



Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Newsletter

"The Paddling Post"

September 2020

Be sure to check the website for information on when courses and activities are scheduled !!!

President's Message

Well, September is here again. For an old teacher, September has many aspects that feel like the start of a new year. I am writing this in the hottest first week of school I can remember. There is forest fire smoke in the air. There is no end in sight for our COVID protocols. I just can't convince myself that there is any aspect of a new year starting even with School and Fall just around the corner. But if we are to continue as we have been in recent months, that is not so bad.



Physically distanced paddle with my pals

Over the recent months VCKC has seen many people enjoying small boat paddling. The SUP program has gained a couple of instructors, so look for more paddle board opportunities in the fall. Kayak has, and will continue to add, a full slate of Basic and Level 1 instruction. Seems like lots of people are swinging those double blades around. I understand the Kayak program is also gaining some instructors, so look for continued learning opportunities where everyone wears skirts. Many members have tried out the old, heavy, well used, plastic, OC1's. And I have heard nothing but praise about how great it was paddling the little outriggers! You can see below those marathoners are still having fun!

Canoes have been busy. Louise, our canoe program director describes her summer adventure on the Yukon River in the pages below. Sounds like a great time. Noteworthy is how she thanks the club for helping her gain the skills to enjoy such a trip. In her role as director she is passing on to the next paddlers to do the same. That is kinda cool. Too bad, I doubt I will be at the club's centennial celebrations.

I have heard program directors say they have seen a number of members who have, for years, only paddled in big boats, testing out what other programs have to offer. That is a great opportunity within our club. I hope more members take advantage of this and try a new paddling experience.

I would like to thank our membership for following the COVID mitigation plan we have developed and registered with Saanich. It is your diligence in maintaining our protocols that enable us to keep paddling and VCKC open. With concerns of increasing Coronavirus spread, BC has recently closed Night Clubs and Banquet Halls, and increased restrictions in other areas.

VCKC is now required to hand into Parks, at Saanich our daily attendance ledger to enable speedy contact tracing of all people that were in the clubhouse or compound. This information must be turned in every 24hrs. Each day of a club course or event, the contact information of those people present must be sent to Parks.

As you can see we might be becoming less concerned about COVID-19 as we develop good habits of prevention ,but the BC health authorities are ever more vigilant in seeking more effective ways of mitigating the spread of the virus. ***Please be conscientious in filling out your name and contact information on the appropriate ledger each time you attend the clubhouse, compound, or course/event.***

The fall, when it finally arrives, will bring with it a change in paddling for many. I know some are dreaming of rains and rising rivers. The executive will be turning our thoughts towards planning for another new year. Many questions that have never been relevant in the “Before Times” will arise and the answers may be less than clear. The next few weeks is a good time to talk to your program directors if you have suggestions or concerns you would like to bring to the executive, as we plan for another year of paddling in a COVID year.

Start looking for your rain jacket.
Cheers

~ Tim Marks, President

COVID - 19 Protocol Orientations

As part of our reopening agreement with Saanich all members must attend an orientation session and sign the new waiver prior to participating in any club event or course. If you have not been able to comply with this requirement and plan to be active this fall please contact secretary@vckc.ca to be added to a list. When there are a minimum of five members requesting the orientation session one will be scheduled.

Club Paddles - Cadboro Bay

The trip started with loading a couple of club kayaks and canoes from the clubhouse. We congregated at Cadboro Bay around 9:30am. This trip had a mix of 4 tandem canoes and 8 kayaks. After a distanced group gathering on the beach to discuss our itinerary we got on the water around 10am. Craig Thomson, our co-lead on this trip volunteered to pick up the sweep position.

Our first ambition was to paddle under the RVYC walkways en route to Willows beach. Unfortunately, we were thwarted by a low tide that didn't deliver quite enough water depth to permit passage. We were also treated to a polite discussion with a yacht club member about the merits of paddling near their docks. The shoreline to Willows beach features many small rock islands and various channels. Paddlers took advantage of these features to take a less direct but more engaging route,



sometimes discovering dead ends, but other times rewarded with passage through a narrow gap with just enough water. On the way we surprised a river otter perched on a rock and eating a fish. The otter stood its ground determined to finish the meal. The group was speedy, and we reached Willows beach in about an hour. We took a 10 minute yoga and nature-calling break and then retraced our route back around Cattle Point to Flotsam beach - our lunch spot.

We basked in the warm sun and shared a few laughs. After lunch we paddled across the mouth of Cadboro Bay to Flower Island. About 10 knots of N wind gave us just enough textured water to challenge our directional abilities. Our final leg of the journey took us along the E side of Cadboro Bay back to the beach. Ken shared some local water knowledge: when there is a flood current (like this day) a current sets up along the E side of Cadboro Bay pushing you into the beach. Well, lucky for us it was a flood current and we were going in the preferred direction, aided by this fortuitous current.

Before we called it a day a few participants practised kayak and canoe rescues. Rescues are always a humbling prospect but today was a good day to get wet. Craig gave us textbook demonstrations of the kayak heel hook entry method and the T-



ladder rescue technique. We covered about 10km. Great group and a great day! A photo album of the day can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/vckc-cb>



Canoe Program

Canoe Courses

Another Lakewater 2 – Basic Solo course was held August 16, with thanks to Alan and Linda Thomson for volunteering to teach this. Congratulations to our 6 new certified solo paddlers!

New courses are coming in September, with Lakewater 1 and 2 scheduled for September 12th and 19th respectively. Please check the calendar and register soon.

Canoe Bookings

A reminder that when not scheduled for club events and courses, the club canoes are available to VCKC members for personal use on the Gorge Waterway - on the club side of the Tillicum Bridge only. To borrow a canoe, Members must have:

- successfully completed the RCABC Canoe Lakewater 1 or higher course or have equivalent skills demonstrated to a club canoe instructor.
- attended the VCKC Covid-19 Protocols Orientation training to minimize the chance that members might catch or transmit the virus while using the clubhouse and club equipment.

Contact canoebooking@vckc.ca to reserve a canoe for the time you want to paddle. Hours of operations of the Clubhouse and boat storage areas are 7 am to 10 pm. Mention which canoe you would like to use if you have a preference. Please check the club calendar to avoid booking during canoe courses, club daytrips or other club events before requesting a canoe.

Safe paddling everyone!

~Louise de Montigny, Canoe Program Director

Our Yukon River Quest

The fascination began many years ago when I picked up Pierre Berton's 'Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush 1896-1899', I was hooked! An estimated 100,000 men (and some intrepid women) with no idea of the impending hardships, sold everything to travel thousands of miles to a brutal northern wilderness, fueled by the dream of striking it rich in the Klondike Gold Fields. The 30,000 Stampeders that made it to the Klondike, found they were too late, all the claims were taken and there was nothing for them but hard, manual labour. But with an entrepreneurial spirit and endless business opportunities, Dawson City became, for a few short years, the biggest city west of Winnipeg and north of San Francisco, the 'Paris of the North'. And what an adventure it surely must have been!

With an insatiable desire to experience first-hand what this Stampede was all about, our family hiked the Chilkoot Trail starting at Skagway, Alaska in 2005. We marvelled at the many artifacts left behind by the original Stampeders and the remains of the goldrush towns that came and went within a year. We struggled up the very steep 'Golden Staircase' where the iconic photos were taken of the miners bent over with heavy loads to reach the Canadian border. We arrived at Bennett Lake, B.C. 5 days later. But the end of the trail was not the end of my dream – now I needed to paddle the 700 km to Dawson City on the Yukon River. It took a few years to discover VCKC and its talented team of instructors and the wealth of learning opportunities that the club had to offer, but in a few short years we had all the canoeing and tripping skills needed. With Covid-19 shutting the Yukon borders to everyone except those of us from B.C. the timing seemed perfect. We loaded our 16' Esquif Prospectuer canoe, all the food and gear needed for a 10- to 14-day paddle and set off for the Yukon!

The trip was as awesome as I had imagined it to be. The Yukon River is the fifth longest river in North America. Its drainage covers almost 900,000 square kms and it runs nearly 3000 kms from Northern B.C. through the Yukon to Alaska. The classic guide 'Yukon River: Marsh Lake to Dawson City' by Mike Rourke, provided detailed maps and historical descriptions of every river bend, rapid, island, sandbar, rock and point of interest for the 700 km section we would be paddling. Each page covered as little as 10 km for a straight stretch of river, to as much as 30 km where multiple meanders formed oxbow sloughs. As we navigated the sometimes-complicated channels, we imagined that steamboat captains of yesteryear would have used a similar map but likely had bigger challenges making their way up or down river. We passed all the supply towns, RCMP posts, telegraph offices and roadhouses that were important along this major transportation corridor. Although many of these sites are now gone, some, like Lower Leberge, Hootalinqua, Carmacks and Fort Selkirk, retain well-preserved log structures to wander through while imagining the adventurous people who once lived there.

The geology was fascinating. The southern Yukon River to (about) Fort Selkirk was glaciated with a corresponding landscape of gravel cutbanks and rounded outcrops. At Fort Selkirk, a massive 300 ft basalt wall rises along river-right for 16 km, formed by molten lava hitting a glacier's edge over 10,000 years ago. North of Fort Selkirk, the Yukon River roughly follows the Tintina Trench, one of western North America's great fault lines into Alaska, with the valley we see today as much as 12 km wide. Also North of Fort Selkirk, is the area known as "Beringia"; during the last ice age this area was an ice-free grassland steppe that included the land bridge from Asia to North America. Today the river has carved out high, prominent rock bluffs and basalt columns originating from ancient volcanic eruptions.



Fort Selkirk



Basalt Wall



Lake Leberge

The river changed every day and with it, new scenery and new challenges. Some of these challenges included:

1) Lake Leberge, made famous by Robert Service's poem 'The Cremation of Sam McGee', is notoriously windy and has a very large fetch resulting in potentially dangerous paddling conditions; local outfitters had warned us that wind and corresponding high waves can cause delays of 1 to 3 days. Taking advantage of the long daylight hours, we started early in the morning, stopped when the wind and whitecaps became a challenge, resumed when conditions eased, and paddled into the late evening. We reached Lower Leberge at the end of day 2 after just 11 hours of lake paddling – thankfully before the next day's forecast for much stronger winds!

2) Five Finger Rapids is the one spot on the river that keeps the uninitiated canoeist awake at night. Four large columns of rock span the narrow channel and large standing waves during high water events can be a challenge for all manner of boat. Thankfully, much advice and YouTube videos exist on how to run the rapid, all starting with "Keep right!" and we had no problem. Similarly, and a few kms downstream, Rink Rapid appeared as a long shelf of boiling rapids on the approach but again, keeping to the right avoided the worst of it.



Five Fingers - looking back



White River

3) The White River - at the confluence with the Yukon River, the huge amounts of glacial and alluvial silt brought in by the White River made an eerie rasping sound on the side of the canoe. Multiple channels, hidden sandbars and surprise wood piles made attentive navigation imperative - but what a beautiful section of river! 4) Weather - was what we expected: a mixture of welcome sunshine, sometimes nasty headwinds, sudden rain squalls and occasional morning fog. Thankfully, we had no snow or freezing temperatures like the Stampeders would have experienced. 5) Pests - there were bugs, but with a steady river breeze they were nowhere as bad as what we experienced on Bowron Lakes in June. Bears? We saw a mother and

her 2 cubs swimming beside the canoe, but once they saw us, they veered off and raced up the cutbank as fast as they could go. Otherwise, there were bear tracks but no sightings.

On the 10th day of paddling, our epic 700 km paddling adventure ended on reaching Dawson City on August 17th, the 124th anniversary of the discovery of gold in the Klondike. Parks Canada has done a remarkable job of restoring and maintaining many historic buildings, a steamboat and Dredge #4. We spent hours wandering the town and surrounding area, remarking on the incredible history of this once booming city.

A huge thank you to the talented and dedicated VCKC instructors for giving 2 raw beginners the canoeing skills needed to make this dream come true!



Hootalinqua Steamboat

~ Louise de Montigny

Kayak Update

A lot has been happening since the club reopened. In the last edition I talked about our shortage of certified instructors. Brian Mallory has been providing courses for VCKC for over 15 plus years, but now he wants to step down. A big thank you goes out to him for all that he has done over the years. He will continue as a mentor for the new instructor candidates but will not be leading courses. We have four candidates working to become certified instructors for Level 1 (Vince Geisler, Wade Martinson, Ryan Ovens and Elizabeth D'Eramo) and Susan Zedel is rejoining the team as a Basic course instructor. As well there are three others in the wings that will be coming on later.



Assisted Rescue in Basic Course

In order to provide our members with courses now, we contracted this out. Special thanks goes out to Mark, Firat and Willi for assisting us. Our Paddle Canada Basic and Level 1 courses have been well received. Six Basic and two Level 1 courses were scheduled. Thirty- three individuals received their Basic Certification and twelve received their Level 1 certification. Joanne Nicholson will be providing the opportunity for eight members to be certified at Level 2.

"You're full of positive energy and your attention to details and attitude in teaching are exactly what a trainee needs. I am lucky and very grateful for this opportunity that my first step was under your guidance." Course participant comment

There is still room in the Level 1 and 11 course scheduled for this fall if you are interested check out the website.

We have also had interest from members willing to volunteer as paddle/trip leaders. This will be a great help to Mike who has been doing most of that over the last year. Mike will become our paddle/trip coordinator and work with a group of volunteers to ensure more opportunities in the future. Watch for news on a variety of paddling/trip opportunities.

The role of kayak bookings has transferred to Angie Walters. Big thanks to her for taking this over. Kayak bookings can be made by sending an email to kayakbooking@vckc.ca. Remember when you take out the kayaks that you **MUST** take the required safety equipment with you (rope, bailer, whistle, spray skirt), and that at this time kayaks are still only to be used on the Upper Gorge (unless on a club outing). A master list of members interested in kayaking and their current certification is underdevelopment. It is important that you respond the email that requested information on your current certification level as this information will be used by Angie to determine eligibility when requests are received.

A recent change to the protocol has provided members with Paddle Canada Level 1 Certification to paddle solo in the gorge. Members who have the Basic Certification will still be required to paddle with a buddy.

Mike continues to be in charge of caring for our kayak equipment and he has added two carts to help move kayaks and canoes to the clubhouse launch site. These are stored in the basement by the day use lockers. Sponges have also been added to each kayak to assist with removing water after cleaning.

Now is the time of the year we start planning for next year. An important part of those plans will be focused on the feedback on development interests of you our members. In a recent email you input was requested. Our plan will include not only the delivery of Paddle Canada courses, but clinic and workshops aimed at skill development and improvement.

~ Susan Logan, Acting Director

Marathon Update

COVID has not dampened the spirits of the dedicated marathoners who make it out two or three times a week to paddle. One of our regulars wears a fitbit watch, or the like, and reported that we often cover about 12.5 km as we negotiate deep and shallow water, hidden obstacles, and sometimes, each other.

However, spirited our outings are, it's tempered with a healthy doses of common sense and an eye on safety measures. As critical as COVID protocols are, drowning is still the biggest risk on the water. It was sobering to learn about a kayaker who drowned near Prince George (not wearing a lifejacket), and another who tied up overnight at the VCKC dock with the explanation that they had exceeded both their fitness and skill level. VCKC is wise to ensure that the Marathon and Outrigger programs undertake an annual rescue drill.

That is why, on a sunny Saturday mid-August, we conducted our annual assisted rescue exercise. Because of the COVID protocols, we decided to make it a demonstration clinic rather than an everyone-gets-wet experience. A double and a single were on the water while everyone else watched from the dock and were provided with appropriate commentary.



Stage 1

Stage two (picture # 2) involved the rescue boat stabilizing the rescued boat while the paddler made their way on board. Key to this effort is a) to push yourself across the boat rather than up and across and b) to position yourself so you can easily resume your position in the boat. It takes a bit of practice, but with the long-time and hands-on experience many of the VCKC marathon paddlers have, there is an ample supply of expertise and experience.



Stage 2

While none of us enjoy a totally unexpected swim, particularly when it's cold [add windy etc.], it's not an uncommon occurrence in a marathon boat. Because the marathon program operates year-round, safety and rescue protocols are of particular importance as the weather and water temperatures start to drop. The annual rescue clinic is not just a reminder about safety; it is also a reminder about the importance of not paddling alone and keeping within one's skill and fitness limit. See you on the water.

~ Peter Elson, Marathon Director



Outrigger News

Use of the two OC1s is going well with the condition of both boats gradually improving. They are being stored closer to the ground making them easier to access.

I have been clearing space for the 3 OC6s which will be unrigged, turned over and covered while they await refinishing of their bottoms. Please watch for a call for help to get them turned over. I am hoping for half a dozen people to help.

I have been told I can convert one of the marathon canoes into an outrigger. If anyone has ideas for such a project, let me know.

Dan has offered to build a new and enhanced outrigger locker but I have been short on ideas for it. Would anyone like to take that on as a project, helping to lay out the interior of the locker and perhaps even maintaining it as we get the outrigger gear ready for a resumption of OC6 paddling.

At present I am assuming a resumption of OC6 paddling will have to wait for the end of 2m distancing advice.

If you want to take out an OC1 outrigger just send an email to outrigger@vckc.ca.

~ Mike Wheatley, Outrigger Director



Thanks to Roy Scully for cutting the grass in the compound and side ramp unasked, to Dan Walker for his mobile canoe and paddle racks – very useful when the clubhouse basement use is restricted - and to Tom Staebell for donating a second of buoys for the canoe courses.

First Aid Courses



Part of the requirements for instructors and paddle/trip leaders is current first aid certification. Many of our volunteers will need to renew their certification this year. VCKC has approached Alert First to provide courses specifically for our volunteers and members. VCKC would like to offer this course to our members as well.

Dates for the courses have not been finalized. We want to see if there is enough interest from the general membership to organize both courses and how many of each prior to finalizing the dates. If you are interested in either of these courses please send an email to Secretary@vckc.ca and indicate which course you would like to attend.

Option 1: Canadian Red Cross Wilderness & Remote First Aid, with Standard First Aid (OFA 1 equivalent) add-on course.

Canadian Red Cross Wilderness & Remote First Aid - This fun and interactive 20-hour course is a must for anyone who spends time more than an hour away from medical aid. This course includes trip planning and preparation, adult, child and infant CPR (Level 'C'), obstructed airway procedures, artificial respiration, use of an Automated External Defibrillator, prevention of disease transmission, and wound management. Recognition and first-aid treatment for drowning/partial drowning, heart attack and stroke, allergic reactions and anaphylactic shock, hypothermia, heat stroke, bone, muscle and joint injuries, poisons, burns, diabetic emergencies, head and spine injuries, evacuation and transportation, and extended care will also be covered. Participants spend the majority of the course doing hands-on first-aid and participating in first aid scenarios. By practicing with scenarios, students gain confidence, learn to improvise and react in emergency situations.

Day 1: 1230-1630 (or another 4 hour time slot) at indoor location

Day 2: 0800-1630 (at outdoor location)

Day 3: 0800-1630 (at outdoor location)

Cost For groups of 12 price will be \$279/person plus GST. For a group of 8 (minimum number) the cost will be \$289/person plus GST. Price includes a Field Guide and certificate valid for 3 years. The Canadian Red Cross will email the participants their Wilderness & Remote First-Aid certificate 10-15 business days post-course.

Standard First-Aid with CPR C add-on: Price for this add-on is \$25.00/person plus GST. All candidates that choose this option will be required to write a multiple choice quiz. The Canadian Red Cross will email the participants their Standard First-Aid with CPR C (OFA Level 1 Equivalent) 10-15 business days post-course.

Option 2: CRC Standard First Aid & CPR C Blended Learning course: the course is a combined on line and classroom delivery.

The 8-hour **online component** will focus on building the participant's knowledge. It includes injury prevention strategies, important background knowledge, and descriptions of how to recognize and care for a variety of injuries and illnesses. Participants will also read about particular first aid skills, and watch videos demonstrating how these skills are performed. The online component covers care for adults, children, and babies. When participants complete the classroom component, their skills and knowledge evaluation will focus on only the topic for which they are being certified.

Once the online component is completed, participants will be ready to move on to part two: The **classroom component**. The 8-hour classroom component will focus on developing the participant's skills. The instructor will know that participants have completed the online component, and so won't spend as much time on the background information that is covered here. Make sure participants take the time needed to feel comfortable with what they are learning.

Participants must successfully complete both the online and the classroom components to be certified in Standard First Aid & CPR.

Price for this course will be a flat rate of \$1449.00 + GST for up to 10 participants. For every person after 10, there will be an additional charge of \$135.00, up to the Red Cross maximum of 18 participants. Price includes:

- Canadian Red Cross Standard First-Aid with CPR/AED Level C certificate, valid for 3 years.
- Virtual Canadian Red Cross First-Aid and CPR Manual

Physical distancing will be practiced wherever possible, and when it is not possible (certain skills required by Red Cross program standards may not allow this), a facemask and gloves need to be worn. Hand sanitizer will be readily available throughout the course.

The following will be provided at each course

- Earloop Mask for use during class
- Gloves for the duration of the course

Club Contact Information

Officers

President	president@vckc.ca
Tim Marks	
Vice-president	vpresident@vckc.ca
Tony Hopkin	
Treasurer	treasurer@vckc.ca
Mark Sondheim	
Secretary	secretary@vckc.ca
Susan Logan	
Past President	pastpres@vckc.ca
Joe Boyd	

Program Directors

Big Canoe Program	bigcanoe@vckc.ca
Mary Marks	
Canoe Program	canoe@vckc.ca
Louise de Montigny	
Dragonboat Program	dragonboat@vckc.ca
Jana Savage Cain	
Kayak Program	kayak@vckc.ca
vacant	
Outrigger Program	outrigger@vckc.ca
Mike Wheatley	
Marathon Canoe Program	marathon@vckc.ca
Peter Elson	

Stand Up Paddle Board

Shelby Hart	sup@vckc.ca
-------------	--

Other Executive Positions

Education, Standards & Safety	safety@vckc.ca
Ryan Ovens	
Membership	membership@vckc.ca
Debi LaHaise	
Clubhouse and Grounds (maintenance)	clubhouse@vckc.ca
Brit Kohn	
Boat & Locker Storage	storage@vckc.ca
Dan Walker	
Director at Large	
Kim Capson	director1@vckc.ca
Ellie James	director2@vckc.ca

Executive Appointed Positions

Newsletter Editor	newsletter@vckc.ca
Susan Logan	
Webmaster	webmaster@vckc.ca
Arthur Caldicott	