



DATE: JUNE 25 AND 26

## THE GREEN VIRUS INFECTS COLORADO PADDLERS

By Brian Curtiss

Last winter I contacted a number of the coaches who provide sea kayaking lessons at the various east and west coast symposiums to see if any of them would be passing through Colorado during their travels. I was hopeful since I had noticed that there were many who had classes listed on both coasts.

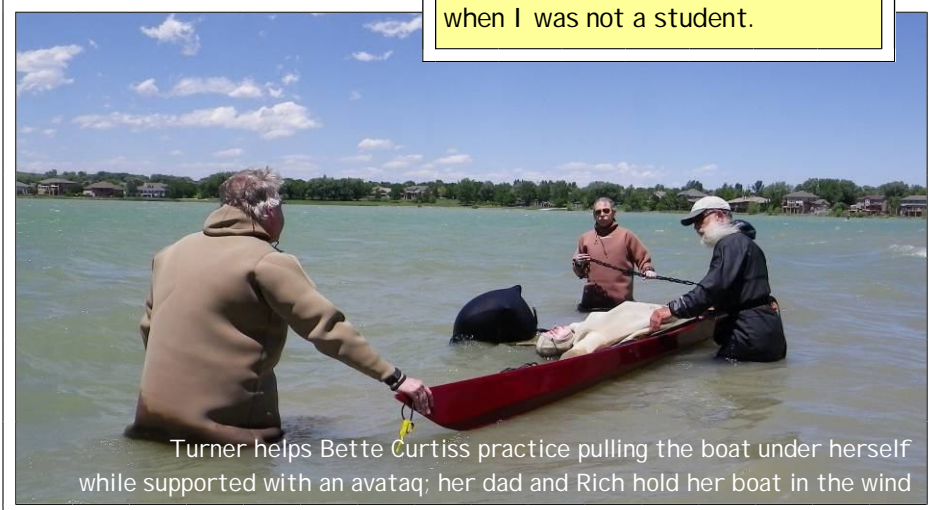
One of the people who responded was Turner Wilson of *Kayak Ways* in Maine. He and Cheri Perry teach Greenlandic techniques and offer skin-on-frame boat building workshops. A real plus is that they bring their collection of low-volume kayaks, traditional paddles, avataqs, tuiiqs and norsaqs [definitions on the next page] so that students aren't required to have their own Greenlandic gear. We traded a number of emails and phone calls and settled on a date that fit with their plans to reach a 10-day skin-on-frame building workshop in Portland by the end of June.

Five of us from the Club (Brian Curtiss, Sue Hughes, Rich Webber, Kristy Webber, and Mark Willey) spent Saturday with Cheri and Turner learning the basics of Greenlandic paddling. We started with stretches (Cheri is also a yoga instructor). Then they demonstrated how the paddle is constructed and how it is fit to the paddler. This information helped us each select a paddle or two from their large collection that we used later in the day. It will also help if we should choose to make our own paddles (several folks including Rich Webber have already done so).



Cheri Perry helps Rich with the paddle movement; Bette was holding the boat and keeping the avataq from blowing away

EDITOR'S NOTE: I wish there were pictures of the members who took the class on Saturday, but all the photos are from Sunday, when I was not a student.



Turner helps Bette Curtiss practice pulling the boat under herself while supported with an avataq; her dad and Rich hold her boat in the wind

We spent the rest of the morning in our own kayaks learning the basic strokes using the Greenlandic paddle: several versions of the forward stroke



Paul Callor worked advanced rolls;  
Brian Moore was keeping the boat in position

(canted, sliding and vertical), sweeps and several versions of the bow rudder turn, sculling draw, and high and low braces.

We had more discussions over lunch; then in the afternoon we donned tuiliqs, grabbed an avataq, selected a skin-on-frame kayak and learned a basic Greenlandic roll or two.

On Sunday, Brian and Rich returned along with four non-club members (Patty Lee Barnhart, Paul Callor, Bette Curtiss, and Brian Moore) to spend another day with Cheri and Turner. We reviewed the basics in the morning and spent the afternoon working on rolling.

The big difference was that the wind came up on Sunday afternoon (10-15 mph out of the west with gusts to 30 mph) which added another dimension to the experience. It was so windy that tow ropes were used to keep the rollers from blowing out of reach. (Note to self: rolling up *into* the wind and waves is way easier than trying to come up on the down wind side!) At the end of the day, several of us paddled up wind to finish the day surfing the wind waves back to the put in.



Balance bracing in the waves that were big for McIntosh Lake

Overall, I think everyone had a great weekend learning new things. Both Cheri and Turner are talented teachers as evidenced by the three or four people who rolled for their first time. While I'll continue to look for opportunities to bring in other outside instructors, I think that we will be seeing these two back here in Colorado in the future.

#### DEFINITIONS

**AVATAQ:** A bladder traditionally used as flotation for a seal harpoon. It can be used as a self-righting aid when learning the basics of rolling.

**TUULIK:** A Greenland style paddle jacket and sprayskirt combo; it is a very warm and dry garment designed for paddling in unforgiving cold conditions. It is meant to be roomy and not restrict movement in any way.

**NORSAQ:** A throwing board used to add power to the throw when harpooning prey; well suited to train Greenland rolls and a great passing stage to learn hand rolling.



Turner helps Patty Lee with the angle of her wrists