



Spring is here! The canoes are rigged and ready, and everyone is gearing up for another great paddling season. Plans are taking shape for races, social events, summer camps, work parties, and community partnership events – along with our ongoing fundraising and boathouse rehabilitation efforts.

Your participation is crucial to the success of our individual and collective efforts as a Club. And as always, valuable information is posted almost daily on the private WCC member's [Facebook](#) page. Make sure to check out ? [Our Instagram](#) ?

Additionally, **this spring we will be changing the code to the pedestrian gate (and coded padlocks)**. The key locks to the NPS vehicle gate and boathouse front door will not change. Notices on the date of the code change and the new code will be sent out via email to members who have renewed their membership for 2024. If you have **not** renewed, [do so today](#).

If you would like to be involved in any aspect of the production of this newsletter or have content to share, please [contact us](#). There are so many great stories at the Club, and we look forward to sharing yours!

In this issue:

- The Spring Cleanup and Commodore's Cruise boat check is this weekend!
- A call for volunteers and an update by **Mary Stapp** on the cartoon frieze removal and storage also this weekend!
- Time is running out to register for the Kumu'ohu Challenge
- A save the date for the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Jazz Sextet concert
- Information on fun opportunities for WCC kids with Intro to Sprint and Summer Paddling camp
- A story by **Liz Pennisi** on the WCC women who raced in Rio De Janeiro in February
- A call for community partner volunteers
- A story by **Liz Pennisi** about our wild spring paddling companions
- Information on the Masters sprint program by **Stephen Weiss**
- An invitation to check out the women's outrigger team
- **Cyndy Carpenter** shares some interesting historical photos from her family archives

Technical note... Gmail "clips" lengthy email messages. When you get to the clip, please select "view entire message." You will know you've come to the end when you get to the WCC Store!

Upcoming Events





Spring Cleanup and Commodore's Cruise

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

10 AM – 3 PM

Feel free to bring along snacks and beverages if you're inclined. Nourishment/fortification is always welcome and appreciated.

SPRING CLEANUP WORK PARTY

As you all know, this is a volunteer-run club and all upkeep is done by members. Come and help get the club ready for the Kumu'ohu Challenge and the season. Just show up with your work clothes and a "can-do" attitude. There will be tasks for every level of effort. Email [Jim Ross](#) (vice president) with questions.

COMMODORE'S CRUISE BOAT CHECK

If you have a boat or SUP at the club, you or your representative must come to the club and show that your boat or board is "river-worthy" so we're not storing derelict or abandoned craft in precious and limited rack space.

Please check in with [Tim Johnson](#) (Commodore) or [Stephen Weiss](#) (Vice-Commodore) or the other volunteers who will be there to verify you have claimed your craft. If a boat/board has not been checked out during the cruise, it may lose its rack space. At a later date (and as per club rules) we will move unclaimed boats to temporary storage to give their owners a chance to claim them. After a to-be-determined time, any boats that are still not claimed will be considered abandoned and disposed of.

If you can't make it on April 13, email [Tim](#) or [Stephen](#) with details (what/where) of your stored craft.



West wall panels of the Mahoney frieze

Volunteers Needed for Cartoon Frieze Removal and Storage

APRIL 13 – 15, 2024

By Mary Stapp

Among all the special things about our club, one of the most special is the Felix Mahoney frieze located just inside the main entrance to the building. There are 27 panels featuring cartoon paintings of some of WCC's founding members. Mahoney was an editorial cartoonist at the Washington Evening Star, and our panels have been dated to 1910.

Remarkably, the panels that wrap almost all the way around the top of the Grill Room have survived intact through floods and extreme temperatures, but they are not in great shape. After much ado about everything, we have a plan to remove and store them for the renovation that is surely coming.

We have scheduled on April 13 – 15, a professional conservator (two actually) to perform this work, with the help of WCC volunteers. First, on Saturday the 13th, we have a work day at the club, so we ask all helpers who are doing general cleanup work to steer clear of the space where the conservators will be working, which I expect will mostly be inside. Next, we need agile bodies to help remove the work from the walls. Two or three people who can use hand tools and stand on scaffolding will be needed, and I can set up shifts as we get closer to the day.

The conservators will stabilize the flaking paint, clean and prepare them for storage, with the help of additional volunteers. For each panel, we will also need to put together containers to be composed of corrugated board, foam board, and Tyvek. Given that the panels are all different sizes, this will require measuring, cutting, and constructing according to the instructions the conservator is providing.

While it's difficult at this juncture to know precisely what will be needed at what time, we would greatly appreciate a stable of volunteers for each of the three days. Obviously, Monday is tricky, so if you are willing to volunteer and are free on Monday, April 15th, please mail me at marystapp@aol.com, and let me know.

The panels will be stored on-site, where they will stay until we have a rehabilitated space to hang them. At that time, there will likely be more conservation done on each panel before they can be re-installed.

It's hard to overstate the value of this project given the historical importance of the artwork. The subjects of each painting are rambunctious, showing founding club members paddling, drinking beer, and performing silly antics – not necessarily in that order! They help establish the light-hearted character of the club as the fun place it was and continues to be.



Detail of one of the the Mahoney frieze panels

We will have interpretive material in the future to put the frieze in its historical context and to underscore how much the club has changed and grown over time. The success of this project will allow us and future club members to connect with our history and cherish it for years to come.

This project is the fruition of years of work done by **Chris Brown** who has sought funding, commissioned reports, documentation, high-resolution photographs, and pushed for conservation amidst the maelstrom of red tape that comes with a nationally registered historic building. He and **David Cottingham** deserve awards for their patience and persistence!

If you can help, please email me (**Mary Stapp**) at marystapp@aol.com, and let me know which day(s) you are available. The more flexibility you have in the hours of the day that you can work, the better.

Thank you in advance.

CALLING ALL PADDLERS! THE COUNTDOWN TO RACE DAY IS ON!



The 18th Annual Kumu'ohu Challenge 2024

**SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024
7:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

The registration deadline for the 2024 Kumu'ohu Challenge is April 17th. More detailed information and registration information are on [PaddleGuru](https://www.paddleguru.com).

The Washington Canoe Club is hosting the 17th annual Kumu'ohu Challenge on the Potomac! This is the season-opening race of the East Coast Outrigger Racing Association (ECORA) sanctioned OC1/OC2 points series and is part of the Mid-Atlantic SUP racing season.

In addition to outrigger and SUP, classes will include surfski, sea kayak, and ICF sprint canoe/kayak. Come celebrate the spring thaw with a great day of

paddling and camaraderie in the Nation's Capital!

The 2024 Kumu'ohu Challenge is now part of the 2024 USA COR National Series for the American Canoe Association! Surfski racers can now contribute their race results to their point totals for the season.

[SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER](#)

Volunteers are essential for the success of this race. We have a range of tasks available (for both racers and non-racers). If you can help out, [sign up](#).

[REGISTRATION](#)

<https://paddleguru.com/races/KumuohuChallenge2024>

Registration closes at midnight on Wednesday, April 17. There will be NO RACE DAY REGISTRATION so register now if you plan to race.

[PARKING](#)

Parking on Saturday between 7 am and 3 pm will be limited to assigned race volunteers only. The WCC parking area will be prioritized for volunteers and for craft loading and unloading. Volunteers will be at the NPS gate to control entry, direct parking, and help with loading and unloading race craft.

There is paid parking along the Georgetown waterfront, including street parking and parking garages. Parking garage information: <http://www.georgetowndc.com/transportation/parking>. Allow extra time for parking and walking to the race venue.

[SCHEDULE](#)

7:30-8:45 am: Boat/board drop off and race check-in

9:00 am: Race Meeting

9:30 am: Race start

12:00 pm: Lunch/Raffle and Silent Auction close

12:30 pm: Award ceremony

[LUNCH](#)

Bonnie Havens will be serving up a delicious traditional Taco Salad lunch after the race. Lunch is included in the race registration fee with an option to purchase lunch for guests. Additional guest lunch passes can be purchased during race check-in for \$15 per person.

[SILENT AUCTION, RAFFLE, 50/50, AND WCC MERCH!](#)

Throughout the day you can bid on top-quality gear and other must-have items for the discerning paddler. Pay for the raffle at the race by credit card, cash, or checks made payable to "Friends of the Washington Canoe Club".

Many Thanks to WCC Kumu'ohu Challenge Organizers **Lisa Man**, and **Emilia Rastrick**.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



SAVE THE DATE!

Duke Ellington School of the Arts Jazz Concert

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2024

6:30 PM

WCC is thrilled to announce that the **Duke Ellington School of the Arts Jazz Sextet** will perform at the Club on Friday, May 31st!

Details are still being worked out, and an email will be sent to all members once everything is confirmed.

Mark your calendars! You won't want to miss this!

RESCHEDULING!

Korean BBQ at WCC

Due to a change in one of the organizer's schedules, our inaugural Korean BBQ event at WCC, slated for Saturday, May 11 needs to be rescheduled! We'll send out an announcement once a new date is selected. As of now, it's

News and Information



Spring 2024 Intro to Sprint Paddling for Kids

Seven consecutive Sundays, April 7 – May 19

10:00 – 11:30 am

Free of charge!

RSVP: commodore@washingtoncanoecub.org

For over 100 years, the Washington Canoe Club has been one of the top clubs in the United States for canoe and kayak racing. Club members have competed in multiple Olympics, won hundreds of national championships, and have traveled the world representing both WCC and Team USA. The WCC juniors sprint team represents, for many, an entrance to the world of competitive paddlesports.

Interested kids between the ages of 10 and 13 are invited to participate in a weekly 90-minute introduction to sprint canoe and kayak paddling. The program is geared toward kids who may have an interest in joining the WCC junior sprint program which runs year-round. The sessions will be held at WCC and will be run by WCC leadership volunteers and current junior team paddlers. There is no charge for the program.

Please email the WCC Commodore (commodore@washingtoncanoecub.org) with questions or to let us know you'll be attending. We want to make sure we have enough volunteers and boats ready for each weekend's program. Feel free to share this information with your friends!

Thanks to the Washington Canoe Club Commodore and aquatics committee for offering this excellent free program.



The Washington Canoe Club is planning to hold 2 separate weeklong summer camp sessions, run by current members of the Washington Canoe Club racing teams. Camp days will run between 9 AM and 3 PM.

This camp will focus on learning the basic skill development for sprint canoe, kayak, and SUP paddling with fun excursions on the Potomac tossed in for excitement. Campers will also get to experience the fun of paddling in a six-person Hawaiian outrigger canoe.

WHEN: June 17th – 21st and June 24th – 28th. Sessions will be capped at

12 participants and weeks may be cancelled if fewer than 5 participants are registered.

WHERE: The historic Washington Canoe Club, located in Georgetown on the banks of the Potomac River. We are at 3700 Water Street NW, Washington DC, 20007

COST: \$450.00 per camper, per week

WHO: Kids between the ages of 9 to 14.

REGISTRATION: To register, please complete the form here: <https://forms.gle/sUyUmzEHrSnxpZzX9>

Questions? Email SummerCamp@WashingtonCanoeClub.org



WCC outrigger women battle heat in 50-mile race in Brazil

By Elizabeth Pennisi

For most outrigger enthusiasts, Hawaii is the most exotic place they race. But thanks to **Ilka Morris**, 10 WCC women headed to Rio de Janeiro in late February to compete against South American teams in a 50-mile course that circled the tiny islands just beyond the city's Guanabara Bay. "The most exciting thing was just being there," says **Rachel Shackelford**, who spent all but 20 minutes steering the almost 8-hour race. "It really is a surreal thing to fly to another country to do a canoe race."



Twenty-five teams in a mix of Hawaiian and Tahitian style canoes started from the beach in Niterói, with all but the steerer in the canoe lined up at the water's edge. When the horn went off, Rachel had to run down to the canoe, push off and hop in. And at the end, they paddled until the bow of the canoe hit the sand, and only later realized the finish was many yards earlier as they passed the official boat. "Our biggest competitor was the heat," says **Lisa Ramm**, who stroked along with **Pam Boteler**, **Erin Rhodes** and **Kelly Rhodes**.

Ilka Morris and a few others started thinking about a Brazil adventure almost a year ago, as Ilka had lived and paddled there for two years. She'd stayed in touch with local paddlers, sometimes jumping in with a team called Mosaico, consisting of women from several South American



countries to do a few of the continent's more challenging races. She recruited **Theresa Haught**, **Coralie Miller**, Kelly, Pam, Rachel, and Lisa. Kelly, realizing her daughter was excited about change races, convinced Erin to miss college and come, and **Sara Jordan** offered to sub in if at the last minute someone dropped out—but became the ninth paddler. On the escort boat, **Cheryl Zook** managed the changes, the crew and the escort boat driver. She spoke just a little Portuguese and he knew a few English words. "It's always a challenge to communicate with hand gestures and learning new words," she explains. "It made it fun, but a challenge."

She and **Alex de Miranda**, a friend of Sara's who acted as the team's translator during the race, slathered sunscreen on resting paddlers, made power drinks and dug out much needed snacks, which ranged from chocolate covered espresso beans (which quickly melted) to energy GUs and protein shakes. Rachel even had some sweet potato, and Pam had pureed fruit packets. All winter, the women trained, first in one-man outriggers, then on both Saturdays and Sundays in the 6-man unlimited canoes, with the help of **Dan Havens**, **Monica Monteon**, **Masako Ohash**, **Sharon Goodall**, Cheryl and **Lisa Mann** helping to fill out open seats, despite the cold, and a few times, snow. One chilly morning they spent 5 hours on the water—about the time each person would paddle in this “change” race. Physically, they were ready, says Rachel.

But once in Brazil, they'd be drenched in sweat just walking around early in the morning, and during the race, with the lifejackets they were required to wear and leggings—often black—many felt they were “burning up” by the time it was their turn to jump out of the canoe and return to the escort boat. The joke was that they went from paddling in 30 degrees Fahrenheit (F) to 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees F), but the reality was that it was much hotter and felt even worse because of high humidity. “The heat just killed us,” says Ramm. For everyone, especially Rachel, staying hydrated was an issue. Rachel went through 8 liters of water and electrolytes all on her own and survived on “pure grit,” she says. “Our sunscreen could not keep up with the intensity of the sun,” adds Sara.



But the race took a toll as well. Two or three people changed out of the canoe every 15 minutes (see photo above). “Toward the end we were definitely groaning about throwing our bruised legs over the gunnel,” says Sara. “But everyone was solid and positive the whole time.”

For her the most exciting moment was early in the race, as the boat was coming around Sugarloaf Mountain, another of the city's iconic landmarks. A container ship coming out the bay pushed up a bulge of water, creating a huge wake the crew surfed admirably. “It reminded me of how awesome a steerer Rachel is and how awesome a crew we have,” says Sara. “Nobody blinked.”

A few days before the race, Rachel and several others scouted the course in the escort boat. Every time the course cut close to a rock, Rachel would ask how deep the water was, so that during the race she could cut corners close to catch rides from the swell bouncing off the shore. “She worked the bumps everywhere she could,” says Lisa.

Off the water, the team crowded into a rented van that came with a driver and the day before the race took a tram to Christ The Redeemer, the city's iconic art deco statue, not just to admire this work of art but also to get a bird's eye view of the course. “It was crazy,” says Sara. There were loops around and zigzags between islands and in some places, the course did a 180 degree turn and took the paddlers back where they had just been.

The competition was fierce, as the first place women's team consisted of “bad ass” young women who finished a half hour ahead of the WCC boat. “We were fourth out of four [women's crews], but I'm so damn proud of what we did,” says Ramm. “Everyone in the boat gave everything they could!”





Volunteers Needed for Community Partnership Events



Louise teaches a group from City Kids how to paddle.

Hosting community, educational, and charitable groups is one way we fulfill our club's objective of "expanding paddle sport opportunities and encouraging and engaging a diverse group of paddlers at all levels."

Last year, we had the privilege of serving individuals from various organizations including D.C. Public Schools, the DC Preservation League, Capital Pride Alliance, Boy Scouts, Jubilee Youth Services, Soul Trak, City Kids, and Team River Runner!

As always, we rely on volunteers to assist in getting individuals from these diverse groups out on the water. If you're available to lend a hand, please email [Louise Flynn](#) to be added to her outreach list.



All photos courtesy of Dan Rauch DOEE

Incoming Migrants Welcome Spring Paddlers

By Elizabeth Pennisi

March arrived and many of us paddlers began dusting off our paddles to start

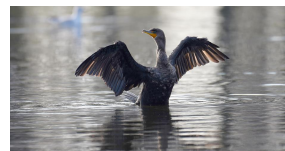
the season anew. And as we take to the river, we will have plenty of company. If the water is still crystal clear as it was all winter, it might be possible to glimpse the thousands of shad heading upriver to spawn. The Potomac hosts two kinds, the deep-bodied, silvery American shad and the smaller Hickory shad, with longer, greener bodies and a lower jaw that sticks out. The two species are not closely related but share the same lifestyle: They spend most of their lives in the salty Atlantic, munching on plankton—the drifting microscopic life—or fish. As each winter wanes, they head landward, sometimes traveling more than 350 miles upriver (though not that far up the Potomac.) American shad can weigh as much as 8 pounds; hickory shad top off at about 2 pounds, and fishermen are already lining the banks to catch the biggest ones they can, as both the flesh and eggs can be delicious. “This run supports an entire ecosystem, as eagles, osprey, cormorants, and others enjoy the feast,” says D.C. government wildlife biologist **Daniel Rauch**.

Eagles are already in residence and are a month into the breeding season. These young eaglets will need a lot of food over their first three months, so it should be easy to spot the busy parents traveling back and forth to their nest 200 yards north of Key Bridge on the Virginia side. The first eaglets of the season just hatched.



The ospreys, too, have arrived after completing one of the longest migrations of our raptors, flying in from Central and South American wintering grounds. “They are very vocal and like to announce their arrival,” Rauch points out “Keep an eye out for [them] pinwheeling over the river.”

Double-crested cormorants are sleek, black fishing birds that snag shad and eels underwater and start congregating in branches by the 1000-meter mark as they follow the shad run. When you see them on rocks with their wings stretched out, they are drying the feathers out as they don’t have the water-proofing oil glands that ducks have. Most will head farther north after the shad run.



If you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of river otters at Fletcher’s Cove and turtles sunning themselves on the rocks. Farther upstream, common ravens are nesting under Chain bridge. Listen for their “wonk, wonk,” as their eggs hatch in mid-March so they will be warning you to “stay away.”

Meanwhile, while mallards and winter holdover Canada geese are here, they might not be on their nests yet. And wood ducks and common mergansers don’t show up until later, with “little ones in April or May,” says Rauch. We’ve all seen the long lines of “little ones” dwindle in numbers, from sometimes 10 to one or two. They are easy prey for catfish, snakeheads, and large turtles, he points out. But don’t expect mayflies, those delicate long-tailed insects that suddenly appear in droves on lifejackets, paddles and boats, until May. And disregard their name, as these aquatic young emerge as short-lived adults all the way through July. Snakes, too, won’t show their heads until the weather consistently hits the mid-60s.

Rauch could use our help: “If you see any new bald eagle or osprey nests between Theodore Roosevelt Island and Chain Bridge, it would be good to hear about them,” he says. “Any unusual birds; other sightings would be appreciated as well.” His email is daniel.rauch@dc.gov.

TEAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

WCC Coaches: Rachel Shackelford, and Lisa Ramm (Women’s Outrigger), Nate Day (Men’s Outrigger), Joe Cafferata (Rec Outrigger), David Podloch and Gavin Ross (Junior’s), Thom Crockett (Master’s Kayak), and Kathy Summers (SUP)





Cafferata

WCC Masters Sprint Team

By Stephen Weiss

The WCC Masters Sprint Team is a group paddling program where club members can learn to paddle racing kayaks. No previous experience is necessary. The team is professionally coached by club member **Thom Crockett**. The first session will begin in mid-April and run through the first week of October. Members will learn how to handle club racing kayaks and practice proper paddling technique. Sessions will run once a week in the afternoon from approximately 6:15 pm to 7:30 pm.

The club has an extensive fleet of racing Kayaks and Surfskis. The club will be adding two new boats to the inventory this year. They include a Kirton Talisman kayak and the Epic V8 Surfski. Both of these boats are considered very stable learning craft which will bolster our inventory for newer paddlers.

For further information please contact club Vice Commodore: **Stephen Weiss** (Stephen.Weiss05@gmail.com)



WCC wahine paddle a Koa canoe in the Queen Liliuokalani Canoe Race in Hawaii, 2023.

Calling all women athletes! Wanna compete with the outrigger team?

You've all seen the big canoes on the dock, but have you ever wondered what it would be like to race in one? Perhaps you've joined the recreational group on Mondays but would like to take the next step. The WCC Women's Outrigger team is seeking athletes with a desire to compete. While no experience is necessary, a willingness to learn and work hard as part of a team is. If interested, contact [Lisa Ramm](mailto:lrramm@gmail.com) (lrramm@gmail.com) and [Rachel Shackelford](mailto:rachelpualani@gmail.com) (rachelpualani@gmail.com).

The women's team practices are Sunday mornings and Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

WCC History

Photos from the Chew, Reece, and Carpenter Archives

By Gloria Vestal

Last October 2023, I volunteered at the registration table of the Team River Runner Biathlon fundraiser alongside a delightful young lady named **Lily Carpenter**, who was earning service hours for middle school. During our conversation, I discovered that her family has been part of the WCC since the 1920s! Lily mentioned that her grandmother had old photos of the club. **Cyndy Carpenter**, Lily's mother, generously scanned and shared these photos with me for inclusion in the *Currents* Newsletter. Cyndy is keen to gather opinions on their historical significance and the photos themselves. If you have any information to contribute, please email it to newsletter@washingtoncanoecub.org. Thank you, Cyndy and Lily!



WCC work party 1928.



Bob Chew paddles on the Potomac with his daughter Betsy (Betty). Date unknown.

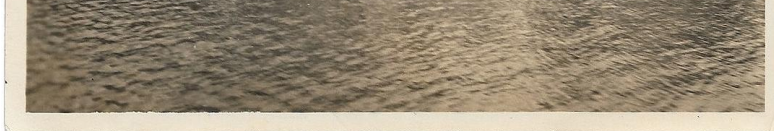


Betsy (Betty) Chew on the WCC dock. Date unknown.



Fletcher's Ferry during a flood. Date unknown.





The Washington Canoe Club in 1949.

Do you have historical photos or have a story to share with fellow WCC members and friends? Don't hesitate to send them our way. Reach out to Gloria at newsletter@washingtoncanoecub.org.

The WCC History Book is Still Available



Images of America: Washington Canoe Club, by WCC lifetime honorary member **Chris Brown**, is still available for [purchase](#) (and all proceeds from the sale will go to the boathouse restoration fund). Or donate \$250 or more to the restoration fund and receive a complimentary signed copy.

Head over to our [history page](#) and watch **Chris Brown's Virtual Book Talk** that was given via Zoom on December 3, 2020.



Show Your Club Spirit and Look Good Doing It!

Any item can be customized with your name.

The WCC Squad Locker stores have a wide variety of club-branded items for members of all ages (including infants and toddlers). All items allow for personalization through the ordering process. With embroidered items, you can put your name (or mantra) on the sleeve. If an item has a printed logo, you can get your name (or nickname) on the back or sleeve. Hats are personalized on the back band area. Both shops are periodically updated and changed, so keep checking back. If there's something you would like to see offered, [let us know](#).

Visit the [Spring/Summer Store](#)

Visit the [Fall/Winter Store](#)

Thanks to Bonnie Havens for all her hard work on the stores.

THANK YOU to all club volunteers

If you have an idea for a contribution to the next issue of *Currents*, please reach out to one of your newsletter team members at Newsletter@WashingtonCanoeClub.org.

We love hearing from you!

