



Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society

Fall 2024 Newsletter

"Stargazer" the new Ceyana Canoe Club "Voyageur II" out for a June training run. Yes, they are paddling backwards upstream! This Big Canoe was bought in part with a CVBS Equipment grant.

Welcome

It has been a busy fall, with some complications for CVBS & myself, and not everything is "falling into place", as hoped. Like getting this newsletter out in a timely fashion. But there is good news, we have at least one 2025 brigade well into the planning, more below. We had successful brigades this past summer, in the "east", reports below. Your CVBS is keen to support brigades for 2024 and 2025, and we have some resources to do so.

In 2024 CVBS provide one brigade seed grant, two grants for equipment purchase or construction, and two instructor development support grants. If your group is interested what support grants are available and how to access them, please check [our web site for details on this link](#). Please note, our instructor development and youth grants are presently being revised to make them more responsive.

"Paddles UP", onto the 2025 season,
Mark

Upcoming 2025 Brigades

Gulf Island Big Canoe Brigade 2025

Dates for the Brigade are July 26th - August 1st , 2025.

Planning is currently underway for this trip. We will be paddling and camping on various Gulf Islands off the coast of Vancouver Island.

For non-club members the cost will be \$2400 per canoe with a maximum crew of 6 people including the captain. A non-refundable deposit of \$200 per canoe is required. When registering a canoe, only the captain needs to register. The remaining 5 crew members will automatically have space reserved for them. Details on how to sign up the crew will be given to the captain.

VCKC members will sign up individually and be assigned to VCKC canoes at a later date.

Solo paddlers will be given the opportunity to sign up on a list that will be made available to captains looking for additional crew members.

Registration will open **March 1st, 2025**. More brigade details will be available then. No advance registration will be happening.

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Linda Allison, Registrar
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Below is the map of the last Gulf Islands Brigade. The 2025 brigade expects to follow a similar route, variations due to campsite bookings, and of course day to day weather & tide conditions can be expected.



2024 Brigade Reports



Five Big Canoes participated in the Brigade with participants from six different provinces taking part. Feedback from participants indicate that despite the brigade being squeezed in between two Atlantic Hurricane remnants the brigade was a fun event that provided paddling, and local cultural and historical connections. Weather was a negative factor the first two paddling days with rain, thunder and lightning. Despite the poor weather participants were able to complete a short paddle each day, swim in the Atlantic ocean and on the second paddling day experienced a memorable opportunity when the Canadian icon, Bluenose11 sailed into St Peters Bay for the day. Despite extensive advertising for two public “Try Paddle” events and public indicated pre-event interest, the weather was a factor scaring most away for the first event and causing the second event to be cancelled completely. The post brigade evaluation had 7 respondents who expressed an overwhelming number of positive comments about the daily paddling, group meals and cultural/historic events. The Brigade Committee also completed a face-to-face evaluation that can be used to inform future CVBS Brigade planning documents.

Brigade Stats

1. Number of participants - 40
2. % male and female - 42.5% male, 57.5% female
3. Ages ranged from 15 years to 79 years old
4. Average age - 63 years
5. Try Paddle Participants
 - a. St Peters event = 4
 - b. Whycomomagh = 15-20 based on pre phone calls by interested individuals.
 - c. Had two guests for last day's paddle, campground to Baddeck

d. Additional individuals likely would have appeared at both sites had weather been better. Example, 3 phone calls to pre register were from Antigonish area. On the night at Whycomomagh a couple from Vancouver travelling through the area and a lady and son from the local area arrived to attend the paddle without pre-registering. Pre-registration was not required.

e. Three CBC interviews included dates, times and location of Try Paddles as well as brochures distributed throughout the region.

Day by Day events:

Day 1, Arrival and set up

Day 2, Morning safety and afternoon paddle through the locke from Atlantic side to Lake, evening meal followed by Anna Mallin, photographer slide show overview of SWPA Big Boat build/launch (30 min) and Music by Cape Breton folk singer Rob Smith.

Day 3, Thick fog and thunder on this day. We attempted an Atlantic paddle in St Peters Bay, but Thunder Protocol put us on shore for some hours. Brigaders swam, set up tarp shelter and lit a fire. Many enjoyed eating wild peas on the rocky spit of shoreline. Evening Try Paddle event offered. Four participants had a wonderful paddle introduction in an idyllic evening. The participant number likely small due to fog and thunderstorms through the day.

Day 4, Planned route changed due to potential thunderstorm and lightning. Began an Atlantic paddle then sighted the Bluenose II arriving in St Peters Bay. Raced it to the area outside the locke. Followed maritime protocol and proceeded across channel markers to the Bluenose II sitting at anchor. Circled to Bluenose II and spoke with captain and crew. Evening meal followed by a Biosphere presentation Biosphere presentation by Zoe Rivera Nicholas and Music by Celtic musicians, Rachel Davis and Darren McMullen. Dancing and jigging ensued.

Day 5, Moved camp to Nyanza/Baddeck area. Passes for Alexander Graham Bell Museum provided thanks to Caitlain O'Brien, with Parks Canada. There were 12-15 people who had phoned to pre-register for the afternoon Try Paddle along with a few others who arrived anticipating an opportunity to paddle in the big canoes were disappointed as heavy rain, lightning and thunder forced cancellation of the event.

Day 6, With good weather, Brigaders paddled for 5-6 hours around the Whycomomagh bay, from Whycomomagh Waterfront Centre in a circular route to Sky River, Iron Mines, MacInnis Island, Chisholm Pond, Sheep Island, and back to starting point. Salt water swims were enjoyed, many eagles, heron sighted. A stop at an indigenous fish farm allowed paddlers to see farming in large fish tanks. Workers were feeding the fish upon our chance encounter.

An evening meal at the beautifully located Whycomomagh Center provided a stunning sunset across the water. Following the meal Gerry Jamieson & Shawn Hadley provided a slide show presentation of the 1967 Big Canoe Race they took part in, followed by Music and cultural stories of Mi'kmaq people were presented by Graham Marshall, Indigenous performer.

Day 7, The day's paddle began at Little Narrows Ferry. Paddlers enjoyed over 5 hours of paddling on another warm summer day. The paddle followed the shores back to the Baddeck Cabot Trail Campground beach. Swimming was enjoyed at a few tops along the way.

Day 8, Our last Brigade day was another warm sunny days paddle this time from Baddeck campground to Kidston Lighthouse with a landing at the Baddeck Yacht club in the center of the waterfront. A string of pearls and Big canoe group cheer ended the brigade paddling. The

evening meal was capped off by Mi'kmaq Traditional District Kesputwick Chief Marilyn-Leigh Francis being in attendance, with elders and indigenous guests from Whycomomagh. Marilyn Francis, an elder from Acadia First Nations led a smudging ceremony and shared some teachings while Indigenous Paddler TJ Gladstone led a traditional Cree round dance to close of the evening. **Day 9**, Paddlers packed up their memories and gear, and said their good byes.

2024 Chief Pinesi Brigade



From Max Finklestein

This inaugural Pinesi Paddle retraced Algonquin Grand Chief Constant Pinesi's route from his annual summering place at Oka, Que. to his hunting grounds in Ottawa. The Brigade left June 26th from Oka National Park, Que. Pinesi was one of the last traditional chief residents in the Lower Ottawa River, until he was obliged to move to Algonquin Park.

Led by Algonquins from Pikwakanagan First Nation, the 154 km, 6-day paddle along the Ottawa River included direct descendants of Chief Pinesi, other indigenous people, and settlers. The Pinesi Paddle began in Oka (at the parc national d'Oka) and ended in Ottawa on Canada Day – with ceremonies, drumming and dancing at each end, and reconciling with communities around campfires in between.

Paddlers included direct descendents of Chief Constant Pinesi, who came from as far away as Wisconsin and Saskatchewan, and other Anishabe Algonquin and settlers. The voyage had different meanings for each of the paddlers. For some, it was about honoring ancestors. For others, it was a physical challenge (and due to the high water, strong currents and seemingly ceaseless headwinds, it was much more of a physical challenge than anticipated.). For other participants, it was about grieving loved ones and lost culture, or a drug and alcohol healing journey. For many settlers, it was about ally-ship with indigenous people.

The Pinesi Paddle for Peace ended with paddlers walking along the ancient portage trail connecting the Ottawa and Rideau rivers in what is now New Edinburgh.

The daily practice of the paddling journey included efforts towards reconciliation. This not only occurred amongst the paddlers themselves, but also took place at the mostly francophone

communities along the route, where mayors, community leaders and local historians graciously hosted the paddlers and celebrated the event.

Campsites and lunch stops along the route included Oka, Rigaud, Hawkesbury, Orignal, Fasset, Montebello, Papineauville, Plaisance Park, and Petrie Island.

The 350th Anniversary of the Seigneurie of Petite Nation coincided with the arrival of the brigade at Montebello, where Mayor Nicole Laflamme and former Pikwakanagan Chief Wendy Jocko unveiled the Kichi Sibi Trails logo on the lighthouse.

On arrival in Ottawa, the brigade was met by a flotilla from the New Edinburgh Boat Club, and other greeters on the shore. Paddlers walked along the ancient portage route to the Fieldhouse. Welcoming ceremonies led by the traditional and council leadership of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (AOPFN) including Kokom Jane Chartrand, Chief Greg Sarazin, Wendy Jocko and Councillor Merv Sarazin, and local dignitaries MP Mona Fortier, MPP Lucille Collard, and Rideau-Rockcliffe Councillor Rawlson King greeted the paddlers. Paddlers shared their experiences at a Roundtable discussion, buoyed by drumming, and dancing. Chief Pinesi Day provides a way for indigenous people to celebrate on Canada Day, without celebrating colonialism.

Events coordinators were members of the AOPFN, Kichi Sibi Trails, the Archdiocese of Mont Laurier and Crichton Community Council. Financial contributions have been made by Infrastructure Canada, New Edinburgh Community Alliance, AOPFN, Tricycle, Blaney McMurtry and Innovation 7, and the CVBS.

Other

2025 CVBS - Annual General Meeting

Our board is meeting in early December to finalize AGM plans. We usually meet for a weekend morning (on Zoom or Google meet) in mid-January. The meeting is open to all Class A members. Class Memberships are for two years, and cost \$10. Class A memberships are for those folk who want to contribute to the development of Big/Voyageur Canoe paddling and the hosting of Brigades across Canada. Contributions can be as executive members, regional reps to our executive, and as brigade organizers. Class A memberships can be purchased on this link.

Ft. Assiniboine' Big Canoe is available!



Good Morning Mark;

I am pleased to share with you and are hoping that you will share with others via the next Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society news letter the following news.

The Fort Assiniboine Museum now has

For Rent

25 foot Voyageur Canoe with Trailer

\$100.00 per day (in water use)

PREREQUISITE big canoe skills

Training available

Contact: Dale 780-305-6921 05raven1968@gmail.com

Rental information will be kept up-to-date on the [Woodlands County website under the Fort Assiniboine Museum](#).

History

The Legacy Canoe is the result of surplus funds from the 2023 Fort Assiniboine Voyageur Canoe Brigade. The surplus was due to the extreme generosity of all the communities and several individuals along the way. The Brigade community was also able to buy bent shaft paddles for Change Health. The canoe was not to be just an ornament.

The Legacy Trailer is a result of surplus funds from the Bicentennial Event held in Fort Assiniboine. Woodlands County allowed that committee to purchase the Trailer and the appropriate equipment ie paddles, life-jackets and equipment necessary for rental.

Regards, Teresa

"This is the end, the very end, my friends!"