

Paddlers' Post



Voice of the Nanaimo Paddlers

October 2010 Issue

Prez Mess

By Stephanie Meinke

Well, I thought I was stepping down from the hot seat when I wrote my last Paddlers' Post message last winter, but here I am ... still ... Still with gavel in hand ... So thanks to you all, for your trust in me to continue to lead this dynamic and wonderful club.



Our last meeting before summer was held at Shaft Point, Newcastle Island, on June 2nd. Weather predicted high winds and rain, so turnout was not as good as hoped, as we wanted to take the opportunity to do our 30th

anniversary photo shoot from Giovando Lookout. Eighteen or so boats were not quite enough, however, so after our dinner and meeting, we did a practice run: popped into the little bay beside the point, grouped together into a loose circle, and Stephan took some pictures. We decided to choose another date in the early Fall for another try at a huge group photo from the Lookout.

September 25th was ultimately chosen – we had moved the regular Saturday paddle to Sunday – but the winds were a little much on Saturday (Stephan, Walter, Reale and I had a wild ride on the outside of Mistaken Island instead: 24–26 knots, four-foot waves – photos to prove it!) Sunday we tried again, but short notice and questionable weather contributed to only 20 or so boats again. Lovely pictures ... but ... we need more boats ... Maybe we'll try once more ...

So, how was our summer??? We started out the summer with another successful Newcastle Island Weekend, and ended the summer with our Spider Lake Splash ... er, Corn Roast and Play Day. We had lots of people on our Wednesday and Saturday paddles, although there was a bit of griping from some about the popularity of the Ladysmith launch by some of our contact people ... (not me ...) On June 13th Darren and Stephan put on another great 'Participants' Workshop' and we also held another very successful practice rescue session at

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Westwood Lake on June 27th. As for overnight trips, well, Nanaimo Paddlers were all over the coastline again this year, both on their own, and on club organized trips. Lots of stories and photos!

We had an opportunity at our first fall meeting, September 8th, to see some of Karina Younk's photos of the three week trip she took with a small group to Gwaii Haanas. What a treat that was. (Commentary was by the rest of the group as unfortunately Karina couldn't make the meeting.) Our October meeting program will be slides and descriptions of other Nanaimo Paddlers' 2010 on-the-water adventures. Our Christmas Party is scheduled for Saturday December 4th, 1-4 pm, at the Kin Hut this year so we can include our out-of-town members. This will replace our regular Wednesday Meeting (Dec 1st). Further details soon.

So, what else is coming up??? First and foremost, we will continue to paddle (weather permitting) Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the winter. Pool sessions are starting up again on October 19th and will run as frequently as they fill up, also throughout the winter. Pool Sessions are becoming more and more popular with members, as they are a very unthreatening way of brushing up on those wet exits and assisted rescue skills. Quite a number of members are also using them to learn and practise rolling and other skills too. We will be holding another Participants' Workshop shortly, and we are planning some Sunday 'stretching our limits' paddles, focusing on skills, current and rough water experience, and problem solving scenarios. Not to forget VHF and GPS courses/workshops, another Seamanship Course in February, and ...



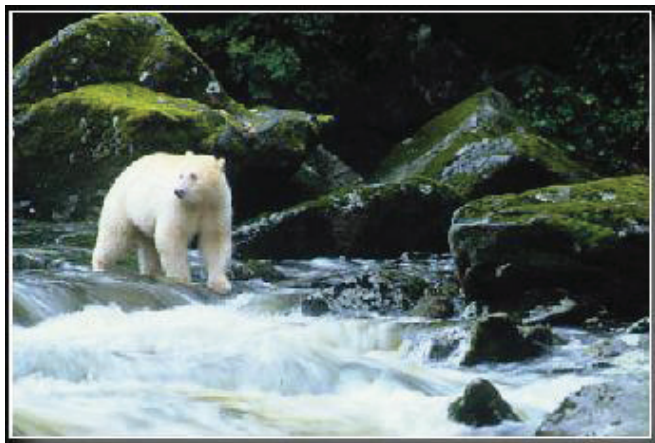
trial run at Shaft Point for anniversary photo.

So that's the rest of our 2010 year plan ... please try to join us for the fun!

Stephanie, the Prez.



Adventures Of Gloria



Gloria met an enormous bear,
Gloria, Gloria didn't care;
The bear was hungry, the bear was ravenous,
The bear's big mouth was cruel and cavernous.
The bear said, Gloria, glad to meet you,
How do, Gloria, now I'll eat you!
Gloria, Gloria didn't worry.
Gloria didn't scream or scurry.
She washed her hands and she straightened her hair up,
Then Gloria quietly ate the bear up.

Best Wishes, Doug

2009–10 Executive

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A Visit with Merve Wilkinson

by Ursula Vaira

I had a chance to visit a “Genuine Canadian Hero” this summer. Merve Wilkinson, subject of the book *Magnificently Unrepentant, a biography of Merve Wilkinson and Wildwood* (by Goody Niosi) and Recipient of the Order of Canada, is described by the publisher as “the Moses of North American eco-forestry, who has spent a lifetime proving that logging a forest doesn’t mean cutting down all the trees. His managed forest of giant trees on Vancouver Island stands as one of the world’s prime examples of sustainable logging.” Merve is now 96 years old.

He is also one of the founding members of the Nanaimo Paddlers.



I interviewed him in his kitchen, with Don Quixote, a well-preserved mink, looking over his shoulder. There were about 22 canoes on the first club trip.

Merve was with the club for about ten years, a valuable member since he was a timber cruiser ... he got to know a lot of inlets and made notes of good landing and camping places. Quennell Lake, which Wildwood borders, was always a favourite social paddle, about two hours around, then back to his house for coffee. Though he was a loner, with a love of the Yukon River, he would teach new members their skills, then take them along on the next trip. He said that when kayakers started to join, they were a pain in the butt, because they would spread all over hell’s half acre.

He recalled how the wildlife was so much more plentiful — moose, grizzly, black bear, beaver, otter, seals — and that on one trip they saw a blue whale close to Pachena Bay ... they saw waves lapping against what they thought was a reef! The whale dove straight down and they looked up to see its fluke 30 feet above the water.

Then, like now, the club planned trips by tide and season, always taking pleasure in landscape, in wildlife, in exploring new areas, in the heron rookeries and turkey vulture colony in the Nanaimo River delta, the cormorants in the Jack Point area.

He was a hunter, too, and in fact the only time he ever dumped himself was on Quennell Lake after he had taken a shot at some ducks. It was very cold and difficult swimming and hauling the canoe at the same time ... until he realized that he was in a shallow spot and could actually stand up.

He couldn't recall any accidents at all on club trips. But then, they did put in intensive evenings of training,



learning how to stow gear and learning canoe handling and recovery skills. He did remember one couple stranded on a sand bar in the Yukon River: "It was very funny to see someone standing on water 20 feet from shore." Difficult to help them out, too, because of current, and since the sand bars are island shaped and drop straight down to deep water.

The afternoon ended with a walk through his orchard and down to the launch on Quennell lake. On the way I passed his yellow canoe, well nestled into the wildflowers at the edge of the meadow. I think I'll pick up a copy of Goody's book — it would make for some great wintertime reading.



Wake's Cove Trip

By Ursula Vaira

The June 19th Saturday paddle took us over to Wakes Cove on Valdes Island, next to Gabriola Passage. This fairly new 1320-hectare provincial park was purchased in 2002; it is named after Captain Wake, who owned it in 1876. But the island has archaeological sites which prove First Nations habitation from at least 5000 years ago. One third of the island is set aside as reserves of the Lyackson First Nation, and that set-aside portion may soon include Blackberry Point.

We set off from the Cedar boat ramp, made the crossing and the difficult portage at Link Island. With a warning from Stephanie to watch the currents as we entered Gabriola Passage, we slipped into Wake's Cove easy as pie. Eager to enter the forest, we turned a blind eye to the few homes residing over the boat ramp. And then we entered a mystical world of ancient mossy trees. Further on was an abandoned farmstead of orchards and waist-high grassy meadows ... pristine except for a newly mown swath straight out of *Lost* — it felt like at any moment something or someone mysterious would emerge from the forest to scare us away.



And why not feel uneasy? Here Captain Wake drowned while sailing ... his body was never found. And here, Brother XII lured his cult followers from all over the world to establish a colony to survive the coming armageddon. "Brother Twelve and his sadistic mistress, a woman known as Madame Z, turned their followers into slaves, subjecting them to the most appalling hardship and privation." (*The Canadian Encyclopedia*.) Many believe the gold he hoarded is still buried somewhere on the island. Apparently while in his cabin high on a bluff on the north end of Valdes, he carried on with Myrtle Baumgartner, despite his vow of celibacy. I imagine that caused a bit of strife for him.

For ourselves, we wandered down the path for quite awhile before we realized Stephanie and her group had simply disappeared. Since she was the only one with intimate knowledge of the trails this was quite worrisome. We called and whistled to no avail, nearly resigning ourselves to having to report them missing ... but she also had the radio. At last we found them at the shore, where they had ungratefully already begun their picnic.

As we launched for home a few of the intrepids stayed behind to try the winds on the outside. The rest of us toured the amazing galleries along the west side of Valdes. We crossed Pylades Channel, paddled past Pirates Cove Marine Park and continued the gallery tour along the west side of DeCourcy. Adjectives to describe the galleries? My favourite is erotic.

You can read about Brother XII in *The Devil of DeCourcy Island: The Brother XII* by Charles Lillard and Ron MacIsaac and in *Brother Twelve: The Incredible Story of Canada's False Prophet*, by John Oliphant.



To Roll or Not to Roll

By Bernie Haley

I started kayaking in the spring of 2009 and the smartest thing I ever did was to join the Nanaimo Paddler's Club. I found them on the internet and took a chance that I've never regretted. There were many great paddles throughout the year and I was fortunate enough to have had some great mentors along the way. Inevitably there would be trips where, with a certain mix of members, there would be someone beside me capsize and come back up the other side totally unassisted! WOW! How did they do that I wondered? Furthermore, why would you want to do that in the first place? What a bunch of showoffs. I ended my 2009 season with fond memories as I stored my kayak and dusted off my golf clubs for Arizona ... not to return until April of 2010. I often wondered what it would be like to be able to upright myself in a kayak unassisted. What a great tool to have when needed, and it looked like a lot of fun. So, I set a goal for myself to learn how to roll over the 2010 season as I stored my clubs and bought a new, lighter, and sportier kayak. This would be quite the jump on my learning curve ... my second season of kayaking. Am I nuts!! I barely know how to skull and brace!

June 2010 ... the club recommended pro rolling lessons so I signed up for "Roll 1" lessons with the Alberni Outpost scheduled for July. I spent lots of time mentally preparing myself right up to two days prior at which time the Alberni Outpost phoned and cancelled because I was the only one enrolled. It would be up to me to find a second. I did! Another one as crazy as me (also a novice with an extremely high learning curve slope)! So ... back to the Outpost with my partner and I, and the date was set. The fun was to begin at Westwood Lake with just the two of us and, hopefully, the best instructor they had.

About one week before "Roll 1" lessons were to begin, Reale informed me of a "Greenland" roll seminar that was to be given by Sheri and Turner on the spit in Comox (sponsored by the Comox Valley Kayak Store). It was a sweet deal since they were teaching Instructors how to teach beginners and, of course, needed beginners. Off I went, not knowing that they were to put me in a Tulik type "All Body" spray skirt with no pfd and hand me a 2x4 and tell me to roll. Well, it was a great session and I popped off a few rolls myself at the end of the it. These guys were good. At one point, Turner told me to roll and put my head to China! I thought he meant I should sweep across as quickly as I could. It wasn't until I got home that I realized he was trying to tell me to keep my head down on the way up (something I still have difficulty with).

“Roll 1” at Westwood Lake ... my partner and I arrived an hour or so before the instructor. We started with stretch exercises and off we went in our kayaks while the instructor waded out to about chest high. “I am now going to teach you the C to C roll,” he said. What? That’s not what I learnt in Comox! Oh well, I’d try anything once. At least I could use my Euro and wear my pfd. We banged and gurgled away for a good four hours and neither of us managed a roll. At least we knew the mechanics of it all, including how to spot one another. We both made a pact there and then that we would meet once a week until we started coming up unassisted. That’s what we did, my trusty partner and I ... we banged and gurgled away for another four to five sessions for about four hours a session on Sundays, mostly at Westwood Lake and one session at Spider Lake. Having a partner to spot you standing in the water is the fastest way to get a roll so I was a very lucky person to have had one. The other way is to do it yourself ... and I admire these folks immensely. Roll ... stall ... wet exit ... swim to shore ... empty boat ... go back out ... roll ... stall ... etc, etc.

Well, we finally developed rolls and that was a huge sense of accomplishment to say the least. It took a lot of hard work and determination but there were other rewards along the way that I had not anticipated. Inevitably one has to wet exit the odd occasion. This lends to one having to practise wet exits, assisted rescues, self rescues, edging and paddle skills. All these need to be practised on a regular basis. Would I do this all again?? I have no choice. I found out the hard way that to roll on the opposite side is to not have rolled at all! Nice. It all starts again in April. It’s been a blast! Special thanks to my partner ... David Nichols



Bernie, Dave and Reale practising their synchronized rolls



Newcastle Beach Cleanup

September 18, 2010, by Dawn Dunphy

This year the club registered with *Wavelength Magazine’s* “Clean Up the Coast Contest” rather than TD/ Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (GCSC) as we have since ‘92 because they have, over the past few years, decreased support while expecting adherence to a more onerous data collection system, left little room for flexibility and off-loaded direct expenses to participating groups.

A small group of hard-working and resourceful club members showed up on a drizzly Saturday morning for the clean-up. Leaving Brechin boat ramp we broke into three groups with a plan to meet for lunch near the pavilion at 12:30.

Dave Ursulak, co-coordinator, Linda Inscho, Ross Braybrook and Clive Blomer went south along Newcastle Channel. Long before reaching Mark Bay their boats were filled to capacity. They concurred with Clive’s suggestion to deposit their bags of garbage at the yacht club where he is a member rather than returning to Brechin. By lunch time their kayaks were again full and Mark Bay, which traditionally catches the most junk, hadn’t yet been cleaned.

Richard Moe in his canoe with me as his bow paddler and Judy Buckingham in her yellow day-tripper kayak cleaned the beaches from Midden Bay to Sunset Beach. Numerous raccoon families taking advantage of the low tide to forage for food scampered off temporarily as we moved along the shore. We did a u-turn when finished at Sunset beach, dropped our garbage in Richard’s truck then headed off to meet the others for lunch.

In the meantime, Bernie Haley and Harry and Liz van Heerwaarden started collecting debris once past Sunset Beach. Before reaching Kanaka Bay their boats were full. Bernie made a geocach by placing their bags of junk

under a tree and recording the quadrants. When their kayaks were overflowing once more they too proceeded toward our rendezvous spot. We shared our morning experiences while having lunch even though it included such graphic descriptions as Dave finding over a dozen dirty diapers in one spot.

Clive, who noticed a First Nation's caretaker in a small motorized vehicle, inquired as to whether he would consider looking after the garbage we had in our boats. He apparently seemed pleased with our efforts and agreed. This prompted Clive to see if he might also be willing to pick up Bernie's stashed garbage, fortunately he was amenable to that as well.

With our empty boats and a united work party we were able to clean Mark Bay quickly as well as pick up any debris that had been missed on Newcastle Channel. The garbage from Richard's truck was transferred to Clive's truck. Clive later stopped at the yacht club to retrieve the pile dropped there earlier, making for a full truck load, nearly as many bags of garbage as we had left with the Newcastle Island caretaker.

The innovation worked well in terms of cleaning Newcastle Island's shoreline without the support of a power boat or more canoes but we weren't able to record the total weight of the garbage collected as in the past. Nor did we take any pictures, the battery in Dave's camera died and I forgot to take mine. However I think we all went home satisfied knowing we had removed a great deal of unsightly litter and left the beaches safer for the birds and critters that call Newcastle Island home. Thanks so much for your help. What a team!



Nanaimo Paddlers Corn Roast and Aqua Games at Spider Lake, September 12, 2010.



A fun time! Though it rained a bit the food was delicious and after the games everyone was wet anyway — and it is a water sport, after all.

The first game was a relay in which the Pineapples (Dave, Liz, Ross) raced against the Kumquats (Bernie, Reale, Ross), having to one by one negotiate a clever zigzag of buoys (designed by Stephan) then returning BACKWARDS to pass the baton to the next team member. The Pineapples won!

Next up: Transfer Boats! Paddling pairs had to paddle out, then transfer boats by whatever method worked and return to the beach. Ross B and Ross T competed against Reale and Stephanie and Dave and Stephan. The underdogs, Dave and Stephan won this one (I think they completed it twice, actually).



A strategy meeting delays the start of "Transfer Boats!"

Having run out of games, contestants were forced to make up their own fun: “Kiss Your Kayak Bow and Stern” and “Stand Up!” Reale added to the challenge by attempting a head stand in her cockpit, but she failed, blaming her craft — Stephanie’s black stealth machine.



Reale and Stephan practise smooching.

The food was amazing thanks to Rudy Smesny, who cooked it deliciously. His sous-chef was Laurie Peck. Everyone helped to make it a perfect day ... thank you to the organizers and food buyers/haulers ... and we couldn't have done it without Ken Lutes, who supplied the equipment. Thank you, very much.



It was someone's birthday, too. As a matter of fact it was his/her birthday twice ... once at Spider Lake and once at Piper's Lagoon. The cake at Piper's didn't fare as well, since Reale forgot she was carrying it while practising her rolls on the way over. Next year it'll have to be a Jelly Roll!



30th Anniversary Paddle Sunday September 26

The Prez finally did it ... got everyone together on an amazing day to have the anniversary photo taken. Stephanie and Stephan climbed to the Lookout on Newcastle Island to photograph our attempt at making a star. Here is what it looked like from ground level:

Congratulations, everyone!

