



# SUPERIOR KAYAK & OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CLUB

(Formerly the Twin Cities Sea Kayaking Association)

**SKOAC**

**P.O. Box 581792**

**Minneapolis, MN 55458-1792**

[www.SKOAC.org](http://www.SKOAC.org)

## Winter '02-'03 Newsletter

### Note from the Editor:

We are edging up on **SKOAC's first birthday** and everyone should be proud of what we have accomplished in our first year of existence. **Thanks to all of you SKOACers** who devoted their time and energy to building our new club. We made quite a splash in the local paddling community with well-staffed, professional booths at **Midwest Mountaineering's Canoe Event** and the **Two Harbors Kayak Symposium**. The sleek new **SKOAC logo, brochures and t-shirts** (all courtesy of our design guru, Jim Davis) are projecting the club's image like never before. Our **web site**, lovingly administered by Chris Wein, continues to grow in leaps and bounds with visitors from all over the world surfing in to check us out.

SKOAC's first summer paddling schedule was full of trips of all skill levels on local lakes and rivers, as well as Mother Superior. This fall SKOAC focused on the "**Outdoor Adventure**" part of our new name, as we **backpacked the Superior Hiking trail, scuba dived with sharks** at the Mall of America's Underwater Adventure Aquarium, and **winter camped** (and kayaked) at **Split Rock Lighthouse**. In the coming months SKOACers can look forward to **snow shoe camping trips** in the Boundary Waters, **winter paddling** trips on Superior and **indoor rock climbing**. Several SKOAC members have also become obsessed with **recumbent bicycles** and are currently dreaming up long range/multi-day trips for the spring and summer. Look for details on these new outdoor opportunities in the Club News section of the newsletter.

As always, I welcome feedback, articles, and anything else related to sea kayaking or the outdoors. Don't hesitate to call me at (612) 823-1272 or e-mail me at [brock.hunter@justice.com](mailto:brock.hunter@justice.com) with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Brock Hunter

### Board News:

1. The SKOAC Board met December 6 at Noodles & Co. restaurant near Lake Calhoun. Present were Lynn Jacobs, Brock Hunter, Al Kasinskas, and Bill Newman.

2. The Board decided to **delay conversion from paper to an all-digital newsletter** until spring. This delay is based on the need to mail out election ballots, candidate statements and, of course, the fabulous party invite you have, no doubt, already taken note of. This delay will also give us some more time to tweek the member e-mail list with any necessary updates and changes. **If you have not already submitted you e-mail address, please do so if you want our new tech newsletter.** If your listed e-mail is not correct, please contact Bill Newman, our Membership Director, at 763.585.6191 or [wanezman@earthlink.net](mailto:wanezman@earthlink.net).

3. **SKOAC Board elections** are upon us. Three of the five Board positions are up for grabs. Those three slots are currently filled by **Al Kasinskas, Adrienne Madson**, and myself, **Brock Hunter**. All three incumbents are running for re-election. In addition, **Jerome Rausch**, a very active club member (as well as a CPA) has been nominated and he has agreed to throw his hat into the ring. Check out the candidate statements and be sure to cast your vote by either **bringing your ballot to the Annual Party on January 25** or by mailing it in. If you intend to mail your ballot, **be sure that we receive it by January 24** or it will not be counted. **Mail your ballot to SKOAC, P.O. Box 581792, Minneapolis, MN 55458-1792.**

4. **Bill Newman, Membership Director Extraordiniar, is cracking the whip on deadbeat members.** Some of you, and **you know who you are**, have allowed your SKOAC membership lapse. Many of you will find renewal/waiver form included with your newsletter. If so, fill it out and send it in with your dues, ASAP. If you did not receive a hard copy of the newsletter and/or

are no longer listed on the club phone list, you should consider yourself **SERIOUSLY LAPSED**. Contact Bill at 763.585.6191 to get your poop in a proverbial group. **Remember, current SKOAC membership is required to participate in many club events including pool sessions, lessons, and, of course, trips.**

5. On January 7 the **Rapid Riders**, our whitewater sister organization within the MCA, invited me (Brock Hunter) to speak at their Board meeting on the issue of **incorporating their club**. SKOAC, as you may or may not know, is an actual non-profit corporation and has been since the days of TCSKA. As a corporation, we enjoy an extra level of protection from potential law suits. Specifically, our officers are shielded from personal

liability, protection not provided by our general ACA insurance coverage.

At the Rapid Riders meeting I explained the requirements and procedures for incorporation and answered many thoughtful questions and concerns from Rapid Riders members. After sitting through the rest of their meeting I can report the Rapid Riders are a very well run, active and friendly organization. We look forward to future opportunities for combined club events.

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## **Club News:**

1. SKOAC's **Thanksgiving backpacking trip on the Superior Hiking Trail** became a true **cold weather shakedown** when, with no warning, our mild forecast was blown away by **30-40 mph** northerly winds and temps dropping down **below zero**. Most of us were **caught without true winter sleeping bags or clothing**. Fortunately, the unexpected cold snap did not really ruin our trip. **We did surprisingly well** with our three season bags, backpacking tents and one larger wood stove-heated ultra-light tipi where we all congregated for meals and socializing. **Despite the bitterly cold conditions we kept the tipi at 70-80 degrees all evening, enjoying yet another legendary SKOAC BS session.** As the evening progressed folks took their leave and headed to their individual tents to bed down. After a night that dropped to **around -5 degrees F, with 40 mile per hour winds**, members gathered in the tipi for a breakfast. Some reported experiencing a pretty chilly night, but spirits in our group remained high and we enjoyed our hike out. We did cut our trip a day short because of the bitter cold, and took advantage of a car that we had strategically stashed at the mid-point of our route for just such an eventuality. **All through the trip we marveled at the resilience of 12 year-old Caelli Wright**, Rick Wright's daughter and our youngest club member. Though visibly tired, **Caelli refused our repeated offers to unburden her of her pack and she often took the lead as our group trudged down the frozen trail.**

2. In early December four SKOACers **dove with the sharks** at the Mall of America's **Underwater Adventures Aquarium**. Rated the best shark dive in America, Underwater Adventures boasts four species of sharks, as well as rays, sea turtles and a plethora of other sea critters.

We started with a dive in the **fresh water tank**, inhabited by many local fish species, including Northern Pike, Bass, Walleye and Sturgeon. The highlight of the fresh water dive was the chance to **feed the Sturgeon by hand**. We discovered that a Sturgeon's mouth is like a vacuum cleaner and they literally

sucked the food (and sometimes our fingers) right up their hose-like snouts.

The **shark dive** came next. We were first briefed on **safety procedures** by aquarium staff. Once in the tank, we stayed in a tight group on the bottom, and swam along the walls, with three staff members providing some perimeter protection with long striped PVC wands. Of the four species of sharks in the tank, two of them, the **Sand Tigers and the Browns, are considered dangerous to humans**. The staff did a good job of keeping the dangerous sharks at a safe distance, though they still **occasionally cruised right over our heads**. The non-dangerous species, the Nurse and Black-Tip Reef sharks, along with sea turtles and assorted fish were allowed to swim right through our group. At one point, **a rambunctious albino Sea Turtle bulldozed several of us over as we knelt on the bottom.**

**Underwater Adventures** is one of the few aquariums in the country that allows the public to dive in their tanks, and one of the fewer still that runs shark dives. The staff was very friendly and professional. We all had a great time and would recommend it to any diver who can't make it to the Caribbean this winter.

Anyone with **diving certification** can arrange a shark dive. Dives are done only a few times per month, always in the evening, and require advance reservations. Contact Underwater Adventures directly to arrange your shark encounter.

3. As in past years, SKOACers gathered at Hidden Falls on the Mississippi for a **New Year's Day paddle**. Despite cold and overcast conditions we had a great turnout. We were joined by members of the **Rapid Riders** and even did some boat swapping. **Rick Wright managed to quickly capsize his borrowed rodeo boat** but, fortunately, rolled back up, salvaging SKOAC's rep. After the paddle, folks gathered around a **bonfire** and socialized until the sun went down.

4. Despite our unseasonably warm (at least until this week) and dry winter, the **Boundary Waters are ripe for snowshoe camping**. Sarah Ohmann did trip out of Ely during the first week of January and reports a generous **18" of ice** on the lakes, covered by a passable **6-8" of snow**. With the recent cold snap, conditions can only be getting better.

Check the Calendar for details on specific trips, including one this coming weekend. We **will always have at least one (and frequently more) wood stove-heated tents** on our winter trips. Group members will need to **bring their own tent** (any backpacking style tent will do) to sleep in, but will be **welcomed into the heated tents for all meals and socializing**. Don't feel bad about sleeping in a non-heated tent – **even we heated tent dwellers let our wood burning stoves die down at bedtime and brave the cold from inside a fat sleeping bag, just like everyone else**.

5. As you may or may not know, SKOACer, **Patrick Maun**, is an accomplished **rock climber** who includes **Devil's Tower** in Wyoming among his ascents. Patrick has generously offered to sponsor the **first SKOAC indoor climbing evening** at the **REI Climbing Pinnacle**. The event is set for **March 3rd from 7:00PM until 9:00PM**. Our group size is limited to 18 (we already have 10), so sign up quickly if you are interested. The cost to reserve the Pinnacle is \$100, which will be evenly spread among all participants. **REI will supply all needed gear,**

**including shoes, ropes and harnesses**. This is a **rare opportunity** for unimpeded access to one of the regions **premier indoor climbing venues**. Contact Patrick at 651.281.0455 or [patrick@patrickmaun.com](mailto:patrick@patrickmaun.com) to sign up.

6. **Rob Tull**, long time club member and **notorious smack-talker**, has become obsessed with **recumbent cycling** over the last couple of years. What, you may ask, constitutes **"obsession"** in a club full of Eccentrics? How about peddling **7,000 miles in the last year?** Rob regularly knocks out multi-day, multi hundred-mile trips. To hear it from him, **recumbents make that kind of distance easier and far more comfortable than on an upright bike**.

Based on Tull's **track record of gross exaggeration**, if not outright BS, we are, of course, **skeptical**. Nonetheless, many of us are curious about these weird-looking contraptions and at least one of us, **Ellen Nacik, has already fallen under Tull's spell**. After joining Rob and some of his "bent" buddies on a weekend in Iowa, Ellen promptly went out and bought one of her own. Ellen now reportedly spends so much time on her recumbent (dubbed Planet Ellen) her friends rarely see her anymore. If you have recumbent bike or are interested in checking them out, contact Rob for info on his next adventure. Rob can be reached at 515.287.1031 or at [rob@robtull.com](mailto:rob@robtull.com).

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## **Kayaking Skills & Safety:**

1. SKOAC continues to explore the possibilities of **winter paddling on Lake Superior**. An exceedingly nasty weather forecast forced us to abbreviate our **Devil's Island Halloween Nightmare trip**. The forecast called for temps in the 20's with winds up to 39 mph and waves from 7-9 feet. Rather than risk being stranded off shore in such conditions, we decided to shore camp at Little Sand Bay (which we had completely to ourselves). On Saturday afternoon the wind died down and we decided to do a **day paddle to Sand Island**. The **temp was in the 20's** but the sun was out and we had little wind, making **paddling conditions very pleasant**. We paddled on the **gentle swells** out to the **sea caves** on the eastern side of Sand Island where **we had a great time playing in the reflected swells and exploring the icy caverns**.

In December, we added a **day paddle to our winter camping weekend at Split Rock**. The **temp was in the teens** and the **wind was gusting up to 30 mph** out of the west. We spent over **two hours out on the water and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves**. We stayed warm and dry (in drysuits) and experienced **surprisingly few equipment problems**. Ice buildup hampered the performance of the rudder on one of our boats, but was not as big an issue as we expected. **Ice buildup on the decks of the boats** was not an issue on our two-hour paddle, but would probably become one on longer trips. We

believe a **small rubber mallet** would be the perfect tool to knock that ice off without damaging the boat underneath.

Our **wood stove-heated tents definitely make cold weather paddling more palatable and practical**, allowing us a **warm refuge** to change out of ice-encrusted dry suits and **to dry out frozen, soggy gear**. **Rubber hatch covers** from Brit-style boats present **particular problems for the winter paddler**. They become **very hard and inflexible** in the cold. Removing them is not too difficult, but putting them back on can be a chore. We are discussing the idea of bringing said hatches into our heated tents overnight to **keep them warm** and flexible. A cheap shower cap (or something like it) could be used to seal a boat's hatches from the elements overnight.

Winter paddling may not be for everyone but, remember, **kayaks were invented by indigenous people of the Arctic**. With special attention to a few extra details, **winter kayaking is not only possible, but highly enjoyable**.

If you are interested **joining us in pushing the limits of "paddling season"** (and you have a dry suit) contact me, Brock Hunter at 612.823.1272 or Bill Newman at 763.585.6191. We do not currently have any winter paddling trips on the calendar since they are so weather dependant. **Such trips will probably be**

launched last-minute, based on a good weather forecast and we will notify interested parties when the opportunities arise.

2. The article from our last newsletter on the **deaths of three paddlers** on the Great Lakes garnered a **great deal interest** from outside our region. We received a number of e-mails from **paddling clubs** the **eastern Great Lakes** and the **East Coast**, **requesting permission to reprint the article** in their own publications. Of course, we granted said permission in the interests of spreading awareness of the inherent but often

overlooked dangers of paddling in cold water. Again, we continue to marvel at the **powers of the internet** to reach paddlers all over the world.

3. Our **winter pool sessions** have been very well attended so far this year. The first two sessions have focused on basic rescue and bracing skills. Future sessions will focus on rolling skills. Take advantage of the opportunity to work on your skills and try new ones in the comfort of a nice warm pool with advice and assistance of your friendly fellow club members. Check the calendar for dates.

## Outfitter/Commerical Listings:

### Adventures In Perspective

YUCATAN SEA KAYAKING & ART/ADVENTURE TRIPS NEW YEAR'S SALE !!!!

2003 New Year's Greetings and Best Wishes for the upcoming year to All. After a grand 8 day driving trip to our location in the Yucatan in early December - we are once again set to host a full season of groups. We have a fleet of new sea kayaks, a beautiful new kayak A-frame rack, new studio space and best yet - a fancy new gas oven/range. Enchiladas, chili poblanos and mango shortcake here we come!

**Several trips still have openings** that we would like to fill with YOUR RESERVATION - we are extending **discounted trip prices** on the following trips:

**\*\* Mexican & Mayan Cooking** - February 22 - March 1

Sea Kayak, snorkel and learn the secrets of great Latino foods with American and Mexican experts.

Sale price - \$1,250. (from \$1,450)

**\*\* Painting & Batik** - March 1 - March 8

Sea Kayak, snorkel and create watercolor and batik images in the splendor of Caribbean colors.

Sale price - \$1,250. (from \$1,450)

**\*\* Sea Kayaking Adventure Trip** - March 15 - 22

Learn to paddle or improve skills in tropical waters! Bird island, snorkel, relax and play in paradise.

Sale price - \$1,150. (from \$1,300)

**\*\* Exploring Creativity** - March 29 - April 5

Sea Kayak, snorkel and give voice to experience through a multi-media journey of creative expression.

Sale price - \$1,250. (from \$1,450)

**PLEASE FIND FULL TRIP DESCRIPTIONS, SYLLABUS AND COLOR IMAGES ON EACH PROGRAM ON OUR WEB SITE**

**AT: [www.livingadventure.com](http://www.livingadventure.com)**

We hope you can join us for a great week of fun, relaxation and renewal.

Gail Green & Grant Herman

Directors / Adventures In Perspective

P.O. Box 874

Bayfield, WI 54814

715-779-9503

[www.livingadventure.com](http://www.livingadventure.com)

### Urban Boatbuilders, Inc.

Urban Boatbuilders, Inc. is offering paddle making courses which includes Greenland Paddles. We offer a Quick Course - one evening that provides a paddle blank and basic instruction (Jan 20th and Feb 3rd 7-10pm, \$110). We also offer a Custom Paddle Making Course that provides more ongoing guidance with a pretty much guaranteed positive outcome. This course requires a Saturday plus two evenings. (Feb 15th, 17th and 19th, \$150). We will offer a 15% discount to SKOAC members on the Custom course. Visit [www.urbanboatbuilders.org](http://www.urbanboatbuilders.org) and click on classes for the full course catalogue and course details.

--- Ted Snyder

--- [theosnyder@earthlink.net](mailto:theosnyder@earthlink.net)

### Voyageurs Adventures

Contact us for lodging, rentals, certified instruction, guided tours, and shuttle service. I would love to offer your group a 10% discount if they mention the belong to SKOAC..... We are either Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota 1-877-GOKAYAK or Lake Kabetogama, MN. If you need any winter help, I base out of White Bear Lake in the winter.

Thanks again

Wade Watson

Voyageurs Adventures

