

St. Paul Baidarka Club gets underway with first meeting

The first meeting of the newly-founded Saint Paul Island Baidarka Club came to order at 7:00 p.m. Feb. 5 in the high school woodshop, which is also where the current "batch" of iqyan and uluxtan are being built. Last year's school-sponsored iqyax, as well as teacher Michael Bucy's "Dyson" baidarka (framed from aircraft aluminum alloy tubing), have both come from this shop.

An announcement of the meeting was put out via St. Paul radio station, KUHB, inviting all interested people to come. In attendance were Jesse Zacharof, Eric Galaktionoff, Anthony "Tone" Kushin, Charissa Shane, Frank Shane, Larry Stepetin, Timon Lestenkof, Karin Holser, Michael Bucy, and Marc Daniels. Pastries and coffee were consumed with incredible speed as the meeting got underway.

Among the issues at hand was what to do with our newly acquired \$200 savings, which was raised at a fund-raising dance Feb. 2 at the City Rec Hall. Two local

bands played – first, the younger guys (Dustin Jones, Victor Merculief, Alfey Hanson, with drumming help from Neon Krukoff) and then the D.L. (Different Local) Band, who also donated their evening's tips to the club. Thank you to everybody!!

We decided to open a checking account under the name of the club and to have Larry Stepetin and Aquilina "Debbie" Bourdukofsky act as co-check-writers for the club. Aquilina is away, off island at the moment and will hopefully not object to being voted into this position.

So, next on the agenda was choosing a name for the club. We wanted to have a name that covered a broader scope than just the single-seat iqyax, but rather our interest and involvement with all types of traditional Unangam watercraft; iqyan, uluxtan, nigalan (single-hole baidarkas, 2- and 3- hole baidarkas, and baidars, respectively). Unfortunately, we are unable to come up with an Unangam word mean-

ing generally, "Aleut skin boat," so we have decided to refer to the club by the name that is already being widely used here on St. Paul, "The Baidarka Club".

Our discussion then turned toward acquiring a boathouse/workshop, and some good suggestions were brought up, including the idea of building our own structure as part of a Voc-Ed carpentry class, led by current baidarka project instructor, Marc Daniels. To raise money for our upcoming expenses, we've decided to try and hire ourselves out as a carpentry/labor crew. We are scheduled to have a meeting with City Manager John R. Merculieff Feb. 9 to discuss the possibility of doing some work for the city, among other ideas.

It was decided (unanimously) that all club decisions would be made by consensus, in keeping with the traditions of Unangam rule. It was decided that I (Marc Daniels) would be allowed to compile this monthly newsletter, at least until a quali-

fied person happens along.

Lastly, we discussed the objectives and purpose of our club, and listed the following:

1. To carry on the skills of building and using the Unangam iqyax, uluxtax, and nigalax.
2. To continue the evolution of these boats, discovering their place in the world today, and to rediscover the many secrets they carry from the past.
3. To have good, healthy fun, showing a good example to others.

Meeting was adjourned, and there were no more pastries or coffee, so work on the baidarkas resumed.