice a problem.

Use padding, and not just on the floor.

You'll want to have some type of mattress, cushions, gym mats, or sheets of foam below the ropes. Padding on certain body areas is also recommended when getting started. The moves done sitting between the ropes put great pressure on a point at the inside edge of your legs slightly below the knees. You will definitely get bruised there initially. If heavy long pants aren't helping, try wearing an old farmer john style wet suit. Neoprene isn't very comfortable to sweat in, but it does let you concentrate on learning the correct timing and body motions. Wrapping pipe insulation around the rope may also work if you can get it to stay put.

Long sleeves will usually be enough to keep forearms and elbows protected. Competition rules do not allow gloves to be worn but there's no reason to forgo them at the introductory stage. Find a pair that doesn't slip. Neoprene gloves provide a good grip but will deteriorate quickly as the rope wears through the material. Try snug fitting leather gloves.

As you learn each maneuver, learn its Greenlandic name.

There are no standardized English descriptions yet, and there doesn't need to be if we make an effort to stick with the Inuit words. Inevitably we will at best be using corrupted pronunciations, but making an effort to go by the real names rightfully acknowledges the origin of rope gymnastics and credits the people who invented it. After all, the word "kayak" comes straight from the native tongue. (Say it all the way at the back of your throat for the most authentic sound.)

You can fake the rope pronunciations by following some simple rules. Whenever a word ends with the letters "ugu" pronounce it as one long "u." Secondly, the Greenlandic double L consonant is not in the English language. The closest equivalent is "shl." So a word like *Peqqullugu* would be pronounced PEH-KUH-SHLU. The genuine double L sound is made by touching the end of your tongue lightly to the roof of your mouth and breathing out. Finally, the English

speaking tendency to emphasize the second-to-last syllable of most words does not carry over to Greenlandic where the last and the third-from-last are favored.

The proper name for rope gymnastics, *Allunaariaqattaarneq*, at eight syllables and twenty letters long is probably not going to achieve widespread English acceptance the way "kayak" has. Comfortably saying AH-SHUL-NAR-EE-YAH-KAH-TAR-NUCK takes some practice. I suggest adopting the word *Qajaasaarneq* (KI-YAH-SAR-NUCK) instead. Technically this is only the name of one category of low rope moves, and translates to "like rolling a kayak." But it's a manageable four syllables, it doesn't have that odd double L sound in it, and it bears a familiar resemblance to the word "kayak."

The Right Rope

Nylon rope is widely available and very strong. It works reasonably well for *Allunaariaqattaarneq* (or *Qajaasaarneq* if you prefer) except that it stretches and it tends to be a bit slippery. I have found that many varieties of marine grade nylon rope are treated with a protective coating that makes them too slippery for demanding maneuvers. Climbing rope is somewhat better. Use the low-stretch static line variety rather than the more elastic belay line.

As far as rope thickness goes, 7/16" diameter can be considered the minimum acceptable size. Larger diameter rope from 1/2" to 5/8" works well. 3/4" is more costly but probably the most comfortable if you are doing low ropes for the first time. 3/8" diameter rope is definitely unacceptable, both in terms of breaking strength and handling suitability.

Hemp rope, also referred to as manila, yields a decent grip but has a very stiff and rather rough texture and tends to shed small pieces of fiber, which can occasionally lodge into skin like a splinter. The best that can be said for hemp is that it's cheap – about 25-30 cents per foot. But it is only half as strong as nylon and will degrade by rotting if not cared for. I wouldn't trust hemp under 5/8" diameter.

Polypropylene rope is not as strong as nylon but has much less stretch. Though it is widely used in marine and industrial applications, the stiff coarse texture and generally unsatisfactory feel make polypropylene poorly suited for rope

gymnastics.

I recommend polyester rope. It has little stretch, and is close to nylon in strength but provides a superior grip. The price is about 40 to 50 cents per foot for 5/8" and nice hefty 3/4" costs about 60 to 80 cents per foot.

Setting Up

For anchor points you can use trees, rafters, wall hooks, etc. but you must be sure they are solid and strong for as long as you use them. The surrounding area should also be free of obstructions such as furniture corners, appliances, opening doors, and so on. Make sure the padding you put down underneath is wide and long enough to adequately cover the area you could fall onto and make sure it's thick enough to do the job. Padding on the floor also forms a visible boundary to keep both live and inanimate objects from encroaching into your space.

If you use large steel eyelets be sure to orient them in a vertical plane. By clipping a carabiner to the eyelet and tying the rope to the carabiner the wear generated by swinging will occur where metal contacts metal, a better situation than metal constantly rubbing against rope. This also allows you to clip extra carabiners into the line to temporarily increase the amount of sag for learning harder moves. Use only genuine climbing carabiners not the toy keychain variety.

The two lengths of rope must be secured to prevent weight on one from pulling it through the anchor point and becoming longer than the other. This can be accomplished with a knot. However, any knot will significantly reduce the breaking strength of a piece of rope. Some knots are much better than others in this regard. The double figure eight knot is one of the best.

DOUBLE FIGURE EIGHT KNOT



Seven Basic Moves

All low rope maneuvers involve bringing your body completely around the ropes until you return to the position you started from. Most of them are done forwards and backwards, and many also have a left-handed and right-handed version. You'll find that falling off takes a lot more energy than doing the moves successfully, so your performance curve rises sharply once you get the idea. There are a total of twenty-six moves done on the low ropes, although not many competitors in Greenland do every last one of them. What follows are descriptions of seven of the most basic.

AKULAAMMILLUGU (AHH-KOO-LA-MISH-LOO)



Stand facing the rope and grab onto it with one hand. Kick your opposite leg up and over the rope so your knee comes to rest on it. Now grab hold with the other hand, arms outstretched, and thumbs out. Jump up using the leg on the ground and bring the rope from your knee down to your thigh as you hoist yourself onto the rope. Grip the rope with elbows slightly bent and lightly touching your sides. Cross your legs so that the foot of the upper leg is held under the other calf.

Lean forward and rotate upside down by bending from the waist. When you are completely inverted, keep pulling with your forearms and swing your legs backwards as a counterbalance to come back around. For the reverse version you must go around leading with your back. A strong kick with the leg initiates the move, and the same bending from the waist must be timed just right.

Forwards and backwards rotations are each worth one point. For some reason the score sheets don't provide for a left and right version, so you can use whichever way feels natural.

OQAATSUASAARNEQ (OH-KOT-SUE-AH-SAR-NUCK)



Kick one leg up over the rope as for *Akulaammillugu* but without jumping on. Just hold the rope with arms moderately spread and thumbs to the outside. Pull your head close to the rope, hang from the one knee, and tuck your other knee over your instep. Bring your chin close to your raised knee. To make the rotation, pull with your arms, curl your body up onto the rope then tumble over and around it. The reverse version starts with a strong kick. Keep your torso curled. Opposite side versions are done hanging from the other knee.

Each orientation is worth one point for a total of four. Like many other moves, *Oqaatsusaarneq* requires a limber and pliant torso, which translates directly to rolling a kayak, particularly the forward ending rolls. Keeping your body tight and stiff and trying to muscle through won't get you very far in either discipline.

PALLUUSSINEQ (PAH-SHLU-SHIN-NUCK)



This move is almost harder to set up for than it is to do. Stand between the ropes facing one end, holding a length in each hand at your sides. Swing one leg back behind you and up between the ropes to hook your ankle over on one side. Slide this leg to the outside until you can drop your knee over. Bring your foot back up between the ropes and hook your ankle over once again. Your leg is now intertwined with one rope that passes

along the inside of your foot. Now drop your torso forward onto the ropes so you can wrap your other leg in the second piece of rope the same way. Each rope should run across the inside of each foot. Grab both ropes in each hand, one held just below your throat, the other over your head.

Initiate the maneuver by dropping your shoulders over the ropes on one side. Hang on tightly with your hands as your whole body swings under the ropes. The key to getting back up is to lead with your feet and twist from the waist, corkscrew fashion. The reverse version is basically the same movement in the opposite rotation. For the alternate side versions let your hands switch places. Each of these four orientations is worth one point.

SINGERNERMILLUGU (SING-GERN-NER-MISH-LOO)



Face the ropes and swing your right leg onto them the same as for *Oqaatsusaarneq*. But now turn your body so that your right leg points towards the left upright. Grab the ropes with your arms crossed left over right, left hand palm down, right hand palm up. Let your torso down and under the ropes and turn around uncrossing your arms while your right leg twists into the rope and catches a turn with the outer edge of your foot. Bring your head up on the far side of the ropes, place your right elbow onto the ropes, then lift your left leg off the ground. You should now be hanging from the ropes facing the opposite direction you started from. Straighten your left elbow so that your left hand is as far up the rope as you can reach.

To initiate *Singernermillugu* pull your shoulders up using both hands and your elbow until your head can lean over to the far side. Then rotate your right leg until the knee points straight down. This brings your torso over the rope allowing you to swing your left leg in a wide arc to control your return to the start position. The reverse variation starts with a sharp swing

of the left leg, twisting it up over the rope as far as you can. Keep your torso close to the rope. Your chin should stay near your right hand. Each backwards and forwards version is worth one point. For two more points switch sides and do it both ways with your left leg in the rope.

INGILLUNI
(ING-GISH-LOO-NEE)



This one is done seated on the rope like a swing. To achieve this position, stand with the rope across your back and grab it with both hands palms down. Lean back and with a slight jump slide the rope down your back and under your hips until your weight is on your thighs. Then flip your hands over to thumbs on the outside. *Ingilluni* fosters a good sense of balance, which is another skill applicable to handling a narrow seal hunter's kayak.

An alternate way to get on is used by young children in Greenland who are only tall enough to touch the rope by reaching over their head. They grab the rope with their hands, keeping thumbs to the inside. Then they swing their legs up, knees to chest bringing ankles under, around and over the rope until they hang from their knees. The hands change to thumbs on the outside while the arms move farther apart. Bringing chin to knees and pulling with the arms the upper body comes over the rope, ending in the sitting-on-a-swing position. They do all this quickly and make it look quite elegant.

Finding exactly how far apart to hold your hands and where to place the rope on your thighs takes a bit of experimentation. Take a few swings back and forth and at the furthest excursion backwards dip your head down, and swing your hips upwards. Hang on tight, don't let your hands slip, and by keeping tucked and straightening your legs at the right moment, you will return upright. The backwards version starts on a forward swing using a strong kick straightening the knees. You may find it easier to keep the rope at a different

point on your thighs for the backwards version. Each way is worth two points. There are no left and right versions because the position is symmetrical.

PEQULLUGU
(PEH-KUH-SHLU)



Stand with the rope across your chest, hold one arm horizontally out to the side and grab the rope with your thumb on the far side of your hand. The other arm is bent at the elbow, holding the rope with your thumb to the inside, and in contact with your body. Take a small jump and bring the rope down to stomach level while throwing your shoulders over until you are hanging with the rope held across your waist.

To rotate around the rope lean forward while swinging your legs up until you are upside down. That's the easy part. Now without stopping, keep your knees bent, chin towards chest, and stomach muscles tight while the non-extended arm presses the rope against your waist firmly. Using momentum to continue turning, curl you head and chest up over the rope as you come all the way around and back on top of it. The key muscles are your abdominals and one arm. A good way to build up to *Peqqullugu* is to get into the starting position and slowly straighten your torso upright to see how much weight you can support with one hand. This gives you a feel for the critical moment of the full rotation.

Peqqullugu makes a good teaching tool for learning to budget your energy. Whether you are competing in rope competition, or hunting seals all day it's very important to pace yourself so as not to become exhausted too soon. This calls for exerting the minimum amount of effort needed to accomplish a given task. In this case the arm holding the rope to your waist has to press tightly but only for a fraction of the total rotation. If you keep your arm tensed while initially turning over to the upside down position, you needlessly expend energy. However, if

you get too casual with that arm and wait too long before tightening it up, you will fall off. Mastering this maneuver calls for finding the optimum midpoint between these two extremes.

Peqqullugu is scored as two points for each left or right rotation. There is no backwards version.

QAJAASAARNEQ
(KI-YAH-SAR-NUCK)



This move is the closest rope approximation to rolling a kayak. Yet rather than an exact replication of body motions the similarity is more generalized. Turning upside down on land allows you to work through the sensations of spatial disorientation and dizziness without having to worry about sudden temperature changes and holding your breath.

Qajaasaarneq is done with the two individual lengths of rope pulled apart. Start by standing between them while facing one post. Grab hold on each side and jump up to suspend yourself on straightened arms, similar to being on parallel bars. Now lean back, resting your upper thighs onto your hands as you swing your legs up through the ropes in front of you, splay your feet to the outside, and come down with your thighs in the middle and your calves on the outside. Cross your ankles together, lean forward, and you should be able to let your hands go. Reach in front with one hand, palm up, and grab both ropes from underneath. The other hand reaches behind for both ropes, thumb pointing away from you.

STRETCHING THE THUMB ACROSS



Getting that last hand around both ropes is often problematic. Try reaching farther back with a straightened elbow and curl your fingers around one rope. Then pull across until your extended thumb touches the other rope. After you work your fist closed around both ropes, move the hand closer to your body. Children with small hands and short arms may find this too difficult. In competition an adult is allowed to pull the ropes together for a child to grasp.

It's important to sit low enough into the ropes so as not to fall out as soon as you're upside down. Remember to keep your ankles crossed and locked together. The aforementioned bruise area under your knees gets the brunt of your weight when you are seated properly. *Qajaasaarneq* is almost better tried than explained. Don't worry about taking a long time to get it right. There's a lot going on. Try experimenting with these three variables:

"WHENEVER I SUCCEED AT A NEW VARIATION IT REALLY MAKES MY DAY."

- 1) The distance between your head and your thighs. It helps to lengthen this on the way down, but coming up your head needs to be tucked in close.
- 2) The sideways angle made between the upper and lower half of your body. Having a loose flexible pelvis helps. Coming up your legs should twist sideways, in practically the same motion as a hip snap for rolling, only not as abruptly.
- 3) The distance between your hands. By pulling them towards each other you create a deeper bend to sit in and the rotation gets easier. This becomes most effective at the final part of the rotation.
- 4) Each forward, backward, left and right version is worth three points for a total of twelve. *Qajaasaarneq* is probably the most popular low rope move and learning it well pays off because there are several advanced variations. You can rack up a total of 90 points if you can do all of them.

Developing a Routine

By keeping ropes set up at home and using them regularly you can build a routine and gradually expand your repertoire. It makes for an invigorating workout that is not only much cheaper than buying the latest home exercise apparatus but has been thoroughly tested and proven through centuries of research and development. No fad TV exercise gimmick can make that claim.

The variety of progressively more difficult rope exercises also provides a satisfying means to measure your progress. Whenever I succeed at a new variation it really makes my day. Like learning the competition rolls, new rope moves are typically gained, lost, and re-found before becoming fully reliable. Tracking the point value of your routine provides the ongoing challenge of beating your best record. The minimum qualifying score for competition is 30 points. When you can do the seven moves described here in all versions you have passed this level.

A word to the diehard traditional skills enthusiast: If you have wholeheartedly embraced Greenland-style rolling you no doubt live for the rewarding sense of accomplishment that comes from mastering each new roll. After becoming a genuine roll-oholic you may have dispensed with paddling for distance altogether. An hour or two afloat within fifty feet of the put-in makes for a good day of kayaking. Should you make the progression from roll-oholic to rope-oholic you won't even have to leave home to get your fix. Take a look at how the available supply of incremental goals more than doubles:

	Rolling	Ropes
Number of Maneuvers	30	74
Total Variations	58	210
Maximum Number of Points	~300	~1080
Highest Score Yet Achieved	~280	526
Available Point Spread for New Records	20	>500

As the numbers reveal, someone will probably ace the rolling competition within the next few years. Ropes on the other hand are still wide open. Yet if the competitive angle interests you the most, there's one more recommendation to heed.

Try not to lose perspective.

There's no reason to treat this activity as a life-and-death matter unless you harpoon seals for a living. Outsourcing others as an end in itself yields only fleeting rewards. Consider the bigger picture. Learning and practicing these maneuvers pays tribute to the remarkable culture and heritage of Inuit people and joins them in celebrating their proud tradition. That's what it's all about.

Swing on.

More information about Rope Gymnastics is available on the QAJAQ USA Website

Greenland Kayaking Techniques
<http://www.qajaqusa.org/Technique/Technique.html>

Greenland kayaking video clips
<http://www.qajaqusa.org/Movies/movies.html>

Photos were taken by Turner Wilson with Cheri Perry demonstrating the seven basic moves.

Dubside earned 336 points in the rope competition at the 2004 Greenland National Championships in Qaqortoq and is the first American to achieve a qualifying score in this event.



2004 Greenland Competition

Thoughts and reflections

By Dubsid

Spending thousands of dollars to travel thousands of miles and pit one's skills against the best in the world tends to bring out a certain attitude - dedicated, determined, and dead serious. I trained intensively for seven or eight months prior to going. Typically I'd be out practicing rolls every other day whether it was January or June. When I got to Greenland the water temperature didn't faze me one bit. It was actually warmer than I expected. What did faze me was the way things were run. Specifically:

- Posted starting times and the order of events were often changed and rearranged, usually with no prior notice.
- When things got behind schedule one day, the route and length of the long distance race were changed and shortened to save time.
- The rules regarding which class a person could compete in were verbally amended so many times it raised the suspicion of a hidden agenda
- The senior presiding judge also competed in some of the events, as did his young son.
- No entry fee was collected from the U.S. competitors even though the official rules have a provision for it.
- During the rope competition a stray soccer ball came rolling through the area followed by someone chasing it. A minute later it happened again, bouncing off the person on the ropes. No one blinked or even said anything.

At any major international competition most of the above occurrences would be grounds for a formal investigation if not a full-blown scandal. Imagine runners at the Boston Marathon being informed at the starting line that the race would be shortened to save time. Or a Frisbee sailing across the green and whacking Tiger Woods on the shoulder.

It took me about two weeks of a two and a half week visit to gain the proper perspective. I started thinking of the whole thing as a big family picnic. Then it all made sense. Charging the visitors money is unthinkable - they are guests. Of course a

judge can also compete - everybody should get in on the fun. Sure the rules are subject to reinterpretation, it's a polite way of covering a competitor's faux pas.

I started really enjoying myself during the last few days. I laughed my way through the final races. When they awarded the medals and told me I'd get mine "later", I laughed some more. They had been doing that to me from day one. I didn't get a single medal until the very end of the awards dinner on the last day, after all the Greenlanders had theirs.

At least two of my medals were supposed to be gold, but they gave me silver or bronze ones, saying they didn't have any gold medals left and I could exchange mine later. By then I really didn't care, because I'd finally deciphered what all the innuendos and ostensible improprieties meant:

"Lighten up dude. We are here to celebrate and enjoy ourselves. This is not the Olympics. We can see that you are good, but don't forget that you're a guest. We do the judging, we set the rules, and we hand out the awards. So show us some respect and humility and then you'll get your due."

I can't speak for how things went in Nuuk or Sisimiut in years past, but from what I saw in Qaqortoq, I have a strong opinion of how we should proceed in the future.

Sending a large contingent of super competitive, fanatically trained Qajaq USA representatives to Greenland looking to beat the natives at their own game and gain an impressive entry on the paddling resume is not a good idea.

I will confess that it's somewhat hypocritical of me to say this because that is exactly why I went to Greenland. I did admirably well but fortunately couldn't outclass their best. I suppose my greatest victory was winning them over socially, which would have been much harder without Cheri.

My understanding is that modesty and group cooperation were prevalent characteristics of traditional Inuit living. By contrast, contemporary American society is individualistic, highly competitive, and saturated with hyperbole. Qajaq USA stands at the intersection of these two cultures. I think we need to tread softly and

considerately. Many of us are looking for a high-stakes, Olympic style narrow-bladed kayaking competition.

What did I get by going to Greenland dedicated, determined, and dead serious? In hindsight if I had spent half my training time learning some basic Greenlandic phrases I'd have had a much better experience. Some of the best friends I made there I could barely communicate with. There's no point in going to a family picnic if you can't even talk to anyone.

Dubsid earned 336 points in the rope competition at the 2004 Greenland National Championships in Qaqortoq and is the first American to achieve a qualifying score in this event.



Editor's Note

The following information may help to fully understand Dubsid's piece on the competition.

International competitors and Qaannat Kattuffiat (QK) officials arrived in Qaqortoq, Greenland for the 2004 event, to find that event classes had not been organized for foreign participants. According to event organizer Hans Kleist-Thomassen (Qajaq Nuuk), this was a simple organizational mistake. Qaqortoq is a small town and had not hosted a championship since foreigners were first welcomed in 2000.

Once QK officials arrived, they went to work to correct the mistake. Dubsid and other foreign participants did not receive their medals at the same time as the Greenlanders, since no medals for the international class had been pre-ordered by the local club, due to the initial organizational error. The QK officials gave the international participants medals that were purchased for the Greenland classes but were not used (there are always some medals left over). This is why the international participants had to wait until the Greenlanders got their medals first -- as the officials had no way of knowing which medals would be left-over to give out.

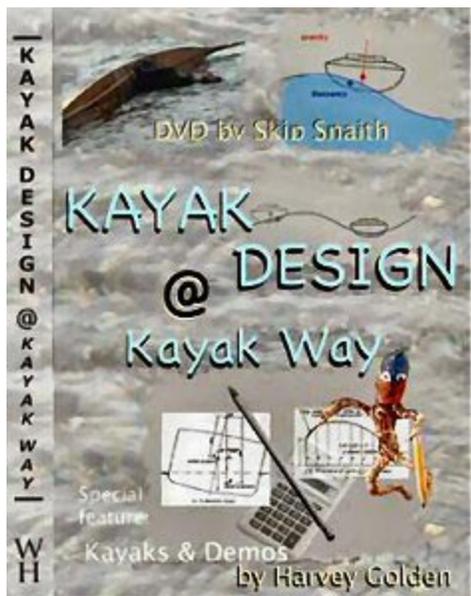
Fees for foreign competitors have been waived since after QU-2000 to encourage more participation. This may change in the future (the fee includes a week of food and lodging and is very reasonable).

"I
STARTED
THINKING OF
THE WHOLE
THING AS A
BIG FAMILY
PICNIC."

Kayak Design DVD

A review and critique

By Pete Strand



One Hundred and Sixty Five minutes covering Seventeen Chapters ranging from the pre-dawn drive on rain slick highways to Harvey Golden's house to in-depth discussion of The Bournelli Principle.

I expected this DVD to be a technical, full of formulae, Naval Architect approach to the scientific design of Kayaks. I was wrong, but not disappointed.

The video starts out with the pre-dawn trip to Harvey Golden's house filmed by Skip Snaith with the camera in one hand and the steering wheel in the other. Once at Harvey's the viewer is treated to a wonderful tour of many of Harvey's replicas. The camera shows you construction details that you would only normally see with a mirror. Harvey and Skip discuss the unique, often unusual, features of boats from the Aleutian Islands

across the Polar Arctic to Baffin Island and a Greenland "Hunting Machine".

Several of the boats are taken out onto the Columbia River where Harvey demonstrates their strengths and weaknesses. At one point in the demonstration of righting moment Harvey comments "There's a lesson there about showing off." Yes, Harvey was also demonstrating some of his skills.

The technical chapters alternate with live demonstrations. Skip uses animations, graphics, models, a rubber ducky, and a child's boat to point out the practical application of Hydrostatics to

I EXPECTED THIS DVD TO BE A TECHNICAL, FULL OF FORMULAE, NAVAL ARCHITECT APPROACH TO THE SCIENTIFIC DESIGN OF KAYAKS. I WAS WRONG, BUT NOT DISAPPOINTED.

kayak design. He advises keeping the remote handy during the Hydrostatics portions so that the viewer can "pause the scene" and digest the charts and tables that are presented. Good advice. Skip takes the topics of Viscosity, Wave Theory, Buoyancy and Displacement and gives them just the right emphasis to show their importance and influence on design. Practical; yes, Academic; no.

Skip coolly discusses many of the design features that are a source of great passion for many kayakers. Skip gives us "Pearls of Wisdom" on: Dead-rise, Practical Beam, Length, Single versus Multiple Chine, and Rocker to name a few. The most precious pearls are to "paddle lots of boats and take notes on the factors that you like and that you dislike,"

and the best of them all "Scientific Design is seductive."

The editing could be better in some of the transitions, that said, if I had seen this a few years ago I would have had to learn so many things about kayak building the hard way. Skip and Harvey make good sense of many of the mysteries that confound and confuse us. This DVD can not be digested in a single viewing. To understand what makes it possible for a 20 foot boat to turn in its own length or to understand how Harvey surveys a boat will require a second look.

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Pete lives in Connecticut. He started kayaking as a tender 8th grader after building a SOF from Mechanics Illustrated plans. At present, he has built over thirty "traditional" boats. Some of Pete's™ qajaqs can be seen on his website <http://qajaqsopfeters.com/>

Notes from the Regions

**IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE FROM YOUR REGION,
E-MAIL YOUR REGIONAL CONTACT:**

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Skinboats of Costa Rica

Based on a true story

By Brian Schulz

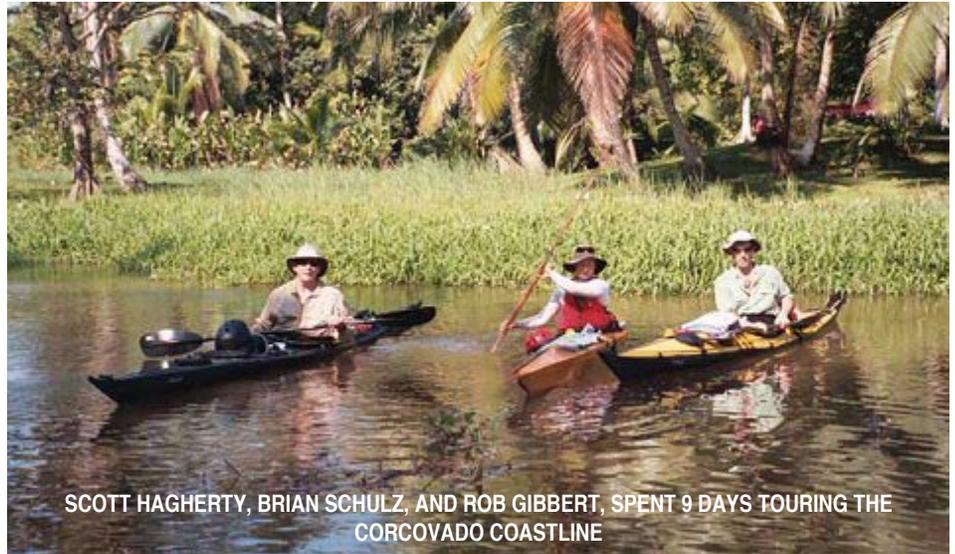
We're somewhere off the southwest coast of Costa Rica, I'm not sure where anymore. The sun is pouring down in buckets and after eight hours of paddling I'm transformed into a pitiful weak noodle, feebly pushing my 7-foot stick through mile after mile of blue water. Wildlife, waterfalls, lush vegetation, paradise is just 1/2 mile to my left but out here it's just strokes and swells and this godforsaken withering heat. I'm plagued by bad 80's pop radio songs. I hear them over and over in my head. I wonder if my brain is starting to cook. Out here in the wild blue Pacific I am haunted by that familiar fear, not sharks, but brain tumors. Every time I get the tiniest headache the paranoia begins, 'it's a brain cancer, I know its brain cancer, or a stroke, give it to me straight doc, and I'm finished aren't I?' It's an irrational fear I suppose, but those are the best kind. I begin to consider what it would be like to have amnesia? How would I make sense of my situation?

WATER IS WARM LIKE A BATHTUB



Don't panic, this is my first and strongest impulse, look around, find out what's happening. I'm somewhere off the Pacific coast of the tropics, I know it's the Pacific because the sun is falling to the west. I know it's the tropics because it's hot. I'm in a sea kayak so apparently I'm a sea kayaker. The movement as I slice forward through the water is clean and smooth, each stroke is automatic and I feel as though I've been doing this for days. I have a wide brimmed hat on but no sunglasses. We are riding low in the water and my entire hand submerges with each stroke, there is the sensation of mass, inertia, of much gear stowed below deck.

This kayak seems small to me but it also seems big, I feel compelled to measure it. This is a funny paddle



SCOTT HAGHERTY, BRIAN SCHULZ, AND ROB GIBBERT, SPENT 9 DAYS TOURING THE CORCOVADO COASTLINE

but it feels familiar. The water is blue green, not crystal clear, and warm like a bathtub. It's bloody hot out here. The waves are big. There is a sand beach to the east not too distant. Where are my sunglasses? Did I ever have sunglasses? Don't panic.

The kayak is laid out for adventure touring, somehow I know this already but the deck scene fills in the gaps. Lines of parachute cord crisscross the forward deck. There's a small hatch toward the bow. A solar panel is tied to the back deck. There is a bow loop with a spare paddle tucked beneath. The bow and stern tow loops, a helmet and compass are tied to the deck. There is a chart case — bingo! — a clue. Investigation and careful consideration yields a probable position, I can only correlate my surroundings to what I think I see on the map. If I'm correct I'll come to a river two miles south with much needed water. I pause to stack hands from the sun to the horizon - two hands, two hrs until sunset. I should head for the river called Sirena. This kayak I'm paddling is different; the phrase 'skin on frame' comes to mind. The skin is orange, flexible, and glossy. I can see fabric through it and the frame inside. I think I built this kayak. Long swells and light winds sweep the surface of the sea pushing along with just a bit of chop. My kayak is short and straight like an arrow, it seems to be doing fine now but in rougher water she might really start digging into the wind waves.

I notice that when I move myself forward or back in the cockpit the kayak paddles differently, faster when I'm forward, better in the waves when I scoot back. The cockpit is long and if I need to I can open the skirt and fold up my aching legs, naturally placing the paddle off to the side and pressing it to the foredeck for stability.

Pushing forward - stroke, stroke, stroke. I'm granted a rare opportunity to speculate on who I am, why I'm here, and what happened to me. For five minutes I'm a marine biologist and the boat is packed with vials and samples. Then a smuggler, crossing borders at night with a kayak full of parrots and marijuana. I'm on a secret government mission to outfit sea turtles with sub sensing radar. I'm a doctor, a welder, an expatriate, a coast guard defector. Somewhere deep a suppressed truth is swimming for the surface. Oh please no, not a small boat builder, not one of those eccentric types who borrows your truck and then decides to use it as a workshop for four months, the kind of perpetually broke scoundrel who'd starve but for the grace of potluck dinners but who can always seem to afford more bronze and cedar. It's best not to think about that now. The amnesia, did I hit my head? Do I need medication? It's a brain tumor, I don't know why, but it's got to be a brain tumor. Stroke, stroke, stroke, pushing endlessly forward through the warm turquoise water.

BREATHTAKING COASTLINE



My river is approaching off the port bow. Things are looking choppy at the mouth with greener water and breaking waves, but farther past the bar is a protected landing and that feels right so I'm heading through the bar. Sharks and Crocodiles, these words appear in my mind and I decide it's important to remain upright. Paddling across the mouth I get thrown around quite a bit but the kayak is responsive and surprisingly, so am I.

ROB GIBBERT OFF THE ROCKS



I seem to remember reading a Sherlock Holmes story once where Sherlock was able to discern the owner of a watch simply by studying it. Can I apply the same approach to my kayak? Let's take a look at this boat and see what it tells us. First the obvious, the boat is small,

bill shaped piece of wood with a raked stem dropping down and back away from it and joining the keelson. The stern, a plumb vertical fin attached to a spreader that holds the gunwales 10 inches apart. An Aleut stern! Whatever that means. I note a 16 inches long wrapping of white duct tape along each longitudinal member, one in the cockpit and one toward the bow. Careful excavation with the pocket knife reveals this to be a stepped double birdsmouth dowelled joint.

This is a break apart joint. This kayak came here on an airplane. The pieces of the kayak puzzle begin to unlock the memory puzzle; the sun is setting into the deep blue Pacific Ocean bordering Costa Rica. I am on vacation, paddling south with friends Rob Gibbert and Scott Hagherty. The air is cooler now beneath the trees, a breeze washing away the exhaustion, the utter blariness of mind. Howler monkeys vocalize in giant pulsing roars, Aracaris send their alien transmission chirping down from the highest branches, Leafcutter ants march past single file, carrying entire trees away bit by bit, vines dangle from impossible heights, crocodiles bask on banks. The air is thick, fecund, everything here is alive. This is the Osa peninsula, Corcovado National Park.

DESIGNED FOR MY INJURIES, MY PREFERENCES, MY ADVENTURES



Dodging waves, surfing and bracing, it feels natural and fun, it's like waking up to find out you know Kung Fu! Soon enough I'm riding a small wave in to shore, the kayak stays pointed where I push it and we slide up onto the sand. I'm exhilarated, and quite exhausted after dragging the boat up the beach. The shoreline here is backed by palms, mangroves, and thick jungle, which is finally shading me from the scorching sun. One hand one finger, 1 hr 15 min until sunset. I drink water from a bottle in the cockpit and take stock of the situation. I set to work retrieving the waterproof bags wedged into the kayak and empty their contents onto the beach. Hammock, repair kit, machete, freeze dried food, sunscreen, bug spray, and no less than six hard bound books the titles of which confirm the sinking feeling that I am not going to be returning home to a large house or nice car. I am obviously just a traveler and not a secret agent, but what kind of camper brings a small library along? There are so many little bags and cases and I cannot seem to find the one that contains a passport, maybe I live here?

22 inches wide, 8 inches deep and 14 ft 9 inches long. It was designed to be narrow and easily driven; it also sits low in the water to keep out of the wind and not get thrown around like a cork in the surf.

It has volume to the ends, a square fin stern and a modified full bow with a raking stem, this helps the kayak maintain an efficient cruising speed and combined with fore and aft peaked decks, gives such a short narrow kayak room for camping gear. Not too much room though; I must fancy myself as some sort of minimalist. The widest point of the kayak is a full 2/3 aft; this is also where the paddler sits. While paddling earlier this seemed to keep me drier in the waves and kept the bow high and controllable in the surf. There is a zipper splitting the back deck. Is this a hatch? The skin is 9oz nylon, dyed golden and coated with two part polyurethane. Looking inside the frame I can see 18 ribs fore to aft, supporting three hull stringers, and gunwales. Five curved deck beams hold up the front and back peaked deck stringers. The bow is made of a sort of

The kayak laid out before me has made a long journey, from noble beginnings 8000 years ago on the frozen shores of Siberia where it served as the primary means of survival for an entire culture of hardened natives. Now near the shores of the Equator it is transformed as my own creation, designed specifically for the wind, waves, and conditions of this trip, but most of all for me, my injuries, my preferences, my adventures. My Qajaq is very different from its Inuit ancestors, but not so different that any Eskimo of 1000 years ago couldn't recognize and paddle it easily. I like to think that Inuit would be pleased to see the improbable journey their kayak has made. After all they have taught me, maybe, just maybe, I could teach them how to swim.

Brian Schulz lives and paddles in Manzanita on the Oregon Coast where he owns a small skin boat school Cape Falcon Kayak. For more information on Brian, visit his website at <http://capefalconkayak.com>





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