



Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club Newsletter

Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club
355 Gorge Road West
Victoria, B.C. V9A 1M9
Phone: 250-590-8193 (Info only)
Website: www.vckc.ca

December 2009

General Meeting
Tuesday, December 8,
2009

Annual Christmas Party
beginning at 6pm

Names from A-L
please bring main courses, appetizers &
salads

Names from M-Z
please bring desserts

BYOB and a gift under \$5.00
if you want to participate in the gift
exchange

And money for raffle tickets

If you can help on Sunday, December 6
between 1 and 3pm we need people to
decorate the clubhouse for the party.

Please come and help if you can.



(Photo: Wendy Clapp)

Olympic torch arrives by canoe

Inside this issue,
an "improper" kayaker,
thoughts on 'stepping up'
plus
paddling the Kootenay

Clubhouse News

The Club Fall clean-up has been done and very good it all looks too. Thank you to everyone who took part, especially to Sandy Rattray for organizing the outside brigade of workers, and Muriel Johnson who organized the inside group. We started at 9am, and by 11:30am, the bulk of it was completed. Many hands etc...

A team of paddlers went out during the morning. It seems like a good opportunity to remind old members and let new members know that the club expects normal club outings to be suspended during the Spring and Fall Clean-ups so that everyone can participate.

The next general meeting is the Christmas Party, being held on the second Tuesday of the month—December 8—not the first Tuesday as usual. Details are on the front page. If anyone has a contribution for the raffle, please contact Mavis Pillar at 250 857-9564 or pilarethiler@shaw.ca. Come and have some fun to start the Christmas Season! (And the date for decorating the clubhouse will be Sunday, December 6 from 1 to 3pm.)

Linda Thomson
President, VCKC

New Year's Day Paddle

The Club has a long-standing tradition of paddling from the Clubhouse on New Year's Day. Canoes, kayaks, voyageurs, outriggers, all are welcome. The paddle will start from the Club at 10:30am, and we will return in time for lunch. Bring along your left-overs for a pot-luck lunch. We'll bring along the usual mulled wine and thick soup of some kind. After the lunch, we'll take down the Christmas decorations so that the Clubhouse is set up for the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, January 5.

Canoe Program Report

Courses

Over the year, the Canoe Program instructors have put on 11 courses, teaching over 80 paddlers and raising over \$4000 net of expenses for the Club. Many thanks to all the instructors, Bon, Dan, Jean, Tom, Ellie, Linda, Joy and Todd. Congratulations to Bon on becoming a Lakewater instructor this year,

as did Dwight from Duncan. The schedule for next season's courses will be developed at the first Canoe Program meeting in 2010 and published on the website and newsletter. Anyone who would like to take a course, please contact me and I will add your name to the list. For a complete list of all courses offered in the RCABC program, go to that organization's website at www.bccanoe.com and look up the diagram under Courses -> Programs. The Club has instructors for all disciplines except playboating and poling. So if the course you'd like to take is not offered, ask!

Program Meetings

The program had one meeting in October, a joint one with members of the Kayak program, and another in November. There were presentations on two summer trips, a DVD on Cold Water Survival and discussion on issues of relevance to both programs. The next meeting is planned for Monday January 18, 2010. By then, there will be a new Canoe Program Director, elected at the AGM on January 5.

Purchases

The Canoe Program has acquired a new-to-the-Club flatwater canoe from Western Canoe and Kayaking. It is a 16'8" Yukon canoe and will be used for Lakewater courses and for day trips if needed. The Club now needs to get rid of one of the old flatwater canoes that are in the compound so that the 'new' canoe can be put in that rack space. See elsewhere in the Newsletter (page 5) for details.

The Club Executive also approved the purchase of two new centre airbags for the Club's whitewater canoes as well as two sets of bang plates.

Both the above items were budgeted for by Joy for purchase in 2009 so thanks to her. I'd also like to thank her for her work as Program director for the last 2 years. Joy has been part of the Club for longer than I have been a member, and I wouldn't have become so involved had it not been for her encouragement. Luckily, she is still on the Island so we will see her from time to time, and I can draw on her extensive knowledge of the Club and past practices.

Alan Thomson



Notes From an Improper Kayaker

I guess, because of Alan's comment at the November exec meeting, that I may now be an "improper kayaker", as opposed to those "proper kayakers", who presumably never sit their butts in craft other than the decked canoes commonly called kayaks. I would say that I am also multiply improper in that I probably spend almost as many hours paddling outriggers and dragon boats. And recently I even took part in a river outing in one of the voyageur canoes. How improper can you get?

I joined the voyageur trip on November 11 mostly because the alternative kayak paddles didn't really appeal to me and because I really like splashing around in white water—at least I liked it on white water rafting trips on the Green, Thompson and Arkansas Rivers. The day began with a meeting at VCKC to load the big tubs onto their trailer, after which the several vehicles trailed on up to Duncan. After we all had a Serious Coffee to set the mood of the day, we convoyed up-river to Stoltz Pool Park from where we launched. Canoe folk seem to do one-way trips more often than the kayakers (probably because water flows downhill and the paddle back would be a bummer) so there was a wait for the shuttle drivers to return, then a two minute silence at the Burma Star cenotaph. Then on to the water.



The group of about 25 was divided up into three voyageur crews of six along with assorted solo and tandem canoes. Each voyageur was fully equipped with an experienced stern and bow person with assorted heaps

of paddle-ready, helmeted protoplasm in the middle. I viewed with consternation the attention paid to tightly lashing about 30 tons of flotation under the thwarts. I was assigned a spot in seat two, just behind Jean Chandler, who did bow duty, and "way far away from Alan", who steered.



Alan and Jean gave us a few instructions about what to do when called for and away we went. We came out from the launch at a steep angle to the eddy line while leaning the boat hard downstream. I couldn't believe that a boat that big could turn so quickly but I soon forgot that because we were told to paddle across the current to a spot downstream where we eddy-turned in behind the lead boat—again with a hard lean and a snappy turn.

The rest of the day was much more of the same: the lead boat would find an eddy and the others would try to get in with them. Great sport for all and exciting to see just how close the boats would come as they eddied in usually coming to a gentle stop,



facing upstream, inches away. The river that day was running extremely full, so most of the rapids were submerged, but we still found several wave trains, some a meter or so in height. Jean never missed a chance to dive us into one of those, laughing maniacally as the bow plunged from one

peak into the next, and she caught gallons of water on her lap and face. The resulting ride was a bit of rock-and-roll, but I never felt at risk, thanks to the smooth cooperative efforts of Alan and Jean, aided only occasionally by those of us in the boiler room.

With only one stop to haul the boats over a log that spanned the river, we finished the day by about 2pm at the white bridge in Duncan. After the necessary shuttle trip, it was back to town with a short hydration stop on the way.

As a somewhat improper kayaker, I urge all of you VCKC types to get involved in more than one aspect of paddling. After all, it's fun and the best thing about this club is that you have the opportunity to jump from one boat to another.

Doug Linton

Kayak Program

At the November 17 Kayak Program meeting a couple of changes were unanimously approved by the kayak membership. It has been decided that the monthly meeting and day paddles will now be combined with the Canoe Program.

Monthly meeting will now be on the 3rd Monday of each Month at 7:30pm.

Day paddles offer both moving and flat-water day trips. We will try to run two kinds of paddling on alternate weekends so that members can take part in both if they want to.

River day trips will be scheduled from September to May (water level permitting) on various rivers of southern Vancouver Island.

Flatwater day trips are run every second weekend, alternating Saturdays and Sundays to allow members who work on weekends a chance to take part. These trips are usually run from September to June, other commitments permitting (courses, regattas, etc).

At least one weekend camping trip is run each year, on the Mother's Day weekend. Others may be scheduled if requested.

The skill levels of paddlers who wish to take part on a trip will be reviewed before a member is allowed to take part.

Until our webpage is updated to reflect these changes, please check VCKC's canoe section for details.

Note that the club does not own any river kayaks. Kayak members wishing to join the river paddle will have to supply their own boat equipped for the river.

Also if you are not currently on the kayak email list you will not receive trip notices. Contact me if you wish your name added to this email list, bonlee@shaw.ca.

A day paddle is scheduled for November 28. If you wish to join this paddle and have completed introduction to kayaking please contact Alan Thomson at 3135thom@islandnet.com or Bon Lee bonlee@shaw.ca.

Canadian Canoe Museum

There was a good turnout of VCKC members at Ocean River Sports in early November for a presentation by [James Raffan](#), Executive Director of the [Canadian Canoe Museum](#) in Peterborough, Ontario.

It is North America's only canoe museum and has 580 canoes and kayaks in its collection plus 1,000 related artifacts. The museum's exhibits explore how the canoe defines the Canadian character and spirit.

James Raffan presented a slideshow and overview of the museum's mandate and operation as well as many interesting, amusing and touching anecdotes about the canoe's place in Canadian history and its role as a national emblem. He even sang a song about a [canoe tragedy](#) where a dozen school boys perished on Ontario's Lake Kamiskaming during a school outing in June 1978.

Victoria was James Raffan's penultimate stop on his "Rivers and Mountains Tour". As he crossed Canada he had been collecting photos of canoes

and canoe related subjects.

One he presented during his slideshow was a photo of the "[Commerce Canoe](#)" sculpture in Victoria's Bastian Square. He was a bit surprised that no one in the audience seemed to know very much about the piece. You can read Raffan's reaction to being approached by the artist of the piece

(Illarian Gallant) at intermission in the diary kept [here](#) by his 'lawyer' Thelma Thwartbender.



Brian Henry (owner, Ocean River Sports), James Raffan, and VCKC members Don Munroe, Linda Thomson and Diane Williams
(Photo: Wendy Clapp)

Canoe Trips

Flatwater

It is usual for there to be fewer trips over the Christmas season but one is planned for Sunday December 13 to make up for the ones missed earlier this season. It will be a short one—near the shortest day—possibly round the Ten Mile Point, Oak Bay and Cadboro Bay area if the winds allow. As usual, an e-mail will be sent out a few days prior to the date asking who is interested in taking part.

Contact is Alan Thomson 250-592-4170 or 3135thom@islandnet.com. Kayakers are always welcome to take part.

For planning purposes, the first Flatwater trip of 2010 is scheduled for Saturday, January 9.

Usual arrangements:

- * Meet in the parking lot by the Clubhouse at 9 am;
- * Call or e-mail Linda and Alan Thomson by the Thursday evening before the paddle date if you would like to take part, and let us know if you need a boat or partner;
- * Check the weather forecast for likely wind and rain conditions (250) 363-6717 or -6880 by telephone or the Environment Canada [internet forecast](#) and bring clothing suitable to the day;
- * Bring lunch and hot drinks, too.
- * The Club's website ([click here](#)) tells you what is expected of trip participants.

A reminder note will be e-mailed to all section members the weekend before the planned trip.

Moving Water

Trips will depend on water levels and what the group is into. Here are the proposed dates although feel free to initiate a paddle any time.

Saturday, December 12

Sunday, December 27

All the details same as last year, 8:30 Millstream etc. A brief email reply is helpful to ensure we

will wait if you might be a minute or two late or to call you in the event of a cancellation and save an unnecessary trip to the meeting place. If you are no longer interested in participating drop me a reply to that effect and the harassment will stop. Otherwise it's "game on". Club boats are available for rental use by moving water course graduates but give me a call to make sure one is available. Sometimes a tandem seat will open up if you need a partner. See you on the river!

Tom Staebell

For Sale – Canoe

Thanks to the Club's purchase of a new flatwater boat, we are getting rid of one of the Club boats. It is an old fibreglass canoe, made from a long-lost mould. On the outside, the hull looks to have been patched in a couple of places, but they may be repairs to out-of-the-mould blemishes as the inside looks fine. It is 17' long and weighs about 75-80lbs, with wooden thwarts, seats and gunwales, a keelson and a fibreglass yoke. It can be seen in the Club compound on rack #22. While it has not been used by the Club for some years, I had it out two weeks ago and it is in usable condition although some TLC to the woodwork would not go amiss. While it will never be a sleek racing machine, it is deep, so has good freeboard which makes it a safe canoe for family paddles.

We'd sell it for \$100 obo, otherwise it is destined for the great canoe graveyard in the sky (or lake?). The rack space it currently occupies does not go with the boat.

Call or e-mail Alan Thomson 3135thom@islandnet.com; 250-812-3799.

NEW YEAR'S DAY PADDLE

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New Year's Day Paddle 2009
(Photo: Wendy Clapp)

Club Notes

From Carolyn Rattray:

The annual fall clubhouse cleanup on Saturday, November 14 was well attended with about 30 club members showing up to help out. As the weather was good, both inside and outside jobs were tackled. Everything from raking leaves and pulling stumps to dusting shelves and washing windows got done with the help of coffee and health food from Tim Hortons. Thanks to all those who came and helped.

From Doug Linton:

Outrigger Stern Clinic -

A clinic to introduce some folks to the black art of steering the OC6 canoes was held in the morning on November 21. Six brave souls came along, some new to the back seat, others for a brush-up. Doug and Mavis with help from the floor provided the in-house experience.

We covered much of the theory, including safety, huli procedure, and basic navigation indoors. And then we proceeded outside for rigging practice and a bit of actual steering with the other clients providing the locomotion. They now all have the basics and only experience will bring real competence. So, if you need a stern, Ron Armstrong, Wade Donovan, Jen Smith, Jonathon Leung, Al Pletz or Michael MacDonald may be able to help you out.

From Ingrid Gavin:

VCKC's First Class Dragons dragon boat team is sponsoring a raffle as a fundraiser for the team. They want to be ready for early-bird entries in several festivals coming up in the new year.

The prize is 20 brand name bottles of wine (12 reds, 7 whites and one Champagne—no two the same). The draw will be held on December 15 and tickets are \$5.00 each.

Tickets are available from Ingrid at 250-217-7156 or by email at gig@shaw.ca.

From Dennis Minaker:

I have been a member of VCKC for a couple of years. Since 1998 I have made three slide presentations at the clubhouse based on my book "The Gorge of Summers Gone, A History of Victoria's Waterway". Now after eight years this self-published book is once more available in print at local bookstores.



Coming up soon ...
Nominations for VCKC's
2010 Executive

All VCKC members are encouraged to consider running for the 2010 executive and/or nominating current members (with their permission, of course.). All positions can (and should) be contested except, of course, that of Past-President.

Anyone who is thinking of standing for office can contact any Executive member to ask about the work involved in a particular position. There are regular monthly meetings, and occasional meetings between program directors to plan up-coming events.

The positions are: President
Vice-President
Treasurer
Secretary
Canoe Program Director
Kayak Program Director
Dragonboat Program Director
Outrigger Program Director
Voyageur Program Director
Marathon Program Director
Education, Safety & Standards
Membership
Clubhouse & Grounds
Social Program
Directors-at-Large

Please contact the Nominations Committee (Maris Ratel) at 592-7082 or by email:
marisratel@shaw.ca.

Stepping Up

It's raining and miserable and cold as I write my first article for the newsletter in my role as interim Outrigger Director.

Since it is lousy paddling weather, I have decided to write about something other than paddling which has over the last two or so years become one of my favourite sports—specifically Outrigger with Dragon Boat a close second.

Instead let me share some thoughts and observations about my experience and direct involvement with volunteer organizations, ranging from small (10 to 20 members) to large (250 plus).

I have been secretary, treasurer, committee chair, vice-president and president of a range of organizations ranging from sport/recreational to church to special committees to a 250 member “campers” association managing assets worth over \$5M in a quasi “mayoral” role running a fully serviced 350 unit RV park.

This experience doesn't make me an expert on volunteer organizations but I have observed some consistent themes over the last 25 years in all of them, so please let me share them with you:

1. 90% of the work is done by 10% of the membership. This will be no surprise to those of you in the 10% club;
2. The 10%, once recruited, tend to get “stuck” with their roles, whether or not they are doing a good job. People are reluctant to tell them they are doing a bad job because they might be asked to take over and see if they can do better;
3. It is difficult to get the remaining 90% to Step Up and take on a role unless something drastic happens to one of the 10%. Death is one way you might get to leave the 10% club or you can move away more than 100 kilometres;
4. These same 10% often feel obligated to carry on for longer than they anticipated whether they want to or not (see 2 and 3 above). For some this becomes a second career which they hadn't planned on—and don't get paid for.
5. Personality, style and philosophical clashes among the 10% are inevitable and can get in the way of getting things done. But it is a reality that can't be avoided. People are people. Get used to it and get used to dealing with it. And remember, we are all on the same team and different perspectives are needed.
6. When a “new” person joins the “10% club”, it often results in a set of fresh ideas and enthusiasm that can revitalize the rest of the 10%, suggest new ways of doing things, and hopefully add value to an organization.

So why am I writing this?

Two main reasons:

First, I am considering taking on the role of Outrigger Director which means I will have to disengage from another

organization where I have played a lead role for the past five years.

The other organization is a text book case of the above six points and I know there will be considerable pressure for me to stay on, especially as it is facing a very challenging and uncertain future and we are finally making progress in reshaping the organization.

So, I will be asking myself if I am ready to step down and if I will be serving that organization better by opening up a spot for someone else to “STEP UP”.

And my second reason. This Club needs folks to “STEP UP” and assist with one of our main fundraisers and a well recognized event in the outrigger and paddling community: “Wake Up the Gorge” on April 10 and 11, 2010.

Whether or not I put my name forward as Outrigger Director, the planning and organizing for this event needs to get going.

It will need a leader who has the time and skills to make it happen, someone able to work collaboratively and cooperatively with others, and have the time to commit to making it happen, with your help.

That person is in the club somewhere and I am looking for that person, or persons, to STEP UP to take this on.

I will be available to get things started and assist but with full time work and other commitments, I am unable to take over the lead role in organizing this important event.

I am told, and have witnessed in my two years with the Club that the event has numerous volunteers. As well there's a history of putting on a well organized race which is a history we want to continue.

I am hoping that our usual great volunteers and others will STEP UP again to make this a premier event for paddlers.

Actually there is a third reason for writing this, one which I suspect our executive will also make you aware of. That is the election of a 2010 Club executive.

I have been warmly welcomed to the current executive, many of whom have apparently been on the executive for many years.

Many will want to continue to do the good work they have been doing or step up to a more senior role. Others may be ready for a change or feel they would step down if someone else STEPS UP.

So, when the chance presents itself, which will be very soon, ask yourself if it's time for you to STEP UP, join the exclusive 10% club, volunteer in our club activities and help shape your organization.

And yes that can include putting your name forward for the position of Outrigger Program Director too.

Thanks.

Max Nock

Don't Forget

Membership Renewals

Just a reminder that it's almost time to renew your club membership for 2010.

In addition to the membership fees a signed waiver is required annually from each club member.

When paying online agreement to the waiver is part of the process.

However, if paying by cheque you need to either do the online waiver (need to go to the members tab and log in to do this) or sign a paper copy of the form and submit it along with your membership cheque. Waiver forms are available in the clubhouse or you can print off a form from the members page of the club website.

Please note that Boat and Locker Storage fees for 2010 are also due on January 1 and can be paid along with Club Membership dues via the VCKC website.

Trip Reports

Flatwater Paddle

Sunday, November 15

With gale warnings in effect all along the Juan de Fuca and Haro Straits, five tandem and one solo canoe headed off to Thetis Lake for a half day paddle. The weather gods were kind, and we had no wind and only the occasional bit of drizzle, as we played follow my leader, copying each move the lead boat made. It is a good way to practice technique whilst having fun. People who normally paddle stern went in the bow and vice versa, as we side-slipped, and paddled backwards around the islets. It's harder than you'd think when used to paddling in the opposite position normally. Thanks to Bon, Susan, Maris, Mike, Ken, Peter, Sandy, Dave, Laurie and Duane for your company.

Linda Thomson

Kootenay River

August 15 - 21, 2009

VCKC member, Dan Walker, has submitted extensive notes on a trip down the Kootenay River from this past summer. It's quite detailed so the report along with photos can be found [here](#). (More photos page 11)

Lots of helpful planning information and descriptions of adventures along the way.



James Bay Eccentric in Training??

I've been living in Victoria's James Bay neighbourhood for over three years now. It's a very diverse neighbourhood with a wide cross-section of residents. Being a neighbourhood somewhat on the bohemian side, there are more than a few eccentrics. There's a delightful little old lady who often wears a hat with a bird sitting on top and rather a lot of makeup. There's the fellow who wears clothes of many colours and can be spotted doing some sort of needle work at the James Bay Coffee Shop. And then, of course, there's me.

Living in James Bay you're well aware that when you go out your door there is water in three different directions. From my house, it's a short walk north to the inner harbour or south to Dallas Road and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. And if I head west, it's not far to Fisherman's Wharf.

Despite there being water all around, it was only this summer that I thought of putting my canoe on my cart and rolling it down to the water at Dallas Road. So this past July, I loaded up the cart with all the essentials, including my Norwich Terrier, Eliot, and wheeled my canoe through James Bay down to the water. I tried to keep to side streets but there was no avoiding passing through Five Corners where Menzies, Toronto and Simcoe streets crisscross. The sight of my purple canoe with Eliot propped up on the gunnels got us lots of stares and more than one tourist pulling out a digital camera. But within ten minutes we were at the foot of Menzies Street.

The first time I did this I put in on the beach and paddled out around the Ogden Point breakwater and into Victoria's inner harbour. Not recommended. The waters at the end of the breakwater tend to get a bit confused as often the ocean swells are bouncing off the breakwater creating rather a washing machine effect. Add a little breeze and the tide coming into or out of the harbour and it can be a bit of a battle. The next time I pulled the canoe down past the Ogden Point breakwater to a fisherman put-in just to the west of the Ogden Point cruise ship docks.

On a warm sunny day, it's a very pleasant paddle into the Inner Harbour. You can poke around Fisherman's Wharf where there's even a paddle-up take out window at one of the restaurants. And it's fun to paddle up to the blue bridge ever watchful for the wake of whale watching boats, seaplanes, sailboats and the Coho Ferry. And, in our case, more tourists pointing at the cute little dog in the big, purple canoe.

A couple of weeks ago, VCKC member, Rob Thompson and I took the purple canoe and a blue kayak down to Dallas Road for a fall paddle. Eliot, of course, rode in the kayak taking everything in. There are not too many tourists wandering around James Bay in November so we got fewer stares. But along Dallas Road a woman was more than happy to take a photo of us with the canoe, kayak and Eliot in tow.

Harold Gillis



VCKC Executive

President		Voyageur Program	
Linda Thomson	592-4170	Don Munroe.....	385-2268
Vice President		Marathon Canoe Program	
Bon Lee	477-1381	Ron Williams	592-6456
Treasurer		Education, Safety & Standards	
Sam Ludmer	298-7004	Doug Linton	727-0216
Secretary		Membership	
Diane Nishimura	383-3080	Carolyn Rattray	386-9144
Past President		Clubhouse & Grounds	
Mile Petrovic	733-2013	Sandy Rattray ..	386-9144
Program Directors		Directors-at-Large	
Canoe Program		Jack Louie	598-1569
Alan Thomson (Acting) ...	592-4170	Maris Ratel	592-7082
Sea Kayak Program		Muriel Johnson	391-0560
Still Vacant		Mavis Pilar	857-9564
Dragon Boat Program		Executive Volunteer Positions	
Mike Fox	391-0160	Mavis Pillar (Soc.Coord.)	857-9564
Outrigger Program		Harold Gillis (Newsletter)	598-9488
Max Nock (Acting)	544-0051	Dave Whitehead (Boat & Locker Storage)	email

[VCKC Calendar - Click Here](#)



Paddling the Kootenay
Photos: Dan Walker

