



Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Newsletter

May 2020

Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club 355 Gorge Road West Victoria, B.C. V9A 1M9
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To comply with recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19, VCKC has suspended all activities associated with the Club's building, compound, dock, equipment, lessons, courses and paddling activities until further notice.

Be sure to check the website for information on when courses and activities will resume !!!

President's Message

A good May to all of you. It is a May, like none other. Thank you all for your patience to date with the reduced, well, nonexistent club activities. Just for old times' sake I went to our website and flipped through some pages. First thing that struck me was the professional/quality of the presentation. Those revolving photos on the first page depict a lot of people having a lot of fun. I can't wait until we add the SUP photo.



Maybe more relevant, in these times, is the clear, concise, communication of our current status. One click at a time a person can follow how the decisions were made. These decisions were made by a large group of individuals working together for the common good of all. I am proud and honored to be a part of this group and this club.

As it is posted, we will stay steady until government and health authorities indicate it is safe to make changes. Across the nation one can hear and feel the impatience and desire to get back to normal. No doubt we can all relate to these feelings. The risks have not changed. Just because swift and prudent action in the past has averted catastrophe at the present, it does not mean we have the liberty to resume what was our normal activities.

Time to hunker down and wait for things to improve.

Be assured your executive is keenly aware of the desire to paddle as VCKC members with VCKC equipment. At this time there is no opportunity to relax or change our initial response to the threat of Covid19. I am sure there is some middle ground that could facilitate a "Soft Startup" eventually and your executive will be looking at all appropriate options. Unfortunately, at the time I am writing this, I see no changes in the immediate future.

Below in the storage report, you can read how Dan is making use of this time. "Very industrious, Dan". I hope you can keep your spirits up. Even though it seems Dan has come to the end of his to-do list, I am sure there is always "just one more thing". Maybe it is not as much fun as paddling, but now is the time for us to enjoy doing that "other thing".

All the best to you today.
~ Tim Marks, President

Big Canoe News

About now I would like to fast forward one or two years and report about epic voyages with big canoes. Alas, this is not yet so. Instead I will try to help you see why you want to be involved with big canoes someday soon!

Our brisk, and brief weekly Sunday paddles were cut short this year with the threat of COVID-19 driving us into isolation and social distancing. Who could think of something like this happening anywhere and especially at VCKC?



Ellie leading Tillicum through tidal rapids on Brooks Peninsula

Our big canoes sit in the compound day after day amongst all the other vessels and wonder when we will come back and lug them over the beach and into the water waiting for happy paddlers getting out and into community with each other. It is pretty difficult to be 2 meters apart in a big canoe. It's even worse to carry them with so few people. Quite impossible for me! So, we can only remember and dream of paddling our big canoes at the moment. There are no virtual zoom meetings for members paddling a big canoe.

Lots of laughter as we remember Helene telling the front half of Tillicum female only, paddlers stories, that kept us going strong while the male paddlers in the back half wondered what was keeping us laughing so much.

Remembering the happy delight of a small surge landing at Spring Island with Tillicum and Sta'Qeya, staying dry and the absolutely lovely view all around the pebbly beach with campfire and chocolate for 16 paddlers.

Thinking back to what felt like hundreds of paddlers during a Paddle for the Kids and every big canoe that VCKC owned plus a few borrowed big canoes from other places, with more chocolate, camaraderie and around \$21,000 of donations from VCKC and friends for Easter Seals.



Spring Island

The hope of getting back into big canoes will help us to keep our distance for now so we can stay healthy and see each other again in the future. You will read of tentative plans for the big canoe program and you are welcome to express your interest. We will continue to monitor the situation for our possible trips, depending on our provincial health leadership directives. In the meantime, I hope you are able to keep your fitness up so you can lift the big canoes and paddle all day and lift the big canoes again. One thing I do know, all our paddling overuse injuries should be settling down by now!

With all the COVID-19 shut downs, you may have forgotten about your **Paddle for the Kids, Easter Seals donation**, which helps out people with disabilities attend Camp Shawnigan. If that is the case, please check out this link to make a donation. It's not too late!! We will wrap it up on May 15th. We look forward to next year's 40th anniversary of VCKC Paddle for the Kids!!!! [Website Link](#)

Stay safe, stay connected! I miss you Fellow Big Canoe Paddlers!!!

~ Mary Ellen Marks, Director Big Canoe

GULF ISLAND PUB TOUR July 19-23

At the time of this writing, the Provincial Health Officer has cancelled all major festivals through to the end of summer. It is unclear at this moment what that will mean for provincial campgrounds, marinas, and canoe trip of up to two dozen people.

All that said, the Big Canoe program is still looking forward to a leisurely 5-day, 4-night trip through the southern Gulf Islands from July 19 through to the evening of the 23rd. Leaving from Swartz Bay on the morning of the 19th, we will paddle to Port Browning Marina Resort on Pender Island to camp for 2 nights. We will supper at local pubs and restaurants. Plan to paddle for up to 10 miles on a day trip on Monday the 20th.

On Tuesday the 21st we make our way from Port Browning to Montague Harbour on Galiano Island for another 2-night stay. Tuesday evening, we will have dinner (with a bus ride) at the Hummingbird pub. Wednesday will be another 10-mile tour, followed by dinner and a moonlight paddle home. A late high tide on Thursday will mean a sleep-in and late departure on Thursday the 23rd. With some stops along the way, possibly dinner in Sidney, you should be home by dark on July 23rd.



This trip is meant to be leisurely. More vacation-like than some of our other back country canoe trips. Paddlers will be responsible for their own meal expenses, and camp-cooking is certainly an option for anyone who prefers that. All paddlers will be responsible for provisioning their own breakfasts and lunches.

We have not set a price for this trip. We expect to keep the paddlers' share of the camping costs to well below \$50. VCKC members can reserve a spot for this trip on our website here.

[VCKC Website Link](#)

Thompson River Trip August 21-24

VCKC's annual Thompson River Trip from Savona to Spence's Bridge, BC will take place again this year (assuming public health conditions permit) on the last weekend of August before Labour Day. After a successful scouting trip last year, this trip will paddle downstream from Ashcroft on the Thompson on the Sunday. More details to follow in the June newsletter but the outline of the trip is as follows:

Friday August 21: Travel from Victoria to Juniper Beach Provincial Park (just east of Cache Creek)
Saturday August 22: Paddle Big Canoes from Savona to Ashcroft (lunch at Juniper Beach)



Sunday August 23: Paddle from Ashcroft to Spences Bridge (camping location TBD)
Monday August 24: Return drive to Victoria – home by early afternoon (ferries permitting)

Keep an eye on the website for a sign-up page, or contact Mary Marks at bigcanoe@vckc.ca

Canoe Program

“Hurray, hurray the first of May, we’ll paddle the Cow from Lake to Bay!” will unfortunately, not be heard this year. The Running of the Cow, the Canoe Program’s most exciting event of the year has been cancelled, in part due to the curtailment of VCKC activities but also because all BC Parks campgrounds, day-use areas, beaches, lakes and boat launches are closed to the public until May 31st. However, with time on your hands, why not experience white water canoeing virtually by watching Bill Mason’s classic film ‘*Path of the Paddle: White Water*’ on YouTube. Bill does a phenomenal job of describing how to read a river and navigate through challenging sections with his young son as the bowman; make no mistake, many canoes were harmed while making this movie!

For those that have signed up for any of our Lakewater or Ocean Canoeing courses, thank you for your patience. I remain optimistic that once we get through this difficult time, we will resume our courses, and will all be back enjoying the Club Daytrips on the beautiful waters around Victoria!

Since I have nothing else to report, here is a little story that might bring a smile.

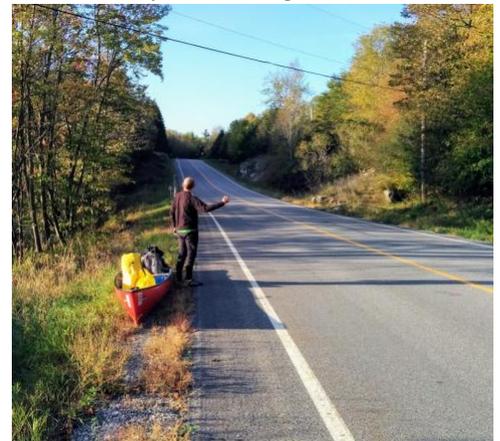
Hitchhiking with Canoe



In early October 2017, Raoul and I found ourselves paddling the Big Rideau Lake, part of the 200 km Rideau Waterway from Kingston to Ottawa. Big Rideau Lake is one of the longest and widest lakes on the waterway and has unsheltered open water making paddling a challenge in strong winds.

Although we had just recently taken up paddling, we had both passed Lakewater 3 and so thought that we were ready for anything - wrong! By mid-afternoon, the wind had picked up and whitecaps were breaking over the side of the canoe. Surrounded by private property, and with the closest town about 10 km away, our goal was to reach Murphy Provincial Park to find a canoe-only camp spot right on the lake. With much angst and all our available (rather limited) canoe experience, we made it, only to discover posted signs indicating that the park was closed for the season and that there was to be no trespassing. Rather dismayed, we were fortunate to spot a ranger in the distance and with much relief, were given permission to camp for the night. However, the forecast for next day was for much

stronger winds. Raoul and I, both foresters, agreed that sitting in a forest under the trees in strong winds was likely not the safest place to be. What a conundrum: if the winds were too strong to paddle safely, but too strong to hunker down until conditions improved, then what to do? Very early the next morning, with winds still manageable, we packed up in darkness and launched the canoe just as dawn was breaking. Instead of trying to paddle the 10 km north to the nearest town, we paddled around Murphy Point, then southeast into the more protected Nobles Bay where a road cut very close to the water. After hauling the canoe and gear up a steep hill, we sat waiting, our thumbs ready. We will always remember the kindness of the very first truck to drive by, a young man, our ‘Canoe Angel’, who took time out of his busy workday to load our canoe onto the roof of his truck and drive us to Perth. We were eating breakfast in a cozy café by 9 am! With renewed energy, we paddled leisurely down the sheltered waters of the Tay Canal back to the Rideau. The next day, under much more



favourable conditions, we continued our paddling adventures. The kindness of strangers everywhere brings joy to our lives!

Stay safe and hope to see you soon!

~ Louise de Montigny, Canoe Program Director

Dragon Boat

As we navigate these challenging times our Imagine Dragonz Team continues to remain close and supportive. We are a team both on and off the water and can't wait to get paddling again.



Laureen Hiking

In the meantime, we're finding ways to stay physically active by hiking and enjoying the spacious great outdoors and enjoying each other's company with Saturday Night Wine Video Meetings.



Team mascot Thunder being COVID safe



Memorial Rock for Team Member Lan



Team video meeting

Stay safe everyone, see you on the water soon!

~ Jana Savage, Director, VCKC Dragon Boat Program

Kayak Program

Hello VCKC Kayakers!



Inner harbour without ferries or planes is peaceful

Over the last few years there has been a lot of action undertaken to move the kayak program forward at VCKC. The dedication and enthusiasm of the past directors has resulted in many improvements. Unfortunately, due to recent health issues, Sebastian will not be able to carry on in the role of Director. His passion for the program and dedication to continue the forward movement will be missed.

There are a group of volunteers who have committed to carry on in various support roles (instructors, trip leaders, equipment care), however, we need a volunteer to take over the Director role. Without a captain it is hard to steer the ship! The major role is to coordinate the efforts of the various aspects of the program and communicate program needs to fellow executive members.

This role is part of the Club Executive and will assist to move forward not only the needs of the kayak program but those of the Club as a whole. It is possible for the role to be a co-director role shared by two people.

Great strides have been made and potential plans discussed for further improvements, however, to see any of this happen a director is essential. Once the Club has reopened a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the plans for moving forward, however, we are missing valuable planning time to coordinate courses etc. .without a person on this role.

Please give consideration to volunteering in this valuable role. If you cannot then, discuss the option with others that you think may make a great program leader and encourage them to volunteer. Names of those interested can be sent to me.

~ Susan Logan, VCKC Secretary

Marathon

Marathon races vary in distances from ten kilometers to over 1000 kilometers for multi-day stage races. The longest marathon race in Canada takes place on the Yukon River, following along the same course as the Klondike Gold Rush miners. Competitors need to consume food and drink during throughout the race maintain their energy levels. Many competitors will drink through a hose and attach energy gels or bars to their equipment so they can be consumed on the fly.



2019 Yukon River Quest

Races are held throughout the year on rivers, lakes, canals, estuaries and even on the open sea. Paddlers portage around dams, locks, shallow water and whitewater. In international competition the portage is usually a man-made area where competitors get out on a dock or sloped ramp and run several hundred meters across a marked course before returning to the water.

Elite paddlers develop impressive techniques for transitioning to the portages; essentially jumping out of the boat before it comes to a stop. Within seconds they have the boat in carry and move at a brisk run. Some carry the boat on their shoulders, in their hand or even drag them along if the ground is smooth enough. The return to the water looks just as smooth as paddlers launch their boats and jump into them without slowing down.

The portage is a prime spot for competitors to drop one another and break away from a pack. Paddling in groups is most efficient as competitors can “wash ride” one another, saving energy by taking advantage of the wave behind or beside another boat. Paddlers usually work together and share the lead. Strategy can come into play when competitors decide to make a move, form alliances, or work with their teammates.

The final stretch usually comes down to a full-out sprint where it becomes a matter of who’s trained the hardest, conserved the most energy and has the heart to prevail at the end of an exhausting feat. (source: Canoe Kayak Canada)

For a taste of what a race could look like click [Here](#)

Meanwhile back at VCKC, the marathon program, as have our marathon competitions, have gone aground. That's not to say there aren't some ways to get a marathon "fix".

Here are some pictures from “The Race That Was” in 2019. It was the first dedicated marathon race in many a year at VCKC with great weather and lots of challenges on the water. It’s the one race that we had hoped to host again this year, but alas, it’s not looking good.



Getting the inside scoop on the route



2019 Competitors



Lead Organizers Bon and Sue Lee



Trophy created by Ron Williams



Race day

Be calm, be kind, be safe. We'll get through this together.

~ Peter Elson, Director

SUP Update



We had originally planned to formally kick-off regular SUP paddles in April, but it looks like things are going to remain on hold for the foreseeable future. Fear not though, brand new Cascadia SUP boards were delivered in early March before things took a turn. These will remain packaged in storage until it is safe for us to paddle as a community. Although we are all excited to take these boards for a maiden voyage, as the old saying goes “you usually have to wait for that which is worth waiting for.”

Luckily, there are a lucky few who have still been able to get out for some beautiful solo, family or socially distanced paddles. As part of the SUP section, we would love to see trip photos and ideas! Please send them to sup@vckc.ca. With all of this being said, I thought it would be prudent to re-iterate some very important SUP and paddling safety tips for those who are able to get out with their own or rented gear. If you do have any questions,

don't hesitate to get in touch!

1. Know your limits – With the healthcare system under heavy load, this is not the time to be taking risks. Only choose locations you know well, in conditions you are very comfortable paddling in. Hold off on your bucket list adventures and testing your outer limits.
2. Check the weather – Not just the hours of beautiful sunshine, be sure to check wind, tides and swell. The nicest days can deliver some nasty surprises on the water if you are not prepared.
3. Have a float plan – This is always important, but with more and more people going solo it is very important to let someone know where you are going, what your trip plan is, and when you plan to return. Make sure to check in when you return safely to dry land.
4. Be prepared – In addition to a float plan, make sure you are taking the right safety gear. SUP's require a PDF, whistle, light (one hour before dusk until one hour after dawn) and a tow rope (if you are not physically wearing your PDF, or you have the inflatable waist belt kind). Also don't forget a waterproofed communication device, a non-cotton sweater/hat and some water. Hypothermia is a real risk if you go in, but heat stroke is very common on warm days – be prepared to know the signs to manage both extremes!
5. Follow Regulations – Many parks and beaches are closed under provincial orders; this includes for paddling. Although frustrating at times, these rules are in place to protect us. Do your research on places where it is acceptable to paddle and follow all signage when you arrive.

For those of you who have not been able to get out, hopefully you will be able to enjoy some fun photos and trip ideas in subsequent newsletters. We can't wait to get back to teaching and touring on the water with you soon!

~ Shelby Hart, Director SUP Program

Storage Update

Shutdown Reminder:

- Members can retrieve their boats from Club Storage but must keep them until the shutdown is lifted
- Members can get access to their boats to install a lock
- No Club boats or equipment are available to members during the Covid Shutdown
- Contact the Storage Director storage@vckc.ca for access to your boat

Miscellaneous

- There's a grey plywood box, full of camp gear in the back bedroom of the Clubhouse. Please contact the Storage Director if you know the origin or owner of this box.

Survival:

- I have almost picked every dandelion in our yard
- I can bake banana bread
- I hand planted every seed in our garden at the correct depth and spacing.
- You get the idea. Hope everyone is healthy, staying active and that we're able to socially distance paddle together again soon.

Cheers,

~ Dan Walker, Storage Director

Club Contact Information

Officers

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Debi LaHaise

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Dan Walker

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