



Photo Courtesy John Pedersen

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Wondering how Greenlanders prepare for their National Championships? Not by whining about the cold, apparently. In this issue of the *Masik*, Greenlander John Pedersen opens a window into the training that his club, Qajaq Ilulissat, was undertaking during the run up to the big 10-day July event. The bad news: COVID-19 concerns forced a cancellation of this year's competition.

Here's the reality of rolling practice in Ilulissat, according to Pedersen: "It is a wet and cold sport, which all realize the first time they sit in a qajaq. The water temperature in spring is only zero or one degree Celsius. Wetsuits and other waterproof gear are not used. Members just wear their normal everyday clothes." Two things to say about that: Brrrr, and, they're tougher than I am.

Also in this issue, kayak craftsman Fred Randall delivers part two of his series on how to build a replica. In this installment he describes how to match the sheer to the surveyed original, in preparation for placing the deck beams and ribs. For anyone who's puzzled through how to accurately construct a surveyed historical kayak, Randall's efforts here will open your eyes.

Putting aside the carpentry issues, the desire to build a replica kayak raises a host of questions that Qajaq USA member Gabriel Romeu takes on in this issue. The modern builder, he observes, starts from a considerably different place than his native counterpart. Modern power tools. A trip to the lumber yard. Polyester sinew that comes on a spool. A neat pile of nylon or polyester, and finish that comes in a can. All of this distant from the actual purpose of the original, which was to bring home a meal. Given these considerations, Romeu ponders the question, What is an "authentic" replica?

Of course it is still possible to throw the kayak in the water and employ it for that original use—killing something to eat. You'll find here a description of my own admittedly bumbling efforts to land lake trout on Lake Superior. But for a deeper reflection on the mind of the hunter and his relationship to prey, we're grateful to Ilarion Merculieff, director of the Homer, Alaska based Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways. He granted permission

to reprint here his profound piece, Heart of the Halibut.

There's plenty more inside, including a run-down on which Greenland events will occur this summer, a note on Dubside's new and fascinating podcast (or, "Dubcast" as he calls it) and tips on paddling-related books and videos.

As always, thanks for your interest and support. Got ideas regarding content for future issues? Please, don't hesitate to contact us at publications@qajaqusa.org.

Tony Schmitz





Report from Greenland: What's Happening in Ilulissat By John Pedersen

With what were thought to be the July National Greenland Championships (Qaannamik Unammersuarneq-2021) just around the corner, John Pedersen sent us news of the preparations underway at his local club in Ilulissat. Not long after sending off this dispatch, Pedersen sent us another note to say that the event had been cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. Nonetheless, his account of the serious, frigid preparation for the competition remains fascinating. We've left intact here his original report, which assumes that the Championships would proceed as planned.

"Our Club Qajaq Ilulissat was founded in the year 1984, just after Qannat Kattuffiat was established. Almost all cities on the west coast of Greenland started a new club that year in order to preserve our qajaq culture.

Qajaq Ilulissat got its own clubhouse in 2006, in an old, abandoned carpenter's house, situated near our local church and just 10 meters from the icy water.

Ilulissat (which means icebergs) is the third biggest city in Greenland, and is located on the middle of the west coast behind



Disko Island. The city name comes from the fastest producing glacier in Greenland, which is a fiord, one kilometer away from the city. Just outside Ilulissat one can see the biggest icebergs in Greenland. (Ed.: See this link, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC3VTgIPoGU>, for a video of the largest recorded iceberg calving — a sight that is at once beautiful and horrifying.) After a long time with COVID restrictions in 2020 and early spring 2021, club activities started again. With those hopes, our club made an early start this season.

Many members have been looking forward to this moment, and almost all members age three to 70-plus are joining in qajaq building, rope exercises, paddling, harpoon throwing and rolling. All the different techniques are practiced whether we have icy conditions, snowy weather or rain. It is a wet and cold sport, which all realize the first time they sit in a qajaq. The water temperature in spring is only zero or one degree Celsius.



Wetsuits and other waterproof gear are not used. Members just wear their normal everyday clothes, so they are very aware of not getting too wet, as this will inevitably cool them down quickly. Members who have been practicing rolling have not used anything to protect them from getting cold except for a neoprene tuilik. Tough guys and girls. But it is therefore understandable that a rolling session just lasts 20 to 30 minutes before they have to give in because they feel cold. They gladly return the next day for new lessons.



Another popular exercise is the Allunaaqattarneq—exercises on ropes. For this, we have a rig that can be used every day. This is the most popular training activity for the small ones, since it's an activity with a lot of playing involved, and no one gets wet and cold. The smallest ones are also doing their harpoon exercises on land—combined with a lot of playing.



The older ones are building new qajaqs, but the majority are mostly preparing and repairing their existing qajaqs and harpoons, sometimes interrupted by a paddling session.



Fir is the preferred type of wood for the frame,



and ash for ribs and coaming. Nylon fabric and sinew is imported from the United States.

At the moment our club has four sealskin tuiliks. They were, unfortunately, very badly damaged on their way home from the last championships in Qaqortoq in 2019. They were stored in a 20 foot shipping container, and on the way home they suffered from warm weather—10-15 degrees Celsius (50 - 59 F)—so large areas of the sealskin had “boiled up” and had to be repaired. A lot of work for the few who still are able to make a tuilik.



We have about 45 club members. At the

moment, they are all in National Greenland championships mode, preparing and looking forward to that special 10-day event in July. Five new members have joined the club, and they have already been taught how to participate in the championships. There are no explicit requirements to participate in the Championships. If you can handle a paddle, you’re in. This is one of the ways to keep them interested in our qajaq heritage.

We are all very excited for the big week, the QU-2021 National Greenland Championships (Qaannamik Unammersuarneq-2021). Here, friends and acquaintances will meet once again for a friendly competition.

QU-2021 is not the World Championships. Some take the competitions seriously, and some are just happy to participate and to pass the finish line no matter what their rank is. In the end it is a big gathering of the qajaq community in Greenland, a tribute to our qajaq heritage.

[Here is a video of our club life:](#) (Ed.: The audio is in Greenlandic without subtitles, but even so you’ll find interesting footage of rope practice, paddling and the backdrop of brightly colored housing and icebergs.)

<https://www.facebook.com/AvannaataKommunia/posts/556363348367521>.

Recommendations



Check Out the Dubcast: Let Dubside whisper in your ear via his new podcast series, The Dubcast with Dubside, available [HERE](#). The half hour sessions cover the waterfront of Greenland-style paddling, with engaging segments on Dubside's early experiences in folding kayaks; teaching himself how to roll, learning how (and how not to) teach rolling and much more. A bonus feature is Dubside's presentation of

music by Greenlandic artists. Turns out that in addition to being an excellent mentor of rolling technique, Dubside is also a skilled musician with a good voice.

For Video, The Dash Point Pirate: Another place to find the Dubcast is on Andrew Elizaga's blog, [The Dash Point Pirate](#). As the pandemic closures took root, the pair collaborated to get the podcast series up and running. You'll find all of the Dubcasts there, plus a deep collection of kayak-related films that Elizaga has compiled or produced with his partner Katya Palladina. Among the many offerings:

- Elizaga and Palladina's film, *George Dyson: The Floating World*, looks at how Dyson came to create a series of modern interpretations of the baidarka, the premier human-powered vessel of the Bering Sea. Dyson's book, *Baidarka: the Kayak* (1986) is a mainstay in many kayak-related libraries. The film features interviews with Dyson, placing him in the milieu of Vancouver in the days when hippies could claim a spot in the woods to build a cabin, or, in Dyson's case, construct a treehouse that towered above the forest floor.
- A one-minute excerpt of the film, *Amphibious Man*, that features Greenland's John Petersen in a display of paddling skills that makes up in intensity what it lacks in length.

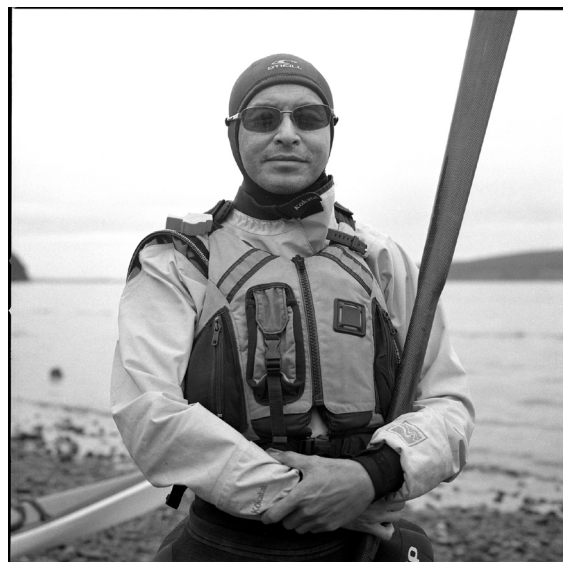


Photo: Katya Palladina

Let's Get Academic: Looking for an occasional and somewhat unpredictable dose of academic writing about the people and society of the Far North? [academia.edu](#) offers a free portal that sends you papers from academics around the world.

Here's how it worked for me. I plugged "kayak fishing" into its search engine. It found a few pieces that I read. I thought that would be that, but it wasn't. Soon enough I was getting more pieces shoveled at my email, some closer to the ballpark than others.

Here's a sampling of articles recently forwarded to me:

- Boats of the World: From the Stone Age to Medieval Times
- Masculinity in Contemporary Inuit Art
- Shamanism in Siberia: Russian Records of Indigenous Spirituality
- Soul Suckers: Vampiric Shamans of Northern Kamchatka
- Did Indigenous Arctic Mariners Use Sail Before European Contact?

Operators say the site links to more than 22 million papers, covering a waterfront of topics. The writing is, well, academic, but often the pieces offer pleasures for motivated readers.



Peter Freuchen

Member Advisory — Read This: Qajaq USA member Dave Browne sends in this suggestion: "Just finishing an absolutely fantastic read — great book — *Book of the Eskimos* — by Peter Freuchen (1961). (It describes) his life living with the Western Greenland people — just as the white man came..."

The out-of-print book is available via Amazon, or in a text-only version at https://courses.knox.edu/anso231/bk_eskimos.htm.

Suffice it to say that compared to Freuchen, your life is boring. The Dane, born in 1886, completed several Greenland expeditions with the noted explorer Knud Rasmussen, traversing Greenland by dog sled. But that's not the half of it. He was a prolific non-fiction writer, a proprietor of a Greenland trading post, a magazine editor, a film-maker and an actor. As an active member of the Danish resistance to the Nazis in World War II he was captured and sentenced to death, but escaped to Sweden. Swallowed by an avalanche, he claimed to have hacked his way out using a dagger made from his frozen feces. He also amputated his own gangrenous toes with pliers and no anesthetic.

If you feel you've been living more adventurously, please, drop us a line.

Hard at Work, Harvey Golden: Kayak historian and builder Harvey Golden's relentless work continues, with a reprint of *Kayaks of Greenland* possibly scheduled for the tail end of 2021, and research for a new book, *Kayaks of Canada*, underway.

"The 2,000-book first run of *Kayaks of Greenland* is almost exhausted," says Golden. If you have to have a copy right this very minute you'll pay dearly. Order it from an Amazon seller and the price is \$175. "I'm hoping to get it done later this year," says Golden. "But I haven't talked to a printer yet."

Kayaks of Canada is a work in progress, with the dip in COVID-related concerns opening a path to further research. Golden says he's surveyed about 40 Canadian kayaks so far for his next book. In comparison, the Greenland book featured surveys of 100 kayaks.

"There are a lot more I want to see," he says. "There are a lot more in Canada, plus in the US and Denmark. There are some in England, one in France, one in Holland."

So when will the book be done? "Right now I hope before I die," Golden says. His Greenland book took eight years to complete; the Alaska book took nine. "I'm on year five of this one," he notes.

You can get a glimpse of Canadian kayaks Golden has built—along with a fleet of Alaskan and Greenlandic kayaks—at <https://www.traditionalkayaks.com/Kayakreplicas/KayakReplicas.html>. If you're in Portland, make an appointment to see his latest work at the storefront museum he operates, the [Lincoln Street Kayak and Canoe Museum](#).

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The Masik welcomes contributions and queries. If you have an idea for an article, please email publications@qajaqusa.org.

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COVID versus Symposiums: Winners and Losers

Effects of the coronavirus pandemic continue to reverberate through the traditional paddling community, as organizers of gatherings from coast to coast consider how to safely proceed.

So far, some events have been canceled for the year, others scaled back, still others rescheduled, and some are moving forward on the assumption that by late summer or early fall these symposiums can be safely held.

In Minnesota, Qajaq Camp organizer Christopher Crowhurst decided to pull the plug on what would have been the eighth year of the event, scheduled for May on the Mississippi River's Lake Pepin. Qajaq Camp draws what Crowhurst called "an older demographic" that is at greater risk. Social distancing and close-contact training with mentors seemed to be operating at cross purposes. In the end, Crowhurst decided to invite previous years participants to a socially distanced group paddle on the lake in lieu of the traditional multi-day event.

Organizers of the South Sound Traditional Inuit Kayak Symposium in Washington's Twanoh State Park rescheduled their event from June, when it had previously been held, to September 10 to 12. "We knew we wouldn't be able to get a park permit for June," explained organizer Joanne Barta. Even with the later date, she said there was still a note of uncertainty given prospect of variant strains of the virus and further outbreaks. "But we need to put everything in place right now," Barta said.

Back in Minnesota again, Traditional Paddlers Gathering organizer Peter Strand said that with more people vaccinated, and the rest of the country increasingly opened up, the 9-12 group's board decided "to go full steam

ahead.” Strand said that participants in the September event will be encouraged to get vaccinated. And if not, they will be “strongly advised” to wear a mask.

“We’re lucky to have a later event,” said Strand. “People are getting vaxed, they’re looking up and around. We felt that we could start planning now.

Registration will most likely open in July. For some, said Strand, it won’t be soon enough. “There’s a core group of people where this is a big part of their life.”

Get the latest information on summer events at www.qajaqusa.org. Here’s a rundown on how things stand now:

July 8 to 11, New York

Hudson River Greenland Festival—Cancelled

"After careful consideration, the HRGF board has decided to err on the side of caution and not hold an event this year. There are just too many unanswered questions about gathering a large group and keeping everyone safe. We will miss all of you, those that we know and those that we've yet to meet. 2022 HRGF will be epic!"

August 13 to 15, South Carolina

Traditional Inuit Paddlers of the Southeast—[Scheduled to occur](#).

August 19 to 22, Minnesota

Qajaq Training Camp—Cancelled

September 8 to 12, Minnesota

Traditional Paddlers Gathering—[Scheduled to occur](#)

September 10 to 12, Washington

South Sound Traditional Inuit Kayaking Symposium—[Scheduled to occur](#).

October 7 to 10, Delaware

Delmarva—Scheduled to occur.

We are in Delmarva's fourth decade providing top level instruction to the paddling community. Special guests and workshops will be announced. This mentor rich event has a great student teacher ratio, often one on one. You're guaranteed to learn something new, improve your paddling skills, make new friends and have fun. All this in a rustic camp-style setting on the scenic shores of Rehoboth Bay, Delaware. We are not sure how the Covid situation will impact us yet, hopefully minimally, but safety is our main concern. Watch our website for updates. For more information, see www.delmarvapaddlersretreat.org or contact us at info@delmarvapaddlersretreat.org.

October 28 to 31, Florida

Traditional Qajaqers of the South—Scheduled to occur.

Traditional Qajaqers of the South is a non-profit that welcomes all paddlers to share its mission to keep traditions alive. TRAQS adheres to the Greenlandic and Qajaq USA principles of mentoring, sharing passion, skills, culture and knowledge to further the community.





A Maker's Journey: Creating that First Paddle

Joseph Schmitz on Carving a Paddle

Greenland paddle carving was not something I ever thought I would get a chance to do in my time at Pacific University. But in fall 2020 I found myself taking a class and absolutely loving it!

At Pacific University Outdoor Pursuits you can find a class led by Joanne Barta and Don Beale. By the end of that class you'll have your own handmade paddle.

Don and Joanne are an amazing teaching team. They'll push you and encourage you every step of the way.



I took this class with my Mom, and some fellow students at Pacific, and I can say we all had an extraordinary time. It was a full day of wood shavings, laughter and lessons.

Don is a master of his craft. You can see the care he puts into his work and the skill that can be developed by experience. Paired with Joanne's teaching, knowing when to help and when to let us struggle, these two make the perfect team.



By the end of the day, you're rewarded with an immense feeling of accomplishment, pride and a paddle crafted by your own hands.



Joanne Barta on Why We Teach

What do students get out of carving their own Greenland paddle? For starters, says Pacific University outdoor leadership instructor Joanne Barta, it's a chance to do something that isn't on Zoom. "They're making something beautiful and useful for themselves. They're using tools to make something real."



She and Don Beale present students with a paddle blank pre-cut to the classic bow tie shape. From there they go at it with draw knives and spokeshaves in a class that fills an eight hour day.



For Beale, who has crafted paddles for more than 20 years and sold 820 of them, it's old hat. But for students the process is a confidence builder, says Barta, that they can use on a University-sponsored paddle trip in August.





Chasing Food Afloat

The dilettante and the Native Explain

Below find two takes on fishing from a kayak, exploring the difference between recreation and sustenance. Masik editor Tony Schmitz outlines his blundering, newbie approach to landing a lake trout on Lake Superior. And Ilarion 'Kuuyux' Merculieff, director of the Homer, Alaska based Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways, explains his introduction to fishing for halibut in the Bering Sea, outlining the deep spiritual connection between the fish, the fisherman and the Aleutian culture into which he was educated.

Splashing after Superior Lake Trout

By Tony Schmitz

A few years back, staring at one of the skin-on-frame kayaks I had made, it occurred to me that at a fundamental level I had things ass backwards.

Mostly what I did with the kayak was to paddle around in circles and practice the various Greenlandic rolls. What I never did was to use the kayak to rustle up some food. Which is to say that in the hierarchy of function, I was missing the main idea.

In the Midwest, where I live, there is a profound shortage of seals, walrus and narwhal. There are, however, many lakes and some fish. So I geared up. I took a piece of plastic that some poly rope I bought was wound around. I outfitted that with fishing line and a leader, grabbed a net and stringer and headed for the Apostle Islands in the southern end of Lake Superior.

The campground there is thick with people who are serious about fishing. Big skiffs bristling with rod holders. Enough marine electronics to run a naval campaign. A pair of 125 horse Evinrudes hanging off most transoms. The serious anglers are after trout, whitefish and salmon. I figured, well, they know what they're doing, I should chat them up. I spotted some guys with a big boat, dressed like they just knocked off at the lumber camp.

So I sauntered over and told them I had a laundry list of questions. Where to go? How deep? What lures? I expected, at best, bemusement. Maybe a dose of contempt.

What I got from everyone I talked to was an outpouring of information and curiosity. Going out in that little thing, are you? Well, here's what I'd do. Lures? Daredevil or Rapala. Depth? Right now (right now being Memorial Day), the fish are in closer to shore, chasing the water temperature that's most desirable to them. Later they'll move to the depths, but at the moment trolling 60 feet of line at about two miles per hour with a good-sized spoon can work. And where? How about that channel between the mainland and that island? And then, from them a wish for my good luck, there apparently being enough fish in the lake for all of us in their view. We'll keep an eye out for you, they said.

Two miles an hour in a kayak is a contemplative pace. I was showing the paddle to the water now and then, mostly dealing with the problem of going too fast. The shoreline does not whiz by. Then again, it's a pace that rewards empty-headed appreciation. The birch and pine along the shore. The red sandstone rock that tumbles from the bluffs to the water's edge. Gulls now and then. The changing wind and waves. The expanse of sky and the clouds.

You can tell yourself that even if you don't catch anything, it's still worth the experience. You're forced to slow down. You're surrendering to the invisible forces. Yes, surely there are fish down there, but you can't see them or hear them or do much of anything except hope that you stumble upon them.

I trolled for three or four hours. I treated the fish, assuming they hear anything, to some songs I knew. I thought some thoughts, not all of them necessarily deep.

Then, out of nowhere, my rig got yanked off the deck and stopped by the bungee I'd attached to a deckline. A fish?

A rock? It's not so easy to tell. I started reeling in my line. Whatever was down there was coming up like a sodden pillow. Not much fight, not until it got a glimpse of the kayak and figured nothing good was about to happen. Then, splashing, thrashing. I pulled out the net, made a few clumsy passes and finally ended up with a lake trout on the deck.

As people observe about hunting, the trouble starts after you bag something. In this case, I had a good-sized trout on the deck. It was not happy to be there. A couple whacks and it was dispatched, sort of, but fish seem to operate for some time with a damaged brain. Line tangled on the deck. Hooks wound around the net. A paddle banging around.

And now a comparative monster of a boat, this operated by a mariner who did not necessarily believe that you need to watch where you're going, headed in my direction. God bless them for this: my fishing buddies who promised to keep an eye out for me were near at hand and delivered a fist-shaking stream of invective at the distracted boatman.

The fish, as fresh as fish gets, was big enough to feed six of us. I was not promoting myself as a mighty hunter. After all, it was one fish, and I spent half the day catching it. But I felt like I had half a finger on the imperative that drove people to create the kayak in the first place. And that night in my sleeping bag I smelled a bit like fish.



The Heart of the Halibut: A Rite of Passage of an Aleut Boy

By Larry Mercurieff © 2002

I knew the halibut on my hand-line was very large, probably over five and a half feet long. It must weigh over 180 pounds. It was undoubtedly a male I thought to myself as I carefully maintained a steady pressure on the cotton line,

using every part of my body to hoist his to the surface. I could feel that he was hooked by the lip and likely to come off the line if I was not present in the moment with its energy and every movement, however subtle. Aleut people did not use gender to distinguish male from female, but we would know.

Halibut are one of the strongest fish in the Bering Sea, known to fight so fiercely that inexperienced people would get hurt once the fish is on board the small 14 to 22 foot craft we Aleuts typically use around St. Paul Island, my home in the Pribilofs. Inexperienced fishers usually let the halibut fight after it is brought onboard the boat before subduing it. "Respect the sea and the halibut," we would always hear as children, "otherwise you can hurt yourself." Self-responsibility, awareness and respect were only a few of the many life lessons taught to us by the halibut and the Bering Sea. If you get hurt, it is not the fault of the halibut, the sea or the weather — it is one's own doing.

I took my time as I hoisted the large halibut up from 150 feet off the rocky sea bottom, one-quarter mile offshore and eleven miles from the village. If he wants to fight, go with his energy, don't fight back. Honor its life force and the halibut will know to give itself to you. The wisdom and lessons given to me by my Elders were guiding me now. I knew that if the large halibut turned its head downwards it will have more physical power through momentum than either I or the cotton line could manage, so I must maintain a steady pressure on the line. Any hesitation in my efforts and the halibut would know it instantly, causing it to swiftly turn downwards, perhaps ripping the hook out of its mouth or breaking the fishing line. I could feel its energy. This was a powerful, wise and old halibut. It knew to conserve its energy until an opportunity to escape presented itself, or for the last death struggle. It did not fight on its way up; it was its way of acknowledging my skill. As the halibut came into view, my partner, on her very first halibut fishing trip, gasped in astonishment at the size of the fish. I knew I would need another person besides myself to gaff the halibut, so I instructed her on how to gaff while I continued to slowly bring the halibut to the surface.

Do not let the nose of the halibut hit the air before you are ready to gaff, otherwise it will start fighting, my inner voice of generations stated. I had caught this fish adjacent to a rip tide area filled with large rocks, so I had to watch the speed and direction of our drift while bringing up the halibut. The rip tide zones can cause a boat to drift a half-mile in ten minutes, and the direction of drift can reverse in the same amount of time. I had to be aware in the moment regardless of what else was going on.

Finally, the halibut was to the surface, I could see that it was a five and a half foot male, as I had felt when it first

struck the line, and it was hooked only by the lip. One misdirected gaff movement and it would rip the hook out of its mouth and be gone. Before I could gaff the large halibut, the boat rocked to the swells caused by the riptides, causing the halibut's nose to lift into the air. It immediately arched its muscular back and powerfully thrashed its tail in the air, heading back down to the bottom. I let the line go but kept a slight pressure on the line. I had to be completely one with the halibut if I was not to lose it. I had to know its intentions before it acted on them. Too much pressure on the line and the halibut would be gone. Too little pressure on the line and it would be gone. It had to be precise, and I had to know exactly when the halibut was about to reach the bottom in order to turn it back upwards with its own momentum. To bring the halibut back under my own muscle would ensure that the halibut would be lost. Today people might call this Zen fishing, but for me, it was the way of the Aleut.

I felt the halibut beginning to turn, and I gently increased the pressure on my line, bringing its head back up, and continued hauling again. There was no struggle, only weight. It was conserving her energy for when we would face each other again.

I was going through a ritual my Aleut ancestors undoubtedly experienced over the ten thousand years of our intimate relationship with the Bering Sea. Taking a halibut in the proper way is a ritual, and mastering this ritual is a rite of passage into adolescence and ultimately into manhood, and it was part of an experience that connected me directly with my ancestors. My ancestors felt the energy of the halibut just as I did. They loved the Bering Sea just as I did. Their emotions were no doubt the same as what I was experiencing with a halibut on the handline. Prior to the invention of the cotton line, my ancestors used strong lengths of kelp for their hand-lines. The smell, taste and feel of this wondrous place in the middle of the Bering Sea were the same as what my ancestors experienced. This Sea is my experiential history book and a personal link to my ancestors.

Historically, our seafaring technology was the most sophisticated of any North American culture when the Russians found and enslaved us. Our people had traveled in high seas kayaks to places as distant as Southern California, the Pacific Islands and the coast of Japan. Our craft were known to be the best open water kayaks in the world. Having built a traditional Aleut kayak, I learned that its sophistication is based on the superior ability of the kayak to move with every nuance of the Sea, from the most overt to the most subtle. Aleut kayaks were known to have the first "ball bearings" in any sea craft known in North America. These ball bearings allowed the craft to move as the sea moves. To construct such craft required a profound understanding of the Bering Sea, an understanding that re-

mained relatively intact to this day, despite the genocide and severe cultural disruption Aleuts experienced for more than two hundred years. It was the very same kind of understanding I was using to connect with the halibut on my line. Like the kayak to the Sea, I had to intimately connect with the halibut in order to feel its every nuance and intention, in order to succeed in bringing it on board. This connection is the foundation for what is often termed by native peoples as our Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom.

As I hoisted the large male halibut towards the surface, my thoughts transported me to the beginning of what brought me to this point. At five years of age, I was introduced to the seafaring ways of my ancestors. This rite of passage began with a group of children clustered around a man, known in the village as “Old Man,” cutting halibut on the emerald green grass next to his home one summer on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs. He had just come back from a fishing excursion with a load of halibut caught from a 14 foot New England style double-ended dory powered by a 10 horse outboard motor. The halibut would be used to feed the Elders, widows and disabled first, then his extended family, and finally his own immediate family.

I was part of the group of children who watched with fascination and wonder as Old Man skillfully and carefully cut the halibut into special parts that filled specific kinds of meals—soup bone cuts, steak cuts, fish pie cuts. More fascinating for me was to see what was in the halibut’s stomach—sandlance, octopus, and small king, tanner and horsehair crab.

Suddenly, Old Man, bronzed from windburn that resulted from the day’s outing, cut the halibut’s heart out and held it out to us, moving around inside the circle of children.

“Whoever will eat this halibut heart raw will always catch as much halibut as you will ever need whenever you go fishing,” he proclaimed.

We all stepped back, startled by this gesture.

Then, without thinking, I said, “I’ll eat it!”

Unbeknownst to me at the time, this was an old Aleut tradition to determine who was ready to go to sea to fish for

halibut. Aleut wisdom taught that whoever would have enough courage to eat a raw halibut heart would make a good student. This ritual is intended to determine which child is a risk taker, willing to experience the unknown to learn new things. The entire community reinforced these ways by actively offering learning opportunities to children who demonstrate this kind of curiosity. From the time I ate the halibut heart, my extended family and men in the village would take me out fishing whenever there was opportunity.

A month after I ate the halibut heart, my first halibut gave itself to me on a hand-line at age five on an outing with my dad. As is the Aleut custom with the first halibut, I was required to eat its heart to become “one with the halibut.” The spirit of the halibut entered me the moment I swallowed its heart. For hours, as we continued fishing, I gazed at the halibut that chose me. For the first time I experienced a deep and special connection with that which gave my people sustenance for millenia. In my open child mind and heart, I felt that the halibut and I were part of the same fabric that makes up all things, and my respect and reverence for the halibut took on a new meaning.

My first halibut went to the elders and my extended family, and one piece was kept for me to eat. Catching the halibut was exhilarating, but there was nothing like seeing the delight and gratefulness in the faces of the people to whom I gave the halibut. Give away your first halibut and halibut will always come to you, the adults would say.

In the traditional way, I did not ask a lot of questions; instead, I was encouraged to simply observe what the men were doing and to mimic them. It was an experiential school that taught more by action than by words. The total number of words the men used in all the years of learning how to fish were less than the number of words I am using in this article. Whenever there were words, they were filled with lessons. I would listen to my dad and the other men speak in Aleut with reverence about the halibut and the Sea. They would comment on when the tide was turning or whether or not the “bottom was coming up” while fishing in areas where the sea bottom consisted of basalt rocks typical of volcanically created islands. As we drifted, the elevation of the sea bottom would change.

Learning to be aware of the most subtle of sea bottom changes increases the chances of catching halibut. Most halibut feed within three feet off the sea bottom, although many times we caught halibut sixty feet off the bottom when it followed the bait on our hooks as we hauled the lines up. I learned that, depending on age, halibut forage in distinctly different sea bottom terrain. The Bering Sea is the Aleut version of the modern day supermarket. Three-foot halibut were found in one area, four-foot halibut in another, five-foot in another, etc. Through experience, and

without the use of compass or map, I learned the sea bottom topography of the entire six-mile radius around St. Paul, as well as the three adjacent islands that make up part of the Pribilofs.

I witnessed how the men would take information in through use of all their senses, about the clouds, color of the water, direction of drift, speed of drift, timing between tides, movement of wind, cloud formations, type of sea bottom and shape and movement of the Sea in the areas we were in. I began to understand the value of self-awareness and necessity of remaining connected to the Sea, the air and the land for success in catching halibut and to be safe. I was learning an ancient language of communication with the Bering Sea, Mother Earth and Father Sky, one that allowed our people to survive and thrive in one of the most challenging of conditions for hundreds of generations.

I went through my next rite of passage at age 11. My father, John Merculieff, gave me permission to use his boat and motor to go halibut fishing. I did not have to pass any competency test to earn this privilege; my father knew I was ready. My skills would match those of much older men who did not have the benefit of the Aleut way of knowing. I could navigate safely without a compass in the fog that predominates the summer months when the halibut were back from their southern migrations. I could feel, smell and read the texture of the sea and air to know when it would be time to return to land to avoid impending storms. I knew how to “ride the skiff or dory” when caught in large swells or breaking sea. I knew what part of the day the halibut preferred to feed, and where and when they go to give birth. I knew the sea bottom like the back of my hand.

Although I was confident of my abilities and skills at this young age, I also knew to have humility and respect for the halibut and the Bering Sea. The price of arrogance in the face of the Great Mystery could mean death. There was always more to learn from the halibut and the Sea, even for the most accomplished seafaring person.

My thoughts come back to the halibut on my hand-line. The way of the handline allows me to feel the halibut directly. The hand-line is our mode of direct communication with the halibut, much like a telephone connection links people — it is how we talk with each other. Through the hand-line, I can feel when the halibut is near the hook before it strikes. This knowledge allows me to prepare for the lightning fast bite on the hook. Otherwise the halibut will take the bait before I can set the hook. I can tell if the bait is being sucked in but not taken by the halibut. I can tell if the halibut is simply moving its body across the bait to determine if it is going to take it. I can tell how the halibut is hooked once it is on the line-by the lip, jaw, gullet or snagged on the body. This knowledge guides how the

halibut is brought up-quickly or slowly, gently or vigorously. I can tell the size of the halibut once it is hooked, and I can tell how much it will fight before hoisting my line. Ability to secure such information determines the degree of success of the fisher. Commercial long-line fishing techniques are devoid of this dimension of connection with the halibut. Younger Aleut men who chose the way of commercial fishing, without learning the traditional Aleut way, lose much in their understanding of the halibut and the ancient ways to communicate with all of nature.

Finally, with the help of my partner, I bring the great halibut into the boat. The wondrous and mysterious halibut surrendered without further resistance. My sweetheart's eyes well up in tears as we both realized the significance of this moment for the halibut and for each of us. The halibut's death is filled with meaning as she gives its life to us with dignity, power and grace so that we may sustain ourselves physically, emotionally, culturally and spiritually.

Honoring the halibut in the way taught for generations, we spent the day carefully and respectfully cutting up the halibut, making sure not to waste any part of it. We returned its skeleton back to the sea so that the halibut will once again chose to return to feed someone else. We drummed and gave a prayer of thanksgiving. We gave away some of the halibut to many in the village, and there was still plenty of halibut to meet our own needs for the rest of the year.

I am thankful for the many blessings and bounty given to me by the halibut and the Bering Sea. After decades of traditional fishing, the spirits of the halibut and the Bering Sea continue to teach me, their Aleut apprentice, my place in the great Circle of Life. After all is said and done, this is the essential gift of wisdom from the halibut heart, given to all who have the courage.

For more, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7Fb8JePdT8> where Ilarion explains the heightened mental state that puts the hunter in tune with the environment on a spiritual level.



[Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways](#)



[Wisdom Weavers of the World](#)

Building a Replica of a Greenland Qajaq KOG 65 from “Kayaks of Greenland” Getting the Gunwales Right By Fred Randall

In the previous *Masik* article, I discussed considerations in the design and building of qajaq replicas. I went into some detail into how to determine the qajaq’s characteristics from the drawing, and developed both a list of offsets from the drawing and the apummâk (gunwales) flare or angle. Finally I went over how to determine the location of the stations for building the replica from the drawing. In this article, I will move on to the actual steps in building a qajaq replica. I have transcribed the list of offsets and apummak angles from the drawing of KOG 65 (page 306 in *Kayaks of Greenland*, Harvey Golden, 2006) to the tables below.

LIST OF OFFSETS					
DISTANCE FROM BOW	PROFILE (HEIGHT ABOVE BASELINE)			PLAN (<u>SHEER</u> IS FULL WIDTH, CHINE IS WIDTH FROM CENTERLINE	
	Sheer	Chine	Keel	Sheer	Chine
0	17- $\frac{1}{8}$ "		16- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	$\frac{3}{4}$ "	
00' <u>6"</u>	16- $\frac{1}{2}$ "		13- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	
01' 0"	16"		10- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	2"	
01' 6"	15- $\frac{1}{2}$ "		7- $\frac{1}{4}$ "	3- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	
02' 0"	14-1/8"		5"	4- $\frac{5}{8}$ "	
02' 6"	13- $\frac{3}{8}$ "		3- $\frac{5}{8}$ "	6"	
03' 0"	13'		3"	7- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	
04'	11- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	6"	1- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	10- $\frac{3}{8}$ "	4"
05'	11- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	5"	1- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	14- $\frac{1}{4}$ "	5- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
06'	9- $\frac{3}{8}$ "	4"	$\frac{7}{8}$ "	17- $\frac{1}{4}$ "	7"

07'	8- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	3- $\frac{3}{8}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	19- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	8- $\frac{1}{2}$ "
08'	8"	3"	0"	21"	9- $\frac{1}{8}$ "
09'	7- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	2- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{1}{8}$ "	21- $\frac{3}{8}$ "	9- $\frac{1}{8}$ "
10'	7- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	2- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	20- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	9"
11'	7- $\frac{1}{4}$ "	2- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{3}{4}$ "	19"	8- $\frac{1}{8}$ "
12'	7"	2- $\frac{5}{8}$ "	1"	16- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	7- $\frac{1}{4}$ "
13'	7"	2- $\frac{5}{8}$ "	1"	13- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	6"
14'	7"	2- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	$\frac{7}{8}$ "	10- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	4- $\frac{1}{8}$ "
15'	8"	3- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	$\frac{7}{8}$ "	6- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	2"
15' 6"	8- $\frac{3}{8}$ "		$\frac{7}{8}$ "	4- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	
16'				3- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	
16' 6"	9"		4- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	2- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	
17'	9- $\frac{1}{2}$ "			1- $\frac{1}{4}$ "	
17' 5- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	10- $\frac{1}{4}$ "		9- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	34"	

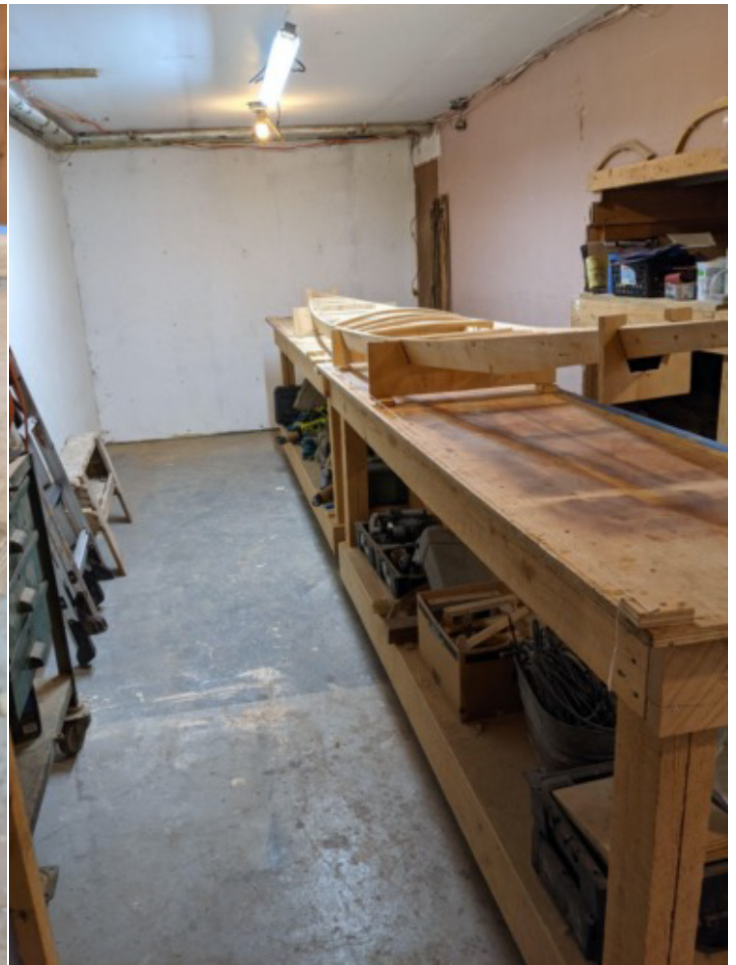
APUMMAK FLARE	
Distance from Bow	Apummak Flare (angle)
2'	11°
4'	16°
6'	15°
8'	13°
10'	10°
12'	12°
14'	15°
16'	12°



Many of these steps are particular to building a replica. Among these is the use of a workbench to act as a reference plane, and building stations for the apummâk (dual gunwale) which match the apummak (single gunwale) flare and the qajaq's width when secured to the workbench.

The workbenches shown are made with rough sawn hemlock boards. The legs are made of 1"x4" boards, the rail is made of 1"x6" boards and the top is 2' by 8' cut from 3/4" plywood. There are wheels on the bottom to make it easy to move.

I run a string along one edge of the workbenches (see photos below) attached at each end on top of a spacer. A block, of the same depth as the spacer, can be slid along the bench under the string to identify any areas that are high or low.



In the previous article I described my rationale for the selection of station locations at 5', 9' and 13', and pincher locations at 2' 6" and 15' 6". To build those stations and pinchers, I need to collect the following information from the tables above and create the table below.

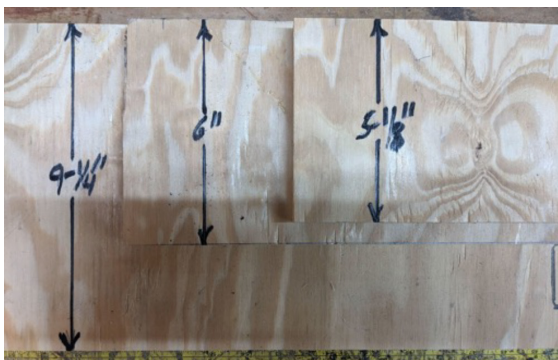
- Apummak flare
- Apummak width
- Height of the top of apummak above the baseline (for stations only)

STATION AND PINCHER INFORMATION			
Station Location	Width	Height Above Baseline	Flare
5'	14- $\frac{1}{4}$ "	11- $\frac{1}{8}$ "	15°
9'	21- $\frac{3}{8}$ "	7- $\frac{7}{8}$ "	12°
13'	13- $\frac{3}{4}$ "	7"	14°
Pincher Location	Width		Flare
2' 6"	6"		11°
15' 6"	4- $\frac{7}{8}$ "		12°

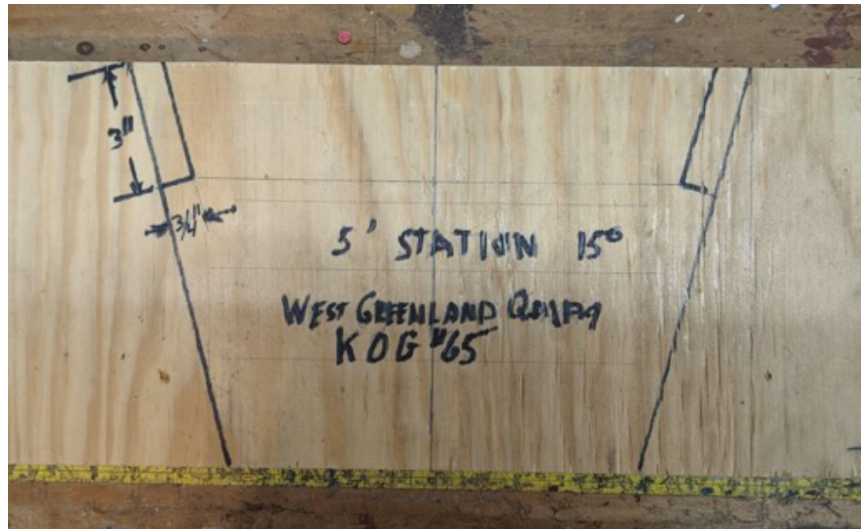
The drawing shows the apummak is 3" deep and 9/16" wide. I plan for the apummak to be 3" deep but 11/16" wide. The additional width should not affect the performance of the replica and will add extra strength when fitting in the tippet (ribs).

From the table above, we know the sheer at the 5' station is 3- $\frac{1}{4}$ " higher than the sheer at the 9' station. The sheer at the 13' station will be 7/8" lower than the sheer at the 9' station.

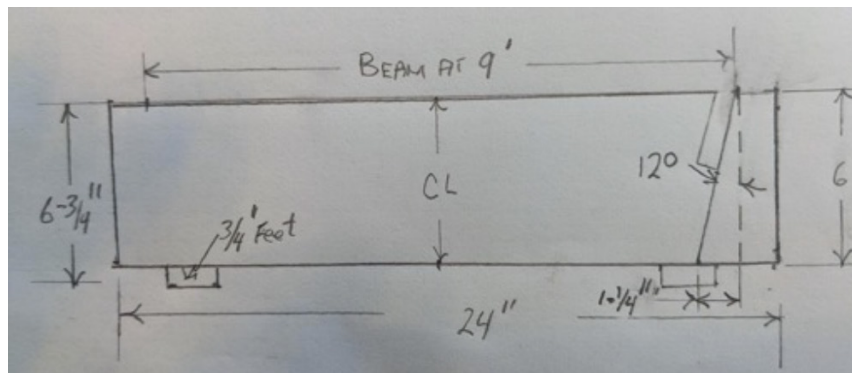
The stations will be cut from 3/4" plywood and be 2' long. The height of the plywood will be 6" for the 9' station, 9- $\frac{1}{4}$ " (+ 3- $\frac{1}{4}$ ") for the 5' station and 5- $\frac{1}{8}$ " (- 7/8") for the 13' station.



Cutting the width of each station



After marking the beam for each station marking, the apummak angle is marked with a digital sliding t-bevel. The digital sliding t-bevel allows setting the angle without any calculations. A protractor could also be used.



Mark the centerline—useful later to check symmetry—and then draw in the apummak slots for cutting. Note the bottom of the slot is not horizontal, but follows the angle of the apummak when it is sitting in the slot. Three-quarter inch feet have been added to the stations for stability and can be screwed into the workbench. So now in the case of the 9' station, the top of the apummak, sheer, will be 6-3/4" above the workbench / reference plane.



The stations, shown above, are cut and marked and ready to be set on the workbenches.



The next step is cutting the apummâk. As shown in the picture, the apummâk is being cut from a 2"x4" using a bandsaw. The boards have already been cut to the 3" depth.

I get good results with a bandsaw blade that is $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, with 3 tpi (teeth per inch) hook teeth. To ensure the cut is straight without any wobble, the bandsaw is tuned before cutting the board. Instructions on tuning a bandsaw are plentiful on the internet.

I will end up with 3" boards close to $\frac{11}{16}$ " thick. You can also buy 1" boards at various widths (1"x4", 1"x6", 1"x8", etc.) and cut the apummak from them. The 1" board you buy is actually $\frac{3}{4}$ ", within $\frac{1}{16}$ of the boards I mill. Depending on the width of the board, you can also get the chines, keelson and deck stringers from the same piece.



Be sure to check that the stiffness of the boards are the same, or the qajaq will not be symmetrical. The boards I cut are draped between two blocks on the workbench shown in the picture. They are perfectly matched. If they were not, the stiffer one could be thinned, or flexed downward repeatedly to "relax" it, or even steamed.

In the image below, the stations are positioned on the workbenches, and the apummâk set in place. They sit perfectly, the natural sheer from the flare and curve matching the stations. There is now a solid surface to work from. If the stiffness of the apummaks did not match, and the stations were secured to the workbenches with screws, they would take the symmetrical set imposed by the stations.

Looking at the picture above, note that the sheer line is spot-on from the 5' station to the 13' station but needs to be checked from the apummâk ends to the 5' station and to the 13' station. The apummâk are actually at 9" at the forward end and at 16' 9-¼" at the stern end. As discussed in the previous article, this accounts for stem pieces that will be attached.



Below is a table that gives the height of the sheer above the workbench. From Harvey Golden's drawing, I measured that height above the baseline at 9' to be 7-7/8". On the workbench (the new baseline), I measured that height to be 6-¾"—the height of the station with the ¾" feet. The difference is 1-1/8" (7-7/8" - 6-¾"). This means the baseline has moved up 1-1/8". So I subtracted 1-1/8" from all sheer line heights, the results given in the table below. Now I can check the height at any sheer line location.



The photos below show me checking the heights at the end point of the appumak, (i.e. 8" and 16' 10"). I find I need to add wood to match the sheer line of KOG 65 — 1-5/8" at the forward end, and 2-7/8" at the aft end. I will add a little extra for wiggle room. The measurements, given in the table below in column "ACTUAL HEIGHTS ABOVE WORKBENCH," show wood needs to be added from 4' to 0' 8" and from 13' to the end.



The added wood is glued onto the apummâk with Gorilla glue or similar. Pipe clamps hold the pieces in place. Taped wood strips held in place with clamps keep the added wood in plane with the apummak. Sliding wax paper between the two apummâk allows both apummâk to be worked at the same time without them being glued together.

SHEER HEIGHT ABOVE BASELINE

DISTANCE FROM BOW	Design Sheer		Actual	Difference
	From Drawing	From Workbench	Measured	Design Height - Measured Height
0	17.125	16		
00' 6"	16.5	15.375		
00' 8"	16.25	15.125	13-1/2"	1-5/8"
01' 0"	16	14.875		
01' 6"	15.5	14.375	13"	1-3/8"
02' 0"	14.125	13	12-1/2"	1/2"
02' 6"	13.875	12.75		
03' 0"	13	11.875	11-3/4"	1/8"
04'	11.75	10.625	11"	-3/8"
05'	11.125	10		
06'	9.375	8.25		
07'	8.75	7.625		
08'	8	6.875		
09'	7.875	6.75		
10'	7.875	6.75		
11'	7.25	6.125		
12'	7	5.875		
13'	7	5.875		
14'	7	5.875	5-3/8"	1/2"
15'	8	6.875	5-1/2"	1-3/8"
15' 6"	8.375	7.25		
16'	8.5	7.375	5-1/4"	2-1/8"
16' 6"	9	7.875		
16' 10"	9.125	8	5-1/8"	2-7/8"
17'	9.5	8.375		
17' 5-3/4"	10.25	9.125		



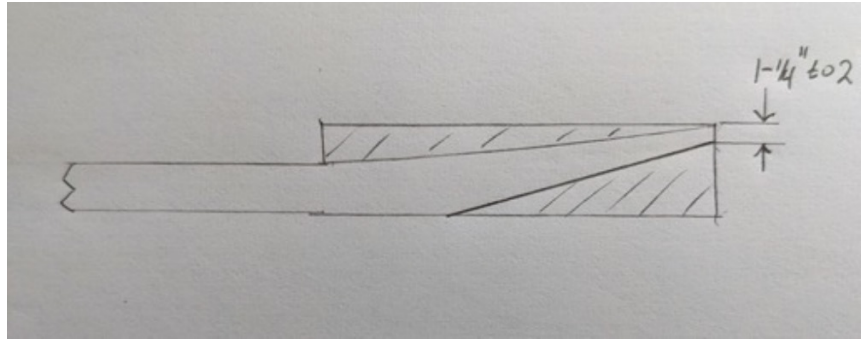
Once the glue is dried and the clamps removed, the surfaces are cleaned and rough cut before returning to the stations.



After returning the apummâk to the stations, I mark vertical lines in pencil at 8", 1', 1'6", 2', 2'6", 3' and 4'. The sheer heights are marked at those locations obtained from the "Design Sheer from Workbench" column in the table above. A batten is secured with clamps on the apummak through the marks to obtain a fair line of the sheer. The same is done for the aft end of the apummak.



Once completed, the apummâk are removed from the station and laid out on top of each other for cutting. A finish screw has been attached to the bow and stern a few inches from the end to secure the alignment of the apummâk. The bottom of the appumak is



marked to give a triangle end, in preparation for the stem pieces. The drawing below illustrates the cuts.

The cuts completed and smoothed with a block plane or power hand planer, the apummâk are returned to the stations.



Next issue of the Masik: Placing the deck beams and ribs.



Authenticity: What Is It?

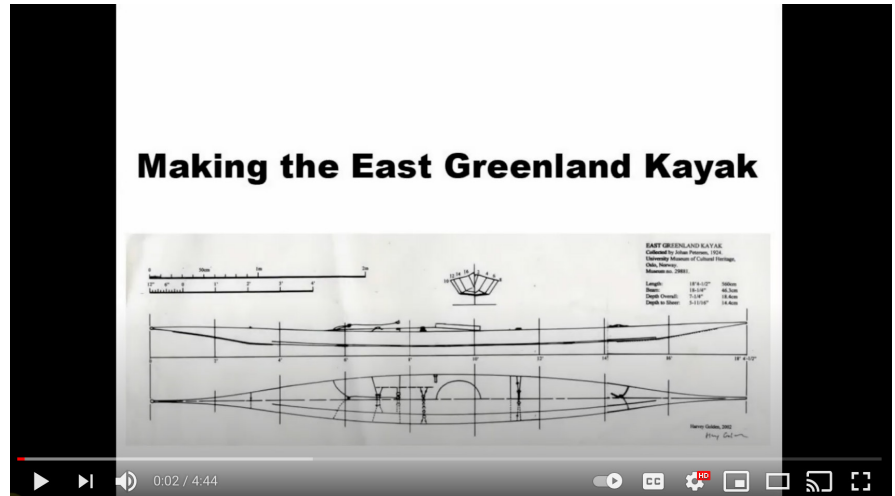
By Gabriel Romeu

I had attended a conference of the Furniture Society in Victoria, British Columbia, in 2002, a yearly gathering that touches the breadth of furniture making from how and why we do it, to the impact it has to society and culture. The conference was a means to meet and discuss almost any related topic, see others work and break the studio isolation of the past year.

The conference included a contingent of well known first nation coastal carvers and painters from both BC and the mainland, to serve as an 'anchor' to this historically rich area, and to give the attendees an opportunity to observe the technical approaches in the seminars they hosted, using the unique methods and tools employed by the first nation makers. Throughout the conference we also sought to expand the conversation of the commonalities and differences of their impetus to make, in consideration of all of our different cultures and experiences.

I was on the executive committee of the of the Furniture Society board in that early part of the 21st century, after years of working on their website and various other roles within the Society, whose mandate was primarily educational, started by academics, all the conferences hosted by educational institutions. I was producing furniture for a living with an unusual approach to making and designing, using a wide variety of materials, wood, metal, stone and glass, applying both the historical hand tools to the tools and processes of industry. My studio housed everything from a kiln for powder coating, numerous mid 20th century tools like a Southbend Lathe and Bridgeport Mill, through and almost complete set of classic planes, Ryobi saws and numerous grits of whetstones. I designed on CAD, some of my work done with CAD-CAM. My favorite tools were the hand scraper and the CNC machine.

I remember the discussions of legitimacy in reference to the hand in making, especially in the context of my own approach to making furniture. How is a 'crafted object' defined as opposed to a produced or machined object? I sat at a bar with an academic from Yale a few years later (at a break from conference), discussing how the makers of both ends of the spectrum used the Shakers as examples of their paradigm, the inventors of the circular saw and employing hand work in every aspect of production. He thought it a great topic for Critical Discourse at conference, an auditorium-scaled event that took up the morning of one of the days of conference. It was usually composed of a panel of a multi-disciplinary group of academics—sociologists, psychologists, historians, philosophers, curators—discussing all those aspects of furniture-making not involving a tool in your hand—



Gabriel Romeu: comparing traditional and modern kayak construction.

use, function, market, the museum, ethics, historical and cultural implications. For this conference, I was asked to participate in the panel, not knowing why, me being the non credentialed sort. But it was my favorite segment of the conference (I found the technical wood working stuff rather boring), and I thought I would give it a go. It would at least relieve the rest of the panel of the tiresome and annoying questions I 'could' ask at previous (and subsequent) critical discourse panels. I had a choice of what I could cover. I knew and respected all the other panelists (much brighter and learned than I), and I thought that my presentation could speak to our participants that were constantly looking and adapting methods, techniques and aesthetics from around the world.

I had recently completed a replica of an East Greenland kayak from a lofting by Harvey Golden. I struggled, not with the technical problems encountered in the brilliantly conceived joinery, or with unfamiliar construction methods. My deep questions concerned whether my privileged cultural place allowed me to construct a vessel as an avocation, when for the original builder the kayak was a mandate (requirement?) for survival in the far north, of which I had no experience.

I had numerous opportunities that none of the builders in East Greenland were able to enjoy. I had various references that allowed me to choose a vessel to build, with none of the environmental conditions that dictated the choice. I had the ability to communicate with the community that would support me at Delmarva. I also was able to get the Peterson, Arima and Golden writings through the internet, spend the time on research, afford the materials and take the time off to both get more of an expertise in paddling and dedicate my studio to kayak building. With this realization, I began to read the writing of cultural ethnographers who explore the impact of colonial contact on both the colonizing and colonized cultures and how they would deal with the objects that a culture was producing. (See, for example, the anthology, *Colonialism and the Object*). I brought my questions to the conference, and made a performance piece in PowerPoint on building the East Greenland kayak for my part of the critical discourse panel discussion. Nothing else, just this presentation, a slideshow with an eight second duration per slide with a short narration on each. This was unusual to the typical lecture with slide support, but I thought it could limit my time on center stage and give the professionals their due. The discussion with audience participation did not give me a free ride. (See the PowerPoint presentation above and here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLdWk83WdHs>).

The post industrial economy shifted a high percentage of workers involved with production into many other segments of society—business and political administration, distribution, marketing, maintenance, care giving, teaching, the arts, and of course finance. The majority of people, even those still employed by the factory, had already been distanced from the final product by the assembly line, by the splitting of production parts in many locations and through specialization in every facet of production ranging from distribution to design, marketing and packaging. This new cultural demographic needed no association with any semblance of 'making,' which is possible in a society based on consumption, where everything is accessible if one has the means.

The post industrial economy also brought major changes as the use of energy, electronics, CNC and robotics further distanced producers from the product they 'make.' Rather than providing identity, the objects created through this type of work provides the means to pay the bills.

Those who choose to make objects starting from raw materials and continuing through to the finished product come from a privileged position. Their work can be an avocation in the form of a hobby. The rare professional will have access to materials, tools and a marketplace. There are the few independents who choose a different path and break from society, placing themselves in the position of self sufficiency. There are the subsistence makers, who produce the requirements for survival in so many places in this world that have no access to the available products that we as consumers and makers take for granted.

Historically, the independent farmer was responsible for making and fixing the tools, the homestead and all the things needed to raise and harvest crops and animals. These days, for many, agriculture may be the avocation of planting the flower garden gracing the home, or the organic farmer buying the greenhouse and setting up the CSA, the industrial farmer that uses a specialized limited crop production or that individual or group that chooses to get off the grid and grow their own. Agriculture is similar to object making in a contemporary consumer based society. Who is the most attuned to the diverse skillset of making in this current culture?

Most people are consumers, completely outside the realm of production. Their social status cues their choice of education, occupation and affiliated organizations. Their status may be more closely defined within subcultures exhibited by their clothing, vehicles, homes, occupations, objects, etc. Their choices reveal their curatorial 'prowess' and constantly define their identity within the larger culture and subcultures. These subcultures are often split by age, geography, social class, religion, politics, ethnic origin and any other rather arbitrary grouping that one assumes by viewing their curated objects. Some of the judgmental standards that support such assumptions, often incorrectly, may be quality, aesthetics, monetary value, technical sophistication, environmental/social impact, conforming to standards or sometimes, as in the arts, challenging standards.

Authenticity is one of the standards applied to objects. In the consumer markets, it is defined by those who own the licensing. One assumes that the Gucci handbag sold by vendors on the corners of NYC streets are 'knockoffs' of the actual product. Some manufacturing consortium (pirates?) found a way to produce and distribute this fake Gucci more cheaply, and assumed the risk of prosecution by the license holder.

In the music business, the licensing agreement is often owned by the producers and distributors of product, also protected by those regulators. The art and antiquities marketplace, including both consumers and merchants, are supported by a cadre of certified and professional assessors to legitimize the objects as authentic. Anything of great value has a rather large and costly network of assessment and prosecution for the 'fakes.' It is built into a system, paid for by the consumers of these objects, but also by those who pay via taxes for the policing and court systems that protect the value of objects they can't afford.

Often the designers, artists, musicians, inventors and those responsible for the original conception of an object are not privy to the rewards of their labor—sometimes because they are no longer alive, and sometimes because their work has been acquired by powerful institutions or individuals, through colonization, contractual agreements made under

duress or pure exploitation.

The question here is whether a replica can be deemed 'authentic.' Is it an authentic representation of an original object? But then the notion of an original object may also be questioned, as most evolve from a rich past of design incarnations. Changes to the 'originals' may arise due to the accessibility of materials available at any particular time, tooling and time availability, skill sets evolving through generations, changing conditions such as shifting environmental conditions, intent of use, technological changes and social/cultural influences.

All of these can also affect the replica. The materials employed in the original may be hard or impossible to access, so substitutions are a compromise. Note that often when an original is falsely claimed in the antiques world, the materials are a giveaway to expose a fake. The tooling required to construct many originals may require a sophisticated skill set to operate, may be made with materials not available, or may be terribly inefficient. All may require additional compromises from the maker of the replica.

The time available in the making of the original, especially in a functional object, may be dictated by need (for survival). For a professional, this may be defined by the contractual schedule with the client. Perhaps the time is open ended without restriction for the devotee.

Depending on the circumstances driving the utility of an object, modifications may be applied to particular (or peculiar) specifications on the replica for things such as fit, durability, available new materials or other factors to maximize use of the replica in the new context. In the case of the original, this opens the possibility of a general stylistic similarity of many 'originals' incorporating minor modifications, but leading to an evolutionary trend in the design and production. The replica stops there unless it serves as an original for a new replica. (This is getting a bit confusing even for me.)

What changes with the replica is the context of the making and the end product. A replica, as a copy, is done by looking back and choosing the object, which is not possible for the maker of the original. The object was originally made to fit a list of criteria necessary for the utility of the maker, whether it was for his/her specific needs or the society it served. For the maker of the replica, the object is often created 'for its own sake' — as an avocation, or to try and get some sense of the original object's phenomenology, as impossible as that may be coming from such disparate contexts of geography, culture, utility and experience. If this replica was almost atom to atom identical, would it be an 'authentic' replica? If it were to need modifications, such as slight changes for fit intended to generate a closer experience of the original, would that nudge it away from the authentic?

In the art marketplace, there was little room for authenticity outside of the original, until questioned by art theoreticians such as Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and manifest in art of Sherrie Levine, whose work consists of exact duplicates of works by other photographers such as Edward Weston and Walker Evans. Copies/replicas, in both the art and antiques marketplace, have been regarded either as promotional material in posters, postcards, calendars and the like, worthless forgeries (if discovered), documentation as in books

and catalogues or 'originals' in the legitimate reproducible mediums of photography and printmaking. Printmaking was originally utilized as a medium to reproduce original paintings, making them available to a larger, less affluent audience for lower cost. It gained 'original' authenticity when its distributive and formal properties were exploited by artists working within the medium itself. Warhol's soup cans and Brillo boxes are examples of an exploration of authenticity within the art marketplace.

This introduces the most personal application to any utilitarian object, the decoration beyond the needs of supplementing, enhancing or supporting its use (though that may be argued by someone more 'spiritual'). This could be surface coloration, illustration, patterning, incising and carving, and also adding elements to structure or arrangement. In some cultures, these additions may be dictated as in ritual or talisman objects. For the professional making an object for a client, the client's input is considered. When making the utility object for oneself, without a cultural mandate to decorate, the choices may be driven by personal aesthetics, iconography pulled from culture, religion, observation or whim. Any one or a combination of these choices of embellishment are intensely personal decisions, creating a symbolic identity through the object, a means of identifying ownership and often a mark to identify with a sub group.

In the finishing of the replica, does duplicating these surface decorative aspects of the object lead to a higher form of authenticity, or an appropriation of identity? Would it be more authentic, in the spirit of the original, to add the personal embellishments of the replica maker?

The real problematic participant in this assessment is the arbiter of authenticity, so prevalent in curation in this one-to-five star world. Everyone has a say. But who has the credentials to determine what is authentic? The maker of the original? They are often inaccessible by the toils of time or geography. A member or leader of the culture with similar experience, also impossible for most objects of the past, but perhaps a contemporary of the past culture or nation? A scholar of the culture? Would s/he require the experience of making? Of using? Another maker? And would that require a scholarly knowledge of the culture? How about a professional curator in either the arts or antiquities? Would they provide the insight to illuminate this question based on their experience within the marketplace? Or maybe, how it seems to be in every other arena of endorsement, by anyone who has the ability to voice the language to sound believable, within one-to-five stars?

This all leads to my personal conundrum. Is there any pretense of authenticity in the kayak I produced? Does a material copy have any relevancy to an original? Are the deviations from the original more interesting than anything that has been already 'done'? Does it benefit anyone but myself?