

Washington Canoe Club

CURRENTS

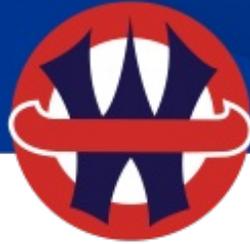


Photo by Bill Woodruff

President's Message

Fellow WCC Members,

The docks are back and I'm looking forward to a terrific 2020 for WCC. As you know, we now have a 60 year lease for the clubhouse and grounds. Hopefully you were able to attend the event we hosted in late February to explain some of the lease details. A special thanks to Tom Cooney for his eloquent presentation and his steady guidance throughout the process.

This lease provides us the foundation to accelerate work on clubhouse restoration. We recently met with our partners from the C&O Canal and the engineers and architects we've engaged in the planning process to present initial analysis and proposals. This began what will likely be a rigorous review with an alphabet soup of federal, DC, and other agencies to ensure that our plans are structurally sound and historically appropriate. It may take a while, but I'm certain that as we bring more groups together to learn about our club, our success and support will only multiply. I'm convinced that once people get a chance to walk around in the clubhouse and learn about its history, it's hard not to fall in love with it – it certainly has kept me engaged in WCC for over 30 years. On our recent tour for new National Park Service staff and the architectural team, the change after visiting the site was notable too – we went from early morning handshakes and formality to laughter and a sincere desire to collaborate and move rehabilitation ahead.

So what will all this mean for WCC members in 2020? Well, a few things. For one, the pace of work for our building and funding committees is accelerating significantly. So those committee members -- who are also often the same people hosting social events, races, cleanup parties, and other programs -- are going to be stretched thin and will appreciate your help more than ever. We have had a largely dormant volunteer identification system, which we plan to revive in 2020. Our goal is that every club member who wants to contribute (and that should be all of you) can find tasks that need doing (or propose ones they think of) and we can account for your contributions.

Second, we will be moving our storage container and many of the boats that have been located downstream (near the club front gate) to a new location upstream. We're still puzzling through the geometry to see if this will result in additional storage space, but I'd like to imagine so. At a minimum, it has already forced some reassessment of what boats are currently stored at the club, and helped us to identify some abandoned fleet to clear out.

One major effort for 2020 will be to help us grow our membership. There are two ways to do this – first, by not alienating any current members and losing them – so please be nice to one another, introduce yourself to newcomers, and assume good intent if someone lingers on the dock when you’re trying to get on or off the water, if someone may need help getting a boat into or off a rack, etc. If you’re new to WCC and particularly if you’re not on a racing team, please don’t be intimidated or feel like you’ve got less of a right to be at the club. Know that while we love the competitive paddling at WCC, we wouldn’t have a club if it were not for all the recreational members. We have succeeded for over 100 years because of the different paddling groups, ages, and interests of our members and because we’ve welcomed sea kayakers, outrigger, SUP, whitewater, and dragon boaters, and even those who just want a great place to keep a boat they paddle a few times a year. (Don’t worry, while we may host a few rowing motorboats we aren’t ever going backwards!) And second, help us to recruit new members. Paddlers tend to notice other paddlers, whether on the water, driving around with boats on our vehicles, or awkwardly launching somewhere along the river that isn’t WCC. Invite them to come check out WCC. Invite your colleagues, neighbors and friends down for a picnic and a paddle some evening – you know they are secretly already wishing you would. Bring your choir, scout group, soccer team, running club, etc. And lest anyone worry about our growing too fast, know that your board and membership committee is trying to be as thoughtful as it can, hiring clubhouse stewards to manage activities, increasing club boats and gear, and ensuring that we have sincere reviews as we increase membership numbers. There is NO waiting list at present, so please do help us to grow – the best way we can increase revenue to fund our restoration is with more membership dues (well, if someone would give us \$5M that might be the BEST, but I won’t count on that). Which would you rather – increase dues or recruit a friend? And yeah, I can appreciate those of you who say “all my friends are already WCC members” – okay, we love you, too and you get a pass.

A reminder, even though we do have a 60 year lease, we can’t afford to lose any goodwill we have tried to build with the public. Be courteous when opening the gate as cyclists navigate past, lost drivers try to reroute themselves, and when wayward visitors stumble in looking to rent a kayak. On the water, be safe, follow established traffic patterns, and avoid playing chicken with power boats and rowing shells.

A few final thoughts:

- We will have some great social events at WCC again this year – a New Orleans themed music event, Oysters, Crabfeasts, etc. We are desperately looking for a new “cruise director” to manage social events. Lisa Ramm has been superb and we have greatly benefited from her service, but she has graciously given us advance notice that her tenure is coming to an end.
- We want to be a more diverse club that better represents the city in which we live. WCC led early efforts to expand gender diversity in paddling and it has been critical to getting us where we are today (just look at the leadership of our club and committees, coaches, and who’s winning all the big races for us!) We believe we can do the same on ethnicity and other measures of diversity. Kevin Rooney has agreed to champion this initiative within the club and would welcome more engagement and will need your help. Please see his post below.

I look forward to seeing you all at WCC this season – Feel free to share your feedback directly with me anytime.

Best, Andrew Soles

Upcoming Events



OYSTER ROAST

What, you missed the first oyster roast of 2020? Well, good news, another one is scheduled! Mark your calendars for **Sunday March 29 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm**. Admission due at the door: \$25 adult, \$60 max per family. We will be there no matter what Mother Nature throws at us in late March! Credit cards accepted. Event is open to all WCC members and their guests.



Save the Date!

JAZZ FEST 2020

Date: Sunday 10 May 2020

Time: 3pm - 7pm

Band: **PANORAMA** from New Orleans

Menu: Mardi Gras food and beverages plus homemade Sara Jordan Desserts

Tickets: \$50 per adult and \$25 for kids (ages 2 to 12)

Tickets available online at

WashingtonCanoeClub.org beginning March 15.



Photo: Mercedes Baird

ANNUAL WCC SPONSORED KUMU'OHU CHALLENGE May 2, 2020 Volunteers needed!

The prestigious 15th Annual [Kumu'ohu Challenge](#) will take place May 2 from 8am – 1pm.

This is the season opening race of the East Coast Outrigger Racing Association sanctioned OC1/OC2 points series and is part of the Mid-Atlantic SUP racing season. Racers are encouraged to register early. Members not racing can volunteer to be part of the action too!

We are looking for volunteers to fill the following roles described below. You can volunteer for multiple spots or just express your interest and the race organizer will place you where help is most needed. There are options for racers and non-racers alike. **Come help and make new friends!** To volunteer, contact Race Director Rachel Shackelford at rachelpualani@gmail.com.

- **Event Set-Up** (7am-8am): Help set up tables, tents, raffle/t-shirt area, etc.
- **Event Management** (7am-10am & 12:30pm-2pm or shorter shift within these periods)
 - **Gate Control** - Wield ultimate control to boathouse access for boat load-in/out and volunteer access. None shall pass ... without your permission.
 - **Dock control** - Bring your white gloves and police whistle - be our traffic director to ensure dock access is coordinated and smooth
 - **Registration & raffle/t-shirt sales** - Get 'yer raffle tickets! T-shirts! Amateur barkers welcome. Great spot for new members to socialize and meet folks!
- **Race Roles** (10am-12:30pm)
 - **Timing** - Experienced paddlers preferred for timers. (Interested but never timed races before? Train up by volunteering to time our monthly Mile Rock challenges.)
 - **Safety Boats** - We have this mostly covered, but would like to expand our fleet of qualified boat drivers. Do you have boat driving experience? Do you have a DC boating license? Let us know!
- **Food & Drinks** (11:45am-1:30pm): We have this mostly covered, but could use a few people to help set up and serve.
- **Clean-Up** (1:30pm-2:30pm): OK - this is the BIGGIE folks. You KNOW how much you appreciate when folks stick around to clean up after the party. Be THAT guy/gal. Again - new members, great place to meet folks.
- **Future Race Director** - We are seeking someone (or a small team) to take over the Race Director role for this race in the future. There is a group of dedicated people that do a lot of the ground work already and the Race Director primarily keeps those tasks on hand and serves as point person on the day of the race. Now would be a great time to come on board and learn the ropes. You can even direct the race and race yourself!

Call for Music Festival Volunteers

WCC Jazz Fest 2020

Volunteers are invited to join the steering committee and/or to sign up to help with promotions, auction, food and beverage prep and delivery, registration, set-up and/or clean-up. **Kick-off meeting to be held Monday, March 16th at 7:00pm at The Berliner or email Catherine Melquist at cmelquist@gmail.com.**

WCC Rock-the-Dock 2020

This event is scheduled for Fall 2020, exact date TBD. **We need a steering committee lead.** This is a great event with fantastic music (by fellow WCC members Tom and Gretchen Toles and friends), tons of fun (and lederhosen) plus a prime opportunity to run the show! If intrigued, email washcanoclubnews@gmail.com.

Thanks to ALL who volunteer for WCC events and those who consistently pitch in to make WCC our favorite place on the Potomac.

News and Information

***Back on the Water* Movie in Development**

By Owen Palmiotti

If you paddle out of the WCC, there's a good chance you've heard of the Havens family and their incredible story. My name is Owen Palmiotti and I've been a member for a few years now. I'm a former Navy Reservist/Merchant Marine, navigation lecturer at SUNY Maritime College, novelist, and award-winning screenwriter and filmmaker. I first heard of the Havens family's story at a friend's wedding in upstate New

York. The priest's sermon was about love and the ultimate sacrifice. Having followed in my father's footsteps (he was former Navy/Merchant Marine, educator, and writer), I instantly connected with the Havens family's story. I reached out to Kirk Havens and then wrote up a treatment to the story and met the Havens family just a few weeks later. I joined the WCC and paddled alongside the family and Club members as I soaked it all in. Fast forward a few years, an old version of the script entitled BACK ON THE WATER won 3rd place at the Beverly Hills Film Festival. I've worked with the family, Club members, and two former Olympians (Sky Christopherson and Adam Laurent) and am in Co-Production with Roth Stock Pictures and Moving Pictures Media Group. We are just wrapping up development, looking to secure distribution and financing so we can film later this year and tell this amazing story. If you're interested in being part of the project, please shoot me an email at owenpalmiotti@gmail.com and follow the project at backonthewatermovie.com. Reach out, hit hard, hit together!



*The river delights to lift us free
(... if only we dare to let go).*

— Richard Bach

WCC's Diversity Mission

By Kevin Rooney

The lack of diversity within our club is an issue that has been raised in the last few years. WCC membership is open to all, but our membership does not reflect the diversity of the greater DC community. This may be partly explained by the relative popularity of paddle sports within various cultures. The Club recognizes the need to reach beyond our social and sporting circles to recruit new members, both athletes and recreational paddlers.

To address this issue, the WCC Board of Governors passed a motion on February 8th that can be summarized as follows:

- Improving diversity among our membership is an official priority for the club.
- The club will establish a permanent volunteer Diversity Chair and subcommittee.
- The club will hire a consultant to help us find the most effective ways to be successful in this endeavor (many organizations have been through this; there's no reason to reinvent the wheel).
- Reasonable funding for the initiative will be approved, as specific needs arise.

It is important to note that "diversity" is not simply about skin color or ethnic origin. It also includes gender (an area in which we have done reasonably well), sexual orientation, disability, etc.

If you are interested in getting involved in this effort, or just have any thoughts or ideas that you wish to share, please contact Kevin Rooney at krooney@gmail.com.



Boat of the Month | Surfski Kayak

By Lanny Shepherd

Each edition of WCC *Currents* will profile some of the Club's craft that are available to members. This month, we're profiling the Surfskis!

First off, what is a surfski?

Surfskis are long, narrow craft designed for speed in open water. They have open cockpits, are self-bailing, and usually have a foot pedal for rudder control. They are paddled with a double-bladed paddle, like a kayak. Their narrowness makes them tippy, yet their length and shape makes them great at riding waves (if you know what you're doing). They're also lighter and faster than a typical sea kayak of comparable length.

What kind of surfski's does WCC have?

WCC currently has three- a Huki (blue), a Stellar (blue), and an Epic (white with no markings). All are standard racing surfskis. The Huki has a little more volume, which makes it more comfortable for larger (and stronger) paddlers. Each was donated to the club within the past five years.

What are the specs?

Our boats are 20' to 22' long and quite narrow at less than 20 inches at their widest point. Thankfully they weigh between 25 and 30 pounds, so they're not too difficult for a single person to heft on shore despite their length. All have pedal-operated rudders.

Where are the WCC surfskis stored?

The Epic and the Stellar inside the clubhouse on racks. The Huki is outside, on the upstream side, up near the trail.

What are the rules on using a WCC-owned Surfski?

A member must be "certified" by either a coach or a commodore before they can use a surfski unaccompanied. They are delicate, tippy craft and don't come cheap, so WCC wants to protect them from damage. It's easy enough to get "certified" - have one of WCC's coaches verify that you have enough experience to handle one appropriately, or go out with a coach and demonstrate that you know what you're doing.

Please, do not take out a Surfski unless you are certified, and never put a guest on one. Help WCC take care of our resources.

Ok, I want to try one out. What should I do?

There's no surfski race team as such (though club members do race them), so kids train with the juniors and adults can train with the Master's program during the summer. Or, get in touch with one of the coaches (Kathleen McNamee, Kelly Rhodes, Nate Day, Tom D, or Luke Rhodes) to set up a time to try one out under one of their watchful eyes. After a few paddles to get the hang of how they operate, you should be good to go.

The photo above is not a WCC surfski, but too cool not to include!

PADDLE FIT CHALLENGE

If your New Year's resolution includes improving your physical fitness, join the WCC Inaugural Paddle Fit Challenge! **The goal is to paddle 1,000 miles or more in 2020!**

While the challenge was created with non-racing members in mind, it is open to any member who wants to take it on and is willing to log their mileage throughout the year.

To register: Sign up in the book outside the weight room and track your mileage on the pages provided. GPS level recording is not necessary — honest tracking in the spirit of the effort is!

Any paddle powered craft of choice is fine (SUP, OC, canoe, kayak, etc. or a combination). Mileage paddled in team boats or off-site can be included.

If you have questions, please email: PaddleFitWCC@gmail.com

Team Announcements

WCC Coaches: Kelly Rhodes (Women's Outrigger), Nate Day (Men's Outrigger), Joe [Cafferata](#) (Novice Outrigger), Kathleen McNamee (Junior's), TBD (Master's Kayak) and Kathy Summer (SUP)

OUTRIGGER TEAM UPDATE

By the time this newsletter is published, the docks will be back at home after a winter that still has yet to arrive by the end of February. Numerous OC paddlers trained on land and on the water in small boats through the winter, and we are looking forward to building our strength, speed, and power over the course of the season to race in the unlimited division for the first time at Catalina this September. Come late spring, we will have an unlimited canoe of our own to train and race in here on the east coast. Once we get going, men's practices will be at 6 pm on Wednesday and 8 am on Saturday, women's practices at 6:15 pm on Tuesday and Thursday and 8:30 am on Sunday. If you are interested in joining the team and are not already on the appropriate OC team email list, please contact Nate (men's coach) at nathan.a.day@gmail.com or Kelly (women's coach) at rhodesk25@gmail.com.



WCC History

The Advent of 9-person War Canoes at WCC

by Chris Brown

With winter paddling in war canoes winding down, it's interesting to note when the current 9-person war canoes came on the scene.

After the 1960 Olympics, the US Olympic Committee decided to provide war canoes for young athletes to encourage interest in paddlesports and to develop technique and teamwork. In 1963, two war canoes from the USOC arrived on the Potomac and young men and women were encouraged to take up the novel sport. Pictured are some athletic "girls" (see news article) from Washington and Lee HS in Virginia and Western HS in the District. Just a year later, two WCC women won the silver medal in the K-2,



Getting set
practice soon
Potomac, the
members of
State Olympic
team. More
meet on State
ready for
Summer season
and Western
Ington-Lee II

Padding War Canoes on Potomac Is Modish Sport for Teen Girls

500-meter race at the Tokyo Olympics. Both of the original war canoes are still paddled at WCC, thanks to the extraordinary upkeep by Frank Havens and later Dan Havens and Jim and Gavin Ross. A third canoe was received from the Quantico Marine base after a tragic training exercise there took the lives of nine Marines. The fourth war canoe came to the club in pieces and Dan made it into one "new" canoe.

