



## Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

### Newsletter

### “The Paddling Post”

November 2020

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

#### President's Message

November 11, for more than a couple of decades, has been a River Paddle on the Cowichan. Years ago, some of the active river paddlers, looking for “something completely different” talked those in control of such things, into letting a couple of Big Canoes go on the river. Water level was high and made for a terrific day. Vimy Hole, a favorite play wave at lower water levels, was a fast, low angle, green wave. Barely recognizable. What fun, surfing these Big Canoes on that fast wave. So much fun it turned into an annual event. (Although that high water level has yet to be repeated.)



This year, with Covid19 protocols, the Big Canoes were left in the compound. I hope it is not the end of an era. Club members in solo or tandem Canoes, followed our mitigation protocol and paddled another November 11 Remembrance Day Paddle, including a visit to the cenotaph and two minutes of silence.

The President's photo this month is of Mary, the President's wife, surfing at Jordan River on a SUP. Hopefully I will be losing a cast soon and able to join her.

There are opportunities to paddle at VCKC! Membership to date this year has bounced up to over 500, about our average in recent years. I send a thank you to all the volunteers that made that possible, especially those instructing, tripleading, and organizing in the canoe and Kayak programs. VCKC will be organizing a Wake Up The Gorge race next April. This will be for small boats only and be following COVID mitigation protocols. I suggest you could talk to Peter, the Marathon Director, for some training tips. Maybe you want to ask James, the SUP Director, to start training to race a SUP at the WUTG.

The AGM is fast approaching. Because of the pandemic it will be a virtual meeting and requires learning a little about being at a “Zoom” meeting. Be sure to participate in the practice General Meetings that Kim is organizing. Check your emails for information. If you are interested or know someone you think would be interested in serving the club at the executive level talk to Joe, the Past President.

One more newsletter and we can put 2020 behind us. I hope 2021 treats us better. Although, I am very encouraged at how the club has made adjustments and enabled so many members to keep paddling. I encourage members to try the different programs that are available. You never know what you are missing out on. Again, a special thank you to the many volunteers that make so many opportunities available to us.

Cheers

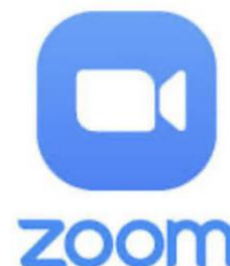
*~ Tim Marks, President*

## 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](mailto: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.

## VCKC Zooming Along

We had our very first club Virtual General Meeting via Zoom, and to prepare for a smooth run we held a couple of practice sessions ahead of it. The practice sessions were well attended and both moderator and members had a chance to work out some wrinkles. The Virtual General Meeting was absolutely amazing, seeing the faces of people we haven't seen since the COVID shutdown in March.



We have MISSED seeing everyone! We heard reports from everyone on the Executive and members had a chance to ask questions and practice a few Zoom skills ahead of the AGM. There will be a Virtual Christmas Party in December and everyone is encouraged to join in the fun! Details will follow. More Zoom practice sessions will be scheduled and feel free to contact me [here](#) if you have any questions.



~Kim Capson

We're hard at work planning for the best (virtual) VCKC Christmas Party! Join us December 15th from 7-8PM, from your own home via Zoom. Plan to wear your best Christmas sweater and showcase your most outrageous drink. We'll be giving out lots of (virtual) prizes! And since the sky's the limit for (virtual) prizes this year, you won't want to miss this chance to win something (virtually) big and spend some time with your friends! Put aside your paddles for an evening and join this fun-filled party. Sneak peek, you won't want to miss our VCKC version of A Night Before Christmas... To register click [Here](#)

## Club Paddles

### Esquimalt Harbour - Sat Nov 7



Knowing we would be space challenged at the Cole Island dock we decided to split into two groups, starting an hour apart.

Group 1: led by Mike Teachman: Our group of 4 canoes and 3 kayaks headed out from the clubhouse launch at 10am. It was great to have a family join us, with three junior canoeists, Sierra(8), Robson(6), and Myra(3). It was a cool start but there was little wind. Everyone managed the portage quite well and we launched into Thetis Cove and noodled the north shoreline on route to Cole Island. There were many coves to explore and various structures and trees to paddle under. We navigated the dock at Cole Island without any dunkings and then settled in for lunch on the newly



completed deck. Some minor excitement ensued when a couple of the canoes came loose, but luckily only floated a short distance before stopping against a downwind dock. Seeing group 2 in the distance we packed up and headed out. We met the other group, chatted for a bit and then paddled the eastern shoreline on the way back to the portage, and then to the clubhouse. We arrived back around 2:30pm. Another fun day with VCKC.



Group 2, led by David Dorosz: The second group was a good size: three tandem canoes and three sea kayaks. We left an hour after the first group and paddled to the portage. The portage went much smoother and easier than I thought it might be. Hopefully it was much easier for the kayakers as well with just being able to store wheels in the canoes while paddling. It was great weather during the two very short sunny breaks, but overall we were mostly protected from the Northerly winds. It was great seeing the herons land on the trees on the island just off Portage Park beach. We then paddled towards the Navy base to give the first group time

to finish lunch before heading to the island for lunch ourselves. The dock at Cole Island showed how much easier it is to get in and out of canoes vs. kayaks at a dock. Nobody got wet so it was OK. It's a paddle I'll do again, and plan on hitting Mill Steam at a high tide to paddle up as far as possible.

~ Mike Teachman

## SOOKE BASIN & SOOKE RIVER – November 8

At short notice, a trip was set up for Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup>. The demand for the Saturday trip to Esquimalt Harbour was over-subscribed, so an alternative seemed in order.

The tides were favourable – not particularly high, but at largely static in terms of height for most of the trip, so no tidal currents to contend with. But the wind forecasts were less benign, with Easterlies of up to 20 knots predicted by some sites. Otherwise the weather outlook was good – sunny but cool.

The note went out on the Wednesday; by Saturday there were 17 paddlers signed up, 16 of whom were there on the Sunday. After a Covid-19 training sessions for some of the group we all drove out to Cooper's Cove on Sooke Basin: one of the many downsides of the epidemic is that no-one wants to share drives unless they have to, which doesn't help global warming or parking.



The parking lot wasn't busy, and we could unload and take the boats to the put-in beach without difficulty. There was ice on the puddles in the carpark, but it didn't feel close to zero, thankfully. We were on the water shortly after 10am – not bad for 12 boats and a small beach – and headed out round the Goodridge Peninsula. The wind was indeed from the east, but not at 20 knots, and aided us in our paddle west to Billings Spit at the mouth

of the Sooke River. The decommissioned minesweeper is still moored inside the peninsula, its gray paint faded and streaked, and with a large birds' nest on top of its mast. Eagle? Osprey? Crow? I'd bet on the Osprey – they seem to like exposed spots.





The trip west followed the shoreline and went easily: we started heading up the Sooke River around 11.20. With a fairly high tide, the going was good - plenty water – and many dead salmon in the water and on the shore. Above the Sooke highway bridge, the river was constantly in turmoil as sealions and seals swerved to catch the fish that were still heading upstream. I don't recall seeing so many sealions in a river before; wonderful to watch. Eagles overhead and at least one osprey.



We headed upriver to the first riffle and after an unsuccessful attempt to paddle to the top, it seemed a good place to have lunch on the gravel bar, in the sun. A number of anglers were fishing the run, but we saw no strikes. Some thought was given to proceeding up stream for another 20 minutes or so to the head of navigation. Given the possible high winds that would be against us on the Basin, we decide to head downstream. Another absorbing display by sealions and seals at the Sooke campground; pity we weren't able to take a video of the action. By the time we reached Billing Spit again, the wind was probably a little higher than a couple of hours earlier, but no full whitecaps on the Bason, so we headed directly back to the Peninsula rather than keep to

the shore. It was choppy and steering was required to maintain direction in the face of the wind and waves, but the group managed well ,and we were back at the cove and loaded up to go by 3pm, as planned.

It was a superb day; blue skies throughout, lots of wildlife and pleasant scenery. Thanks to all who signed up and took part; a very good group for a trip like this one.

*~Alan Thomson*

## Remembrance Day Paddle



It certainly made an interesting Remembrance Day service. Paddlers in PFDs and drysuits spread out by covid guidelines standing quietly with heads bowed as we listened to the poem "In Flanders Field". It was read by a gentleman who had a connection to the "Burma Star Memorial Cairn" which is situated at Stolz Pool beside the Cowichan river. Roses and poppies were placed on the cairn after we sang the National anthem and held one minute of silence.

This cairn is dedicated in memory of al who lost their lives in the WWII Burma Campaign. It is a copy of the Kohima Monument in Myanmar, Burma.

VCKC's tradition of a Remembrance Day Paddle is a moving experience when we are able to join friends from other paddling groups to appreciate the freedom and joy of paddling the river thanks to the sacrifices of others. This year was a little harder due to Covid but by splitting into smaller groups and maintaining distances it was still a great day. A few swims, lots of rolls and some stretching of skills.

Thanks to all the paddlers.

*~ Ellie James*





## Canoe Program

Fall canoe courses are now complete and it's time for all our current and past canoe course graduates to bundle up and enjoy the many paddling opportunities that the club offers in these colder months:

1) As always, club canoes are available for use in the Gorge for members who have passed at minimum Lakewater 1 Basic Tandem and have signed the Covid-19 waiver; email [Canoebooking@vckc.ca](mailto:Canoebooking@vckc.ca)

2) Tuesday and Thursday afternoon paddles allow members to join each other and have some fun on the water. The sessions

are just 2 hours, traveling from the clubhouse to Portage Inlet and back, weather permitting. Along with canoes, these sessions are open to anyone from any program. Please register on-line so we know you are coming.

- 3) Club Day Trips are a great way to gain confidence and improve your skills in more challenging conditions than might be expected in the Gorge. Paddling leaders have the skills to safely lead small groups of canoeists and kayakers to many of Victoria's beautiful paddling locations. Check the VCKC calendar and sign up early to ensure a spot.

With the cold weather on its way, consider learning/refreshing about the effects and treatment of hypothermia. Baby It's Cold Outside ([bicorescue.com](http://bicorescue.com)) is an awareness and educational program about hypothermia and cold injuries. Although specifically developed for professional Search and Rescue responders, the information is useful to anyone who enjoys recreating in the great outdoors in winter. The training is delivered in 6 modules covering, for example, the mechanisms of heat loss, basics of thermo-regulation and principles of cold-water immersion. Relevant scenarios are used to train responders about what to do if they see someone in trouble. Learning how to identify the different levels of cold stress and how to treat it, may be just enough for you to save the life of a fellow paddler (or yourself)!

Get out there and enjoy our beautiful island. Happy paddling everyone!

~ Louise de Montigny

## MOVING WATER COURSE Oct 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> 2020

Thanks to Ellie's drive, a basic tandem canoe course attracted 8 students. As 6 of them had taken a number of Lakewater courses over the past few months, it had a good group feel, with 6 of the 8 having met before. The additions, The Huang brothers Shiming and Shihong were the new members and they of course knew each other well and were happy to paddle together.

In preparation for the course, 2 of the instructors, Ellie and Alan had paddled the relevant sections of the river in the 10 days before the weekend to ensure that no new logjams or other hazards would endanger the students. Even with this scouting, we were surprised by a large Douglas Fir that had fallen into the river just above the section known as the Splits. As it only blocked half the river, it was easy enough to avoid, but it was a reminder that you can never be absolutely sure.

Day one was held at the upper end of the river, on the water just below the lake weir and on the first 2 or 3 kilometres of the river. The put in is handy to the carpark at Saywell Park, where there is also a large dock for putting in and landing, as well as handy to picnic tables and a public washroom. After a morning of revision of basic strokes and practicing forward ferries and eddy turns, we moved down to the start of the river and to stretches suitable for

trying out these new manoeuvres in faster water. The groups did very well, with only one unplanned capsize which occurred close to shore and was soon remedied. The canoe rescue session was held in the late afternoon just above Little Beach. Although everyone was tired, the rescues went quite well, with a diversity of rescues techniques being successfully used. It is a slow-moving stretch of water, allowing time for trial and error. We left the water at 5.30pm and Instructor 3, Rick Bryan, took the trailer of canoes home for the evening, saving Alan the trans-Malahat trip that evening and the next morning.

Day 2 began at Sandy Pool, where we caused some anglers to move downstream but provided entertainment for some families who came down to the beach. More than an hour was spent practicing forward ferries and eddy turns in the faster water, the group moved down river, but not before Shiming and Shihong demonstrated some sizzling eddy turns with the stern paddler nonchalantly lying back playing air guitar on his paddle as the bow paddler's draw and tilt brought the canoe arrowing into the still water. But confidence bred a little too much nonchalance and on the final run, the tilt became a capsize, and the realisation to the air guitarist that his drysuit zipper wasn't fully closed.....

Downstream to a bend that often accumulates wood, where we landed and scouted downstream. Apart from finding the section to be safely runnable, we also found black bear footprints as well as deer hoof impressions in the sand. Lunch - still no rain – and on down the river to the Splits, where Alan did a demo of falling into the river and hoping for a throwbag rescue. He took the precaution of swimming himself close to the eddy where the would be rescuers were standing and one of them obligingly dropped the throwbag onto his tummy. Then others volunteered to swim and ere rescues in turn with no need for the downstream rescue canoe to be called into action.



Down to 'Damien's Out', where Adrien and Valdy managed the difficult feat of coming into the eddy without the right degree of lean and tipping over until one gunwale was under the water, managing to avoid capsize by tipping the other way until that gunwale went under the water but still avoiding capsize. Aaron and Elizabeth were so impressed that they didn't notice until too late that their bow was drifting out of the eddy and into the fast water of the main current. This resulted in a real capsize and a long swim before Melia and Keri came to do the rescue. Letting the bow swing out of an eddy into the current seems to be hard to learn, but experience is a good teacher. We by-passed Vimy and went straight down to the take-out which easy

to catch at the 40m3/sec water level.

Many thanks to Ellie for organising, Rick and Alan for co-teaching and for towing the trailer and to Aaron, Adrien, Elizabeth, Keri, Melia, Shiming, Shihong and Valdy for making it such a pleasure to teach. We expect to see many of them on the river during the winter season's paddling.

*~ Alan Thomson*



## Kayak Update



Despite being closed for a few months, this has been a busy year. Our last kayak course for the season was offered and five new paddlers received their Paddle Canada Level 1 certification. Congratulations.

As well plans are underway to offer a Paddle Canada River Kayaking course this spring. If you are interested in attending one register [here](#).

Brian Mallory and Dorothea Hoffman are working with paddlers over the next few weeks to assist in improving their paddle stroke. There is still room in the clinic December 12. If interested register [here](#)



In collaboration with Alert First we offered two remote first aid course. Here are a few comments by participants:

*"I found it to be a good course. I enjoyed the way it was taught, liked the fact that we were "in the field" and appreciated the scenarios. Topics more relevant to water sports were covered well. The instructor (Brent) did a good job teaching the course."*

*"The First Aide course was awesome. Brent is an excellent instructor, very knowledgeable and has a friendly and engaging manner. He kept the days' activities moving. We had a good balance between theory and hands on learning. I learned such a lot and am very glad to have this knowledge for "wilderness" trips. We bought the first aid kit as well as a few cool add ons."*

The new instructors are now in the planning stages and courses are scheduled to resume in early February.

As well the new trip leaders are continuing to plan for more paddle events over the next months. Keep watching the website for dates and locations as they are announced.

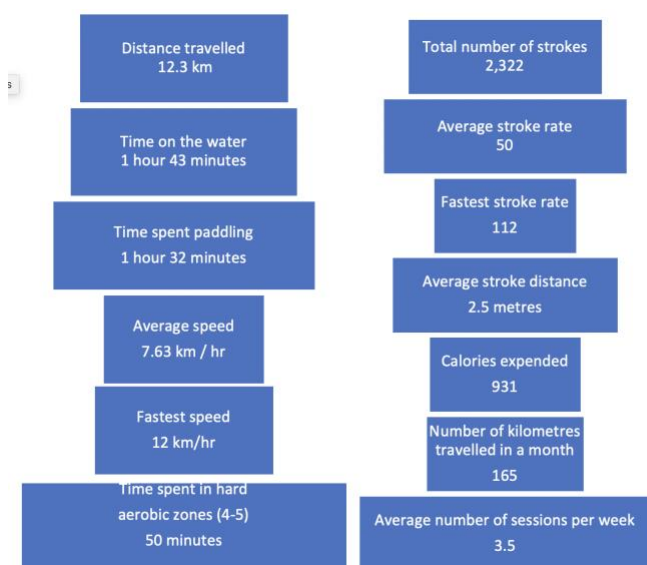
~ Susan Logan, Acting Director

## Marathon Update



There is a lot to say about what one sees on and under the water these days as flocks of migrating and winter birds such as Buffleheads and Surfscotters take up residence on the Gorge waterway. Seals, river otters, herons and ducks continue to do their thing. While there are times when it is safe to travel further afield, Portage Inlet is the “go-to” place for most early morning marathon outings. The map illustrates how we paddle from the clubhouse, up the Gorge, and across the Inlet to the North side near HWY1. We then often paddle counter clockwise to the entrance to Craigflower creek at the Southwest part of the Inlet before returning and clockwise circumventing the entire Inlet and all the associated bays. Usually there is one more

crossing to the North side before returning to the clubhouse. This journey averages 12 kilometers but can be extended to 13km or shortened to 10km, depending on conditions and paddling appetites.



I asked one of the marathon program members with such an app to report on one recent outing. What they reported is shown on the left.

From a marathon canoe perspective, what is less frequently appreciated is what actually goes on inside our bodies when we are busy navigating tides, currents, hairpin turns and wake riding. Thanks to the use of apps such as a Fitbit, this information is now readily available.

~ Peter Elson, Marathon Director

## Storage Report

Currently, a new boat shed is being constructed in the Compound. Thanks to everyone for putting up with all the building materials lying around. I didn't get a single complaint! We should be done with construction by mid-November. Previously, VCKC was storing 42 boats in the compound. With this new shed we have expanded capacity to 51 covered boat storage spots.

Thanks to Tom Staebell for overseeing the project and procuring building materials. Special thanks also to Ray Milan and Jim Swanton for contributing skilled labor. Tim Marks provided the design for the shed.

This design was loosely followed.

~ Dan Walker







## VCKC 2021 AGM

Plans are underway for the 2021 AGM January 12, 2021. This will be a virtual meeting. We are asking members to register for the event to ensure that our platform is able to meet the demand for virtual attendance. Once you have renewed your membership go [Here](#) to register. A notice will be going out via email soon.

Nominations for the executive are now open. All positions are for a one year term. Many of the current executive have expressed interest in returning next year, however, all club members in good standing are eligible to run. If you are interested contact Joe [here](#)

## Fall Clubhouse Clean-Up Covid-style

**Saturday, December 5th, 9 am - 12 pm**

Please RSVP [here](#) with which roles you would like to volunteer for? Due to Covid, the clean-up will look a little differently. Once I have an idea of how many folks will be attending, I can schedule 1.5hr or 3hr shifts for different jobs. Thank you for your volunteer service, it helps to keep our clubhouse running smoothly.

Volunteer roles in these different areas are needed. Please come with your own tools and keep them with you (do not share unless sanitized).

**Inside:** cleaning, dusting, mopping, window cleaning

**Outside:** raking, weeding, gutters outside window cleaning, junk removal.



~ Brit Koh

*Hi Louise and Tim and all VCKC members and members,*

*We want to thank you very much for providing the opportunity for so many of our students to get out on the water this fall. Because we were not able to run overnight Outdoor Education trips this fall, we had to alter our program to include several day trips instead. VCKC gave our students the opportunity to practice self-paddling, learn new skills, work together and gain new fresh air experiences.*

*Students in grade nine through twelve were taught canoe and equipment use and safety as well as some basic paddling strokes. Although some of us still lack more like, they had strokes! In all, over 60 students had a blast on the water!*

*Thank you, Louise for helping us out with all our bookings. Thank you, Tim for providing updates on all the new changing protocols. Thank you, Tim for providing us with more knowledge of Portage, Sub and providing paddling for kids. And thank you to all members who put up with us occupying your space, we really did our best to not get on your way!*

*Our school has been fortunate enough to be an associate member with VCKC for several years now. We truly appreciate everything VCKC has offered us, from several volunteer leaders (Alan, Linda, Ellen, Sandy, Tim, Joe, Tim, Tim, Tim) to the use of the big boats and trailers.*

*Thank you all for all that you do!*

*Sincerely,*

*Andrew Farrell*  
*Adolescent Director, PE Teacher, Outdoor Education Teacher*  
*Miss Montessori Academy*



VCKC in collaboration with one of our associate member provided the opportunity for local school groups to get out on the water early this fall

### **Club Contact Information**

#### **Officers**

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Dan Walker

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