



# NEWSLETTER

## Full On: A Living Legacy

Summer 2013



*VRC Chairman Arnaldo de Oliveira Sales, GBM, OBE, JP, and Honorary Life Chairman of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, and VRC Honorary Secretary Frank Pfeiffer*

### From the Editor's Desk

In this issue, we highlight the many ways our members have helped to make the VRC a better place, from a "working bee" organized by Nana Barros and Madeleine Behan's garden at Emerald Bay, to a fond farewell to paddlers Patty Lee and Jai Leal, departing for Eleuthera in the Bahamas. Such luck! The VRC's prize-winning Paddle Club provides an introduction to Hong Kong's premier club for dragon boating and outrigger canoeing, for newcomers to the sports and

seasoned veterans alike. And in our Club Notes section, we highlight notices and news



affecting members. This newsletter is for you. Please contact us at:

[theeditor@victoriarecreationclub.com.hk](mailto:theeditor@victoriarecreationclub.com.hk)

-- The Editor

### Message from the Honorary Secretary

As the summer unfolds the Victoria Recreation Club (VRC) continues its transition to a modern club.

The good news I have to share is that the transition period – which has sometimes been painful – is finally coming to a close. The bad news is that it is not quite over, and I need each of you to be patient, to respect our operations staff, and to understand the limitations we face in the General Committee as well as the vision that we have for the future.



#### Emerald Bay Lease

The extension of our lease at Emerald Bay for another 15 years is now virtually certain, although we have yet to hear from the Home Affairs Bureau and Lands Department. The understanding we have with the government is that Emerald Bay will be open to approved bodies and schools for a certain number of hours per week, with organized programs and a fee structure. The General Committee has already authorized the purchase of four mini-dragon boats and six kayaks both for members' use and to be able to run these programs once the lease is finalized.

Appointment of a New General Manager



Operationally, many of our current problems stem from the absence of a General Manager. This problem is close to being solved, and we expect to hire one of three finalists for the job in the very near future. This will relieve some of the pressure on our front-line staff people, who have had to deal with ever-increasing demands from our members. Individually, all of these demands might be reasonable, but collectively and depending on the time of week they can be extreme. On one recent Sunday we had 120 people in Emerald Bay and 150 in Deep Water Bay.

Once the new General Manager is in place we can start exploring ways to further improve our services and facilities. We plan to tap into the institutional knowledge of our sister club the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (RHKYC), to learn from its experience. A bit of history is that the club's original sailing section split off to become the Hong Kong Corinthian Sailing Club, which was incorporated as RHKYC in 1890 – 58 years after the founding of the VRC in Guangzhou in 1832.

#### Formation of House Committees

And we plan to do more to bring the wisdom and experience of our membership into club operations, following the model set by RHKYC and other well-run

private recreational clubs in Hong Kong.

At Emerald Bay, we have established a House Committee, under Convener Heinrich Verheul. This committee has already met several times and provides a conduit for members' views and collaboration. One such collaboration came about on June 23, when more than 30 members gathered at Emerald Bay for a

“Working Bee” involving some heavy hauling and clearing, as well as a celebratory barbecue. Nana Barros, as a member of the Emerald Bay House Committee, was the driving force behind this event – demonstrating how the House Committees are effectively a bottom-up structure allowing the VRC community to “give back” to the club.

We very much need a similar House Committee at Deep Water Bay, where I will serve as Convener. Please contact me at [info@victoriarecreationclub.com.hk](mailto:info@victoriarecreationclub.com.hk) if you would like to be a part of the Deep Water Bay House Committee. Let me know too if there is a particular area you would like to

concentrate on, whether family recreation, entertainment facilities, the menu, or anything else. We would like all of you to feel welcome to make a further contribution.

#### Contributions of the General Committee

I would like to say a few words about our General Committee – myself, Mr. Dan Fedoruk, Ms. Julie Devine, Mr. Andrew Orr, Mr. Heinrich Verheul and Mr. Nicholas Pirie.

You may not know who these individuals are, but during this transition period, our General Committee has provided model leadership. Let me mention two specific instances of such leadership.

As a result of the audit of boat storage at Deep Water Bay, revenues have increased more than 30 percent on an annual basis. For this we have to thank Ms. Julie Devine, who worked tirelessly to track down owners and make sure that they are paying for racking space. As you may or may not know, our housekeeping for our boat storage system was in serious arrears as of two years ago, and it has taken the better part of a year to set things straight. A similar process is now underway at Emerald Bay.





Along the same lines, our Treasurer, Mr. Dan Fedoruk, has been working on a budget and vision plan for the club that will project both revenues and expenditures over a two to three-year time period. This may seem very ordinary but it has never been done before in our history, going back in Hong Kong to 1849. It means that we will be able to more confidently plan for the future and realize our limits when it comes to outlays such as the new Ladies Changing Room at Deep Water Bay or the racking system for 50-100 boats that we would like to install at Emerald Bay.

We invite you to get to know all of us. Please feel free to introduce yourself, ask questions, and of course pay compliments as due!

Expansion of Ordinary Membership

Finally, looking ahead, we will shortly propose an increase in the current number of ordinary members who can be introduced annually. Currently, there is a limit of 10 new ordinary members per year, up to a total ceiling of 250. We will propose an increase to 25 per year to the membership, either through an Extraordinary General Meeting or the Annual General Meeting, normally held in late September.

With all these developments, I hope for your understanding and support as we face the last phase of our transition. Our roots lie deep in Hong Kong's colonial past, but our future very much belongs to an international Chinese city and community, China's "world city". As that community becomes ever more respectful of its splendid waters, we hope to provide a wonderful platform for marine recreation in all of its forms – whether admiring the sunset and enjoying a seaside barbecue, ocean swimming and paddling, or simply enjoying the outdoors with friends.

Sincerely,

FRANK PFEIFFER







# Club Notes

## UPDATE YOUR DEBIT LIMITS

- Please be reminded to update your direct debit limit to cover the increased membership fees in effect this quarter if you have not already done so.
- Please check your Q3 bill to ensure your direct debit limit covered the increased membership fees in effect this quarter. If not, please immediately increase your limit and send a cheque to KCS Hong Kong Limited, 8/F, Gloucester Tower, The Landmark, 15 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong.
- If you want to verify our fees please check our website at [www.victoriarecreationclub.com.hk](http://www.victoriarecreationclub.com.hk) and click About the Club and Membership.



## NEW AT DEEP WATER BAY

- **New wines and beers:** From next weekend a fabulous range of red, white and sparkling wines will be available by the bottle at very good prices, together with a small selection by the glass.

There will be an extended list of wines available for pre-order for your BBQ or party. Check out the list when booking your next event. Bottled, craft beers are also now at the bar as well as two beers on draught. After an initial trial period the program will be extended to Emerald Bay.

Many thanks to member



Christian Pillsbury for helping to set this up.

- **Members' beer tasting event:** Coming in September. Keep an eye on the notice board!
- **Deep Water Bay women:** You'll be pleased to know that

super-powered hair dryers have been installed in the women's changing room to speed you on your way to work in the morning after your early swim or paddle.

- **SUP/Boat storage:** Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) racks and kayak storage are now full. There are still a few surfski and OCI storages spaces available. Apply now if you want one. The application forms for boat storage are held at the reception desk. The new rate for SUP storage is \$300 per quarter.

## EMERALD BAY BOAT STORAGE



Thank you to all the members who have responded to the requests to identify the boats currently stored at Emerald Bay. Unfortunately there are still a number that have not been identified. This is to advise that any boats not identified and set-up on the direct debit payment system by 31 August 2013 will be considered abandoned and removed. The General Committee plans to replace the racks with new ones similar to those in use at Deep Water Bay and increase the capacity at Emerald Bay at the same time.



# Introducing the Hong Kong VRC Paddle Club

As you are probably aware, the Victoria Recreation Club's

shows that one of the major objectives of the club is 'To promote swimming, rowing and other sports and pastimes'. The Hong Kong Island Paddle Club, having paddled competitively from the VRC in Deep Water Bay since 1993, was delighted to continue this tradition by becoming a part of the Victoria Recreation Club in October 2011. The transition from being an independent club to merging with the VRC has been a lengthy and gradual



process, but we now have a new name: 'The Hong Kong VRC Paddle Club', plus a new logo and race kit designed around the pictures of the original VRC Polo crew who competed in the 1930's.



rich and distinctive history in Hong Kong is based around competitive sports – notably rowing, swimming and water polo. The club's original charter

These days, the VRC Paddle Club has almost 100 active members, around half of whom are also VRC members. We are financially self-sufficient, raising money from membership fees, corporate team-building workshops and sponsorships, to cover running costs, repairs and new equipment. While our main focus is Dragon Boat and Outrigger Canoe paddling, we also train and race on Surfskis and Prone Paddle Boards, and incorporate running, swimming and circuit work into our cross training programme. At the moment, we operate mainly out of the Deep Water Bay premises, but there are plans to expand to Emerald Bay later this year.

Our coach, Robert Kawai, holds numerous titles, including eight time World Outrigger Canoe Champion, two time Winner USA Canoe Champs, and multiple



NZ Surf Life Saving Title Holder. Under Rob's (frequently painful) coaching, the VRC Paddle Club continues to be the premier paddling club in the region, winning or placing in major Outrigger Canoe competitions in Hong Kong, Australia and Hawaii, and taking home two silver and three bronze trophies at the 2012 Dragon Boat Club Crew World Championships in 2012.

However, it's not only about our top race crews, we also welcome beginners and recreational paddlers to join our growing paddle section. With our growing fleet of three Dragon Boats, seven OC6's, six OC1's, three OC2's, six Paddle Boards, and several Surf Skis, we have more room than ever to

## Race Calendar

### August 31

Dolphin Quest (around Lantau Island)

### September 7

VRC Southside Challenge

### September 21-2

San Miguel Cup (Singapore)

### September 29

Lantau Classic

### October 13

Around Lamma

### October 19

Around Po Toi

### October 25-7

Micronesia Cup (Palau)

### November 10

Around the Island Race

### November 16

Dragon Run



accommodate new paddlers. Our paddling sessions are divided into three categories –

Rookie, Club, and Race Crew. Why not come and give it a try?

-- Adam Giles, Chairman, Hong Kong VRC Paddle Club

COME PADDLE WITH US!

**Beginner/Rookie Paddlers:** Wed 7:30pm, Sat 11:00am (contact Lyn Fox lynfox@hsbc.com.hk)

**Recreational/Club Paddlers:** Tue & Thu 7:30pm, Sat 8:00am (Contact Steve Stanton stephenw.stanton@gmail.com)

**Race Crew Training:** Tue, Wed, Thu 6:30am, Sat 8:00am (contact MEN – Jake Hamstra jakehamstra@yahoo.com; WOMEN – Laura Ediger laura.ediger@gmail.com)

DEEP WATER BAY: FIRST VRC SOUTHSIDE CHALLENGE

The VRC Paddle Club is very excited to be hosting our first distance OC race on Saturday, September 7. The Paddle Section, as IPC, used to host OC 500m sprints that paired with our well-established Deep Water Bay Dragon Boat Regatta in May (you guessed it, also 500m). About two years ago, the club didn't have the manpower to run this race and it

was passed across the bay to the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club to run. They have been doing a great job, but we are keen to get the VRC back on the Hong Kong outrigger race calendar. Enter the 1st Annual VRC Southside Challenge! It will be the first race on the local OC calendar so at about 15 km is the perfect start.

The race course will be Deep Water Bay to Murray House in Stanley, and back to Deep Water Bay around the back of Round

Island. Crews from all paddle clubs in Hong Kong will be invited and will be welcomed at the VRC for a BBQ and post-race awards. Come down to support the VRC race crews or join us for a drink at the BBQ. Stay tuned to the VRC Paddle Club's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/HongKongVRCpaddle](http://www.facebook.com/HongKongVRCpaddle) Club for more details!

LIFE OF PI: FAREWELL TO PATTY AND JAI

"Life of Pi" ....oops I mean "Patty" will be released in your cinemas soon. Steven Spielberg will be working on The Sequel "From the Bahamas with Love"!

I was fortunate to meet Patty back in 2001 at Deep Water Bay, of course, and in a dragon

boat with Dan and Katherine calling for deeper, harder, longer strokes. We were training for Penang. In those days, we were the rockets at the back of the boat inspired by all engine room and stroke crew... and were the most inexperienced of the crew!

When we finally arrived in Penang, we cried, hugged, paddled, came first in our races and then cried some more. Honestly it really hasn't changed very much since. There were tears in the 2013 International Dragon Boat Race! And I am sure there will be tears in early August when Patty finally leaves for the Bahamas.

Over the years we became not only paddling buddies but off the water buddies too. I was honoured to be asked to be one of her Sisters at her wedding. I was in charge of helping her buy the right underwear for her wedding dress. Honestly, shopping with Patty was so much easier than shopping with a particular French and Italian

JO JONES







lady! On the wedding day, she looked absolutely fabulous as you can see.

I was also in charge of getting the different vessels to the wedding boat. Thank God the captain of our junk could read nautical maps, otherwise we would still be sailing around Sai Kung.

We've been to quite a few VRC weddings together since then. Sadly we've also attended a funeral to say goodbye to our wonderful friend, So Mei. She will always be in our hearts and will never be forgotten, especially the day we spent in

her kitchen making 101 dumplings, and yes we ate them all! In those days you could without worry of putting on weight.

At Patty's 39<sup>th</sup> birthday party (only a couple of years back) at a lovely private kitchen she prepared a "Must Do List Before I'm 40". Knowing Patty, I'm pretty sure she's completed that list and perhaps even some activities last Saturday night!

Thank you both! There will be a huge gap in my life when you go! (*Julie Devine*: And don't forget Jai! He ran boot camp for a while).



DIRECTIONS TO ELEUTHERA: PATTY AND JAI'S NEW HOME IN THE BAHAMAS

The coach is already training the crew for the paddle over. It's only 9,088.6 Miles / 14,626.6 Kilometers / 7,892.5 Nautical Miles from Hong Kong to Bahamas. Alternatively you can fly to Nassau which is only 18 hours and 52 minutes.

EMERALD BAY WORKING BEE

On June 23, a group of more than thirty gathered at Emerald Bay in response to an appeal for support for a "Working Bee". It was a great success, and possibly the first of many such monthly sessions. The volunteers came not only from the members' ranks but also included a number of guests. The weather was a cause for concern with a heavy downpour at about noon, an hour ahead of the scheduled start time. As it had rained heavily the day before, and more heavy rain was forecast for Sunday, we all viewed the skies with great concern. But all the worry was for nought as we were blessed with clear skies and no hot sun to burn us all. The only rain thereafter was a very slight drizzle at the end of the BBQ.

This was a project of the Emerald Bay House Committee -- its inaugural project. The objective was to clear barnacles, stones, rocks and any other debris from the beach area, especially from the designated path into the water. Another objective was to use the rocks to fill in various sections to build up a path near the BBQ areas at the bottom of the steps from the clubhouse.

Without any great direction and co-ordination everyone drifted into one of three major groups --

NANA BARROS

group one built retaining walls to mark out the path and keep the rocks in place, group two dug out the rocks and filled the containers, and group three carried the rocks over to group one to be spread out. Throughout the afternoon volunteers moved between groups as the need arose. The whole exercise was a fine example of how we can all get together on a common project. All we need is a catalyst.

We mustn't forget the children. The very young ones thought the spades were the best tools they had ever used for digging holes in the sand while the older ones





worked enthusiastically in picking up stones and loading the baskets. They were a fine example of the overall community spirit displayed by all concerned. Many have asked when the next Working Bee will be held and the general opinion was the sooner the better.

Unfortunately not everyone could remain for the BBQ. The lucky ones had a good time. Once again the work was a community effort. One 'volunteered' to cook and we all put our various meat on a common BBQ and what was cooked was shared by all. Once again the young were at work. One BBQ was attended by the young ones and they cooked their own food.

In summary it was a successful day. We accomplished far more than expected, we learnt that we're prepared to get together and work for a common cause. We made many new friends, enjoyed a lovely BBQ and just had a good time.

Until the next Working Bee,  
*Nana Barros*



EMERALD BAY:  
MADELEINE'S GARDEN

In the Inaugural Issue of the VRC Newsletter, Gordon Loch wrote of the high-level work being done by Nick Pirie to



improve the grounds. The cynics might say that some work is expected of Nick as he's a member of the General Committee. I would like to highlight the work of a member, Madeleine Behan, who is not on the committee. Madeleine has been working tirelessly at cultivating and maintaining the flower bed (by the sea) and the little flower garden on the slope

next to the lawn regularly for the last six years (at no cost to the Club - it is her hobby). It is no small feat to keep this garden alive as it is exposed to the sea, the heat, the torrential rain and the cold depending on the season, among many other different enemies inherent in nature. Fortunately, the Behans have been able to battle the odds and now the garden is blooming. Some photos are attached to show how the garden has blossomed in different seasons over the last six years. There is also a photo of Madeleine attached, do stop her when you next meet her in the club and thank her for her efforts. A full set of photos is available at the bar at Emerald Bay.



Contributors

FRANK PFEIFFER



Frank has been Honorable Secretary of the VRC for over 20 years.

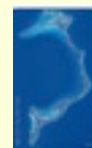
ADAM GILES, CORINNE PARKER, JO JONES, JULIE DEVINE, NANA BARROS



Our contributors – this time. Feel free to send us your

notes on club events and memories.

THE EDITOR



A long-time club member who prefers to remain anonymous.