

EDITOR'S NOTE: Brian has been studying Greenland paddles and paddling for a long time.

Last spring, when he was on the east coast visiting his mother, he attended the Traditional Inuit Paddlers of the Southeast's symposium in Aiken, South Carolina.

TRADITIONAL INUIT PADDLERS OF THE SOUTHEAST

by Brian Hunter

Traditional Inuit Paddlers of the Southeast (TIPS) is

an annual kayak gathering that brings Greenland Style paddling to the southeastern United States. Novice to expert paddlers get together to learn and teach paddling strokes, maneuvers and rolling techniques, and to appreciate the ingenuity of the type of equipment used for thousands of years by Greenland hunters.

BRIAN'S REPORT: On May 15-17, 2015, I attended the 2nd Annual Traditional Inuit Paddlers of the Southeast (TIPS) retreat near Columbia, South Carolina. It was a Qajaq USA event featuring two exceptional and world renown Greenland style paddlers, Chris Crowhurst and Dubside.

Uncle Dave, a Qajaq USA volunteer, brought six skin-on-frame qajaqs, about a dozen Greenland paddles and several different sizes of tulik ("doo-ee-leek"), which are Inuit style spray skirts with a hood and arms.



Qajaq USA is an organization dedicated to preserving some of the traditions and techniques used by the Inuit, and to raise awareness about the roots of the paddling activity that many enjoy: www.qajaqusa.org



Also provided were several avataq ("av-ah-tock"), the sealskin flotation bladders that are attached to a harpoon. There were even some harpoons.

This gear was from the Qajaq USA collection; it travels to different Inuit style events around the United States. The participants were encouraged to try all the different equipment and received instruction on their proper fit and use.



The norsaq, or harpoon throwing stick, used to launch the harpoon is under the harpoon hidden on the far side of this paddler. Norsaq's are also used in several variations of emergency rolls.

HARPOON THROWING PRACTICE

There were classes in using the Greenland style paddle, often called a "stick," and many other subjects. Harpoon throwing was one of them.

One of the instructors, Chris Crowhurst, said in his blog, "I liked how TIPS de-emphasized rolling and provided opportunities for forward stroke development, maneuvering, harpoon throwing, ropes and paddle making, as well as presentations on history, Greenland competition, etc.

This really allowed the attendees to get a rounded view of Greenland style kayaking."



In this picture you can see the harpoon in the air and the norsaq in the paddler's right hand.



The instruction by Chris, Dubside and Uncle Dave was truly excellent; every participant I spoke to was thrilled with the training and learned new skills or improved existing ones.

ROLLING LESSONS

But rolling is a life-or-death skill for hunters in the Arctic's icy waters, and it was a big part of the symposium. There were classes on the many different types of Inuit rolls from beginner to advanced "combat" rolls.



Learning the hand roll with Chris Crowhurst

Dubside [no last name] travels all over the US to demonstrate rolling, and the rope gymnastics that are used to teach rolling skills where the water is too cold to practice them in the ocean, and he competes in and judges rolling contests in Greenland.

He's amazing; check out a rolling exhibition: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_8Lh6ldWng

Or a rope demonstration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URONCFjK0j0>



Dubside demonstrating rope gymnastics that simulate rolling

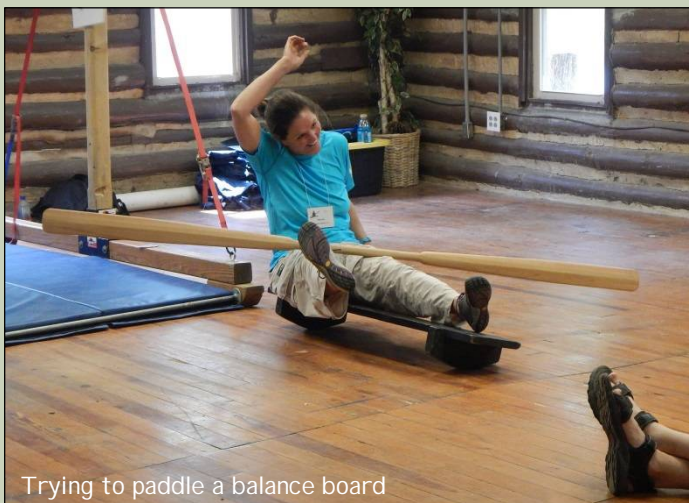


YOGA

Both mornings of the event started with yoga for qajaqing. It was the first time many of us (including me) had ever tried it.

After those two sessions I am convinced that yoga can improve qajaqing skills by stretching and strengthening the muscles used in paddling. I believe it is especially useful for rolling qajaqs.

IMPROVING BALANCE



Trying to paddle a balance board

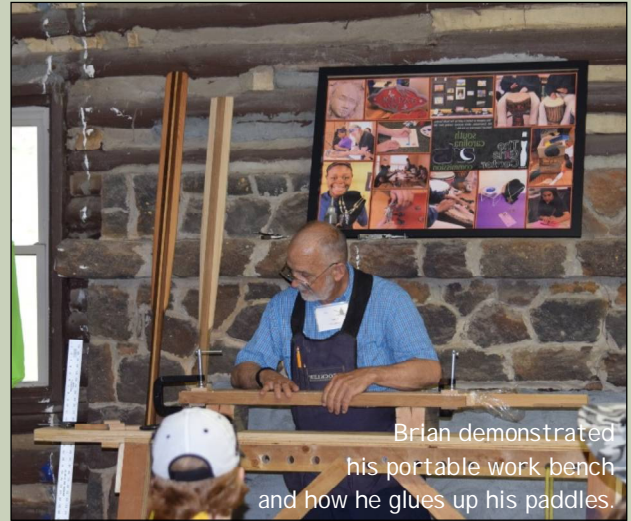


Playing around on three boards

MAKING GREENLAND PADDLES



Paddle making seminar



Brian demonstrated his portable work bench and how he glues up his paddles.

There were 21 participants at the second annual TIPS from all around the US, and one from Mexico who was a German citizen. Skill levels varied from novice to those performing rolls with a brick in one hand.

We all went away feeling grateful for the new paddlers we met and the skills we learned or improved. Many of us will cross paths again at other Qajaq USA paddle events.



Early morning serenity at Aiken, South Carolina

SOME HISTORY OF KAYAK CONSTRUCTION: For the most part the sea kayaks (qajaqs) we paddle today were inspired by the Inuit people of the Arctic. The skin-on-frame (SOF) qajaqs they made were designed to hunt marine mammals, birds and do a little fishing, too. Bringing home enough food to keep the village fed in very harsh sea states and cold water drove the design of these highly specialized water craft and related accessories. Different areas of the Greenland coast also influenced qajaq design that were specific to that location.

Greenland qajaqs and paddles were tweaked and improved to perfection over a period of several thousand years. Originally they were made solely from found and harvested materials specifically for a single person. Measurements, called anthropometrics, were obtained from the length and width of various parts of the paddler's body. For example, the length of a particular qajaq might be three times the length of the paddler's outstretched arms from fingertip to fingertip, and the width equal to the width of his hips plus two fists with the thumbs tucked in.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As the article on TIPS mentioned, Brian has been interested in Greenland paddling for several years. People new to RMSKC can look in the publications available on our website for articles he's written on Greenland paddles and how he makes them: *Paddling with a 2x4* in the Mountain Paddler, Summer, 2013 (21-1b), and *How I Make Greenland Paddles* in the Mt. Paddler, Summer, 2014 (22-1b).

In searching for those cites, I realized Brian has been listed as the author in the *RMSKC Index of Publications* more than twenty times. Some were short event or paddle reports, but more than half were major articles. Here and on the next page are portions of the Index sorted to show the titles and topics of his longer articles.



TITLE	SUBJECTS	AUTHOR	ISSUE
<i>Rudder vs. Skeg</i>	Weather cocking, locked stern, advantages and disadvantages of rudders, advantages and disadvantages of skegs, how to counter weather cocking, kinked cable, retrofitting a rudder, gas pedal rudder controls lee cocking	Brian Hunter	2015, 23-1b, <i>Mt. Paddler</i> <i>Early Spring, 2015</i>
<i>Thoughts on Paddling as a Group</i>	Safety in a group, paddlers' responsibilities when paddling in a group	Brian Hunter	2015, 23-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler</i> <i>Summer, 2015</i>
<i>Rolling: It's a Little Like Learning to Ride a Bicycle</i>	Videos, reasons learning to roll is valuable, advantages of a roll, pool practice,	Brian Hunter	2015, 23-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler</i> <i>Summer, 2015</i>
<i>Kayaking on the Edge</i>	Benefits of edging, physics of why edging works	Brian Hunter	2014, 22-1b, <i>Mt. Paddler</i> <i>Summer, 2014</i>

TITLE	SUBJECTS	AUTHOR	ISSUE
<i>How I Make Greenland Style Paddles</i>	References and sources of information, pictures of Brian's workbench, grain explanations, gluing steps, attachments to the workbench: clamps and jigs	Brian Hunter	2014, 22-1b, <i>Mt. Paddler Summer, 2014</i>
<i>The Splendor of Shadow Mountain Lake</i>	Gratitude, beauty, fishing, flowers, mule deer, Grand Lake	Brian Hunter	2013, 21-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler Fall, 2013</i>
<i>Paddling With a Two by Four</i>	Inuit, Aleut, skin-on-frame, Greenland, making a Greenland paddle, paddling with a Greenland stick, advantages of a Greenland paddle, disadvantages of a Greenland paddle, <i>Greenland Paddles Step by Step</i>	Brian Hunter	2013, 21-1b, <i>Mt. Paddler Summer, 2013</i>
<i>Boat Modifications: for Safety, Control, Comfort and Convenience</i>	Boat modifications, carry toggles, security bolt, hatch cover security, bungees, thigh braces, back band, perimeter lines, under-deck stowage bungees	Brian Hunter	2012, 20-1b, <i>Mt. Paddler Early Summer, 2012</i>
<i>Some Basic Knots for Kayaking</i>	Which knot to use, knot jargon, ten knots with pictures and good instructions	Brian Hunter	2012 20-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler Late Fall, 2012</i>
<i>SERIOUSLY SICK? Just Driving Home from a Trip?</i>	DVT, safety, causes, pain, dehydration, blood clots	Brian Hunter	2011, 19-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler Fall, 2011</i>
<i>Heavenly Paddling on the Green</i>	Moving water, Labyrinth Canyon, monoliths, mesa, <i>Canyonlands River Guide</i>	Brian Hunter	2011, 19-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler Fall, 2011</i>
<i>Advanced Do It Yourself Dry Bags</i>	Making dry bags, specialized dry bags, heatseal, fabric, bow bag, custom dry bags	Brian Hunter	2010, 18-3b, <i>Mt. Paddler Fall, 2010</i>
<i>Kayak Towing</i>	Rescue, skill	Brian Hunter	2010, 18-2b, <i>Mt. Paddler Summer, 2010</i>
<i>Kayak Camping for the First Time</i>	Kayak camping class, Granby Reservoir	Brian Hunter	2008, 16-3, Fall, 2008