

INTERNATIONAL BREAST CANCER PADDLERS' COMMISSION



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Looking Back While Moving Forward

By: Jane Frost, President, IBCPC
Vancouver, B.C. Canada



Jane Frost, President of International Breast Cancer Paddlers' Commission speaking at Canada House in London during a reception celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant.

2012 was a year filled with advancement for the IBCPC. We started with the announcement from the international judges that the 2014 IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival will be held in Sarasota, Florida, USA. Our hosts are two Florida teams Pink Dragon Ladies, Tampa Bay and Save Our Sisters, Miami. Sarasota is a charming seaside city that will surely greet us with much fanfare and even more fuchsia.

The biggest adventure was IBCPC's participation in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant on the Thames in June. Our paddling sisters from Lake Windermere in the Lake District in England loaned us 'Lucy at Low Wood' cheerfully decorated for the occasion. Our team, Internationally Abreast represented seven of our member countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States. Dr Don McKenzie, founder and coach of the first breast cancer dragon boat team from Vancouver Canada steered the fifteen joyful women under twenty bridges along the Thames, from Putney to Greenwich. As a member of that crew I explain we were on the water for six hours and it felt like six minutes!

A number of our teams have gone on some big adventures too. Teams have paddled in Hong Kong, where IBCPC representatives attended the International Dragon Boat Federation Annual General meeting as well as participating in the international competitions. Turkey, Ireland and Israel are other countries visited by our members. On the membership front our teams in Italy, Ireland, and Great Britain are making impressive strides in encouraging and supporting new teams.

One of my happiest personal experiences this year has been working on this newsletter. I am privileged to be working with a seasoned professional who volunteers her

time guiding me. She says she does it because she admires our energy, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial nature no matter what country. She sees us as crusaders who make an important contribution to the communities where we live and paddle. No small praise for all of us, I'd say.

I have now been President of the IBCPC for two years and am pleased to report that our Commission is strong and growing. We have established a good working relationship with the International Dragon Boat Federation of which we are a commission. We are also receiving many inquiries about starting new teams particularly in the United States and Europe. Asia continues to be a challenge.

Now I would like to ask you on an individual basis to give serious consideration to volunteering your time, energy and expertise to the IBCPC. In two years we shall be having a "changing of the guard" as elections will be held for most of the Steering Committee positions. In order to ensure a smooth transition we need to have more involvement from people like you. We need writers, editors, people who can track down stories for our newsletter or what about membership and mentoring new teams? There is lots to do. Two years is not that far way so please consider coming "on board" this important organisation. We welcome your participation.

As the breast cancer dragon boat movement grows internationally we are well positioned to raise awareness about this dreaded disease. The IBCPC was created to spread this message and as our influence grows so too does this unique opportunity. Together we are stronger, our voices are louder and the message is clearer.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2013 filled with adventure be it in your community or in a foreign land.

In this Issue

Building their own	2
The Perfect Gift	3
Festival Down Under	4
What's Your Opinion?	5
Dragons in Ireland	5
Meet Ireland's rep.	6
Coping with celebrations.	7
Join the big event	8
What's going on?	8

They're the Gals that Built the Boat

By: Suzanne Bodner,
Chestmates, Kingston, Canada

The women of the Avalon Dragons breast cancer dragon boat team have the art of boat-building deep in their bones. They hail from "The Rock" the island province of Newfoundland which sits in the Atlantic Ocean off the eastern coast of Canada where thousands upon thousands of their ancestors made their living fishing the ocean waters in their home-made boats.

Soon after they formed a team in early 2006, the Avalon Dragons enlisted master boat-builder and naval engineer Bruce Whitelaw to help them design and build their own wooden dragon boat from scratch. In an unused industrial arts classroom in a junior high school in St. John's, the capital city, safety glasses were donned, measurements were taken, hammers came out swinging, and power tools whirred as the women turned up four times a week to make their unique dream come true. It was an exciting adventure for all of them as they used their learned-on-the-job skills to become the first dragon boat team in North America to build their own boat! For many of the women getting "down and dirty" was a form of healing therapy along their breast cancer journey. Said team member Sylvia Flood at the time, "We're not thinking about our chronic illness. We're having fun, and we're experiencing another new challenge in our lives, and that's what life is all about. This boat is all about life beyond cancer!"

In May, 2007, the Avalon Dragons held a keel-laying ceremony where, in keeping with Maritime tradition, all members of the team, along with their boat-building naval mentor, proudly etched their names into the mahogany keel for posterity. And for good luck, two special-edition breast cancer ribbon coins, issued by the Royal Canadian Mint, were embedded in the keel.

Well-known Newfoundland artist Di Dabinett, herself a breast cancer survivor, agreed to design and carve a unique head and tail for the new boat. Team members helped her paint them in bright bold colours.

Over 500 people attended the official launch in September of 2007. Hearts soared with special pride as the women paddled their magnificent gleaming wooden dragon boat

out onto Octagon Pond in Paradise (a town just outside St. John's) where the team is based. For many of the crew, the building of the boat had been a labour of love for over a year and a half.

In 2009, the team was invited to a Boat Show in the outport community of Lewisporte. There, the "other" master boat-builders were in shock as their expert eyes examined the



Avalon Dragons' dragon boat. They praised the women for the beauty, the workmanship and the aerodynamic qualities of their boat from Paradise.

For the first two years, the team practised in their wooden boat and in a pink fibreglass one which was donated by one of their coaches and a local Chinese restaurant. Since then, as the team has grown in numbers, three other fibreglass practise boats have been donated to their fleet.

These days, the wooden boat is usually reserved for ceremonial and community events like the Santa Claus Parade and the CIBC Run for the Cure. This past summer, the team held its second local dragon boat festival, "Paddle in Paradise", and the magnificent wooden boat was the centrepiece of the Pink Carnation Ceremony. It was an extremely emotional moment for all team members – a vivid expression of both their strength and their vulnerability as breast cancer survivors.

Not only did the women of the Avalon Dragons build a boat, they built a team. Working together on a dream project for so many months, they forged strong friend-

ships and a deep respect for each other, which like their names etched in mahogany, will last forever.

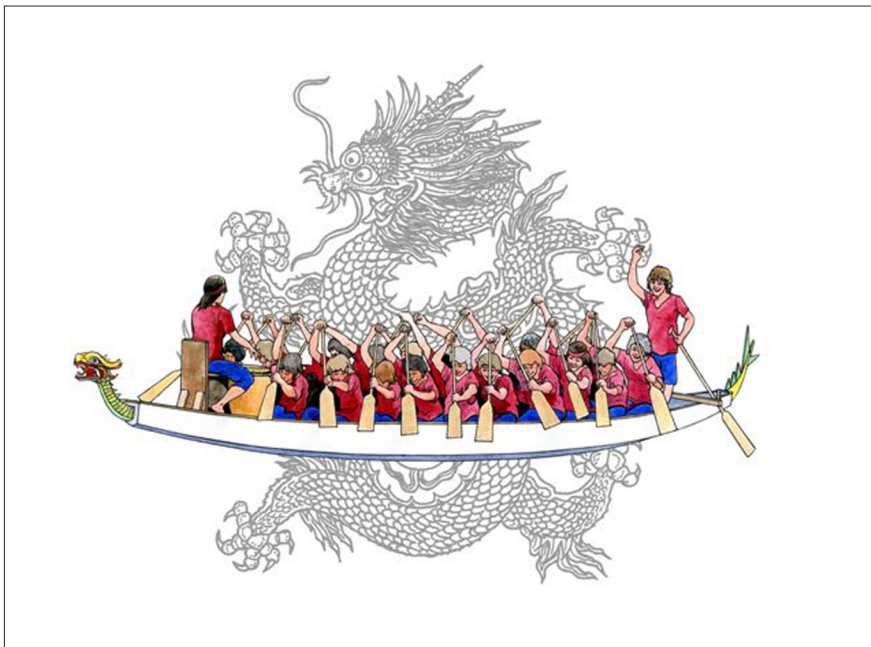
One of the goals of the current 60-member team is to grow dragon boating in Newfoundland and Labrador, both for breast cancer survivors and for the general public. They know first-hand the importance of fitness in decreasing the incidence of breast cancer and so many other illnesses. They have become cheerleaders and role models across the province.

The Avalon Dragons hope to expand their facilities and their festival so that one day they can invite national and international teams to compete on their waters.

Their team song, sung with a regional linguistic twist to the tune of a rousing traditional Newfoundland folk song, tells their story best. "We're the gals that built the boat and we're the gals that paddles her, we're the gals that showed the world, we're breast cancer survivors."

Thanks to Nancy Bennett, Avalon Dragons Communications Chair, for her help with the details of the story:

The perfect gift.



The first printing of the popular IBCPC dragon boat note cards have been sold. A second printing is in process. Those wishing to order packages of six for \$15 can do so by sending a money order or cheque to IBCPC, 6062 Macdonald Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6N 1E3.

The John Lyman Book Award has been granted to Gordon Miller the artist and author who generously created the image on the International Breast Cancer Paddlers' Commission note cards. The award was given in recognition of the excellence of his recently published book "Voyages to the New World and Beyond ". This award is presented annually by the North American Society of Oceanic History for a book that makes a significant contribution to the study and understanding of maritime and naval history in North America.

Gordon Miller (gordon_miller.ca) who lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, also has twenty-two pages of his art work from "Voyages" published in the spring 2012 edition of "Queen's Quarterly". This scholarly journal is published by Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Festival Down Under

By: Jo Parry, Dragons Abreast
Brisbane, Australia

Beautiful Cockle Bay, Sydney was the setting October 27th for the Dragons Abreast Festival, a national event to raise funds in support of Dragons Abreast programs by inviting corporate and social dragon boat teams to compete while raising awareness of breast cancer and the benefits of paddling. Spectators and participants alike can see that those living with breast cancer regain full, fun and active lives after their diagnosis and treatment.

The racing was not just on the water. Another race was underway leading up to the event for the highest fundraisers. Dedicated members of Dragons Abreast were each allocated corporate teams to ensure they were informed and ready for the challenge ahead. These partnerships provided a personal face for the corporate teams of the benefits that Dragons Abreast has brought to the survivors and will offer those who will join in the future.

The World Fire Fighters Games were on in Sydney at the same time. Great timing – they heard about Dragons Abreast Festival and were keen to join in the fun. They entered a number of teams including Team France who dressed up as you can see in the photo.

Cockle Bay grew quiet during the Flowers on the Water™ ceremony. Eleven boats rafted together with breast cancer survivors and supporters for a ceremony that is always moving for those involved as well as for spectators on the shore.

A highlight of the racing day is the annual Hospital Challenge. Healthcare workers – doctors, nurses, radiologists, etc, raced and were given very warm thanks with a paddle of honour from the survivors after completing their final. The Hospital Challenge gives breast cancer survivors a chance to ‘thank and appreciate’ the care provided by these healthcare workers during their treatment.

Corporate and social teams had a ball, and many will return next year. Congratulations to Dragons Abreast for again organising a fabulous festival.



Dragons Abreast Australia holds their annual regatta in Sydney Harbour and the event attracts both corporate and community teams, many of whom get into the spirit of the occasion. These women are members of a corporate team that chose a french fuchsia theme for their uniforms and yes they did paddle in these outfits.

Hereditry Gene Carriers

By: Louisa Balderson, Paddlers for Life
Lake Windermere, United Kingdom

Paddlers for Life UK coordinated a recent network meeting bringing together breast cancer dragon boat paddling crews from across the country. The national leading breast cancer support charity, Breast Cancer Care generously provided facilities at their Central London national and regional office.

Diana Jupp, Director of Services spoke about the latest services provided free by Breast Cancer Care. It was an opportunity to reminisce about the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant (Hello, to International Abreast) and participation in the Olympic Torch Relay. Making the most of Diana's knowledge and experience, the discussion and debate reached out to the provision of services, notably dragon boat paddling, to women affected as hereditary gene carriers (BRAC1, BRAC2 and TP53)... a first in the UK!

Reactions of the pink paddlers were varied; some were aware of existing team members with a family history

which became known following diagnosis, while others were new to the issues faced by those affected to prevent diagnosis. The question was asked 'should women undertaking risk reducing surgery to prevent a diagnosis of breast cancer join the teams of breast cancer dragon boat paddlers?' Our review of the preventative benefits was unanimous; equality, participation and inclusiveness was highlighted; the jury is out across the United Kingdom while breast cancer dragon boat paddlers explore the different views around the world.

Now our sights are set on supporting the development of a novice breast cancer crew in the London area. Our goal is to have a London based team paddle in the IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival in Sarasota, Florida in October 2014. A small group of women have already come together and so the vision begins to become a reality.

A great weekend...until we meet again in Manchester in March 2013

Introducing Dragons to Ireland

By: Susan Rowe,
Dublin, Ireland

More than 250 school students from nine Dublin schools were introduced to the sport of dragon boating between March and June 2012 through the initiative of Plurabelle Paddlers Schools' Pilot Project supported by the Health Promotion Unit of the Health Service Executive in Dublin. Twelve volunteers from the Plurabelle team helped train the students.

There were two purposes to the project: to emphasise the importance of physical activity and participation in sport to live a healthy life and to introduce the sport of dragon boating to those who would not have seen it before. The sport is in its infancy in Ireland.

The students really enjoyed the fact their whole class and their teachers could take part and everyone showed great enthusiasm and effort. Feedback from the students, supervising teachers and the Plurabelle Paddler volunteers was universally positive. We got the groups out in all weathers which is normal for Ireland!

Our big bonus was the message our activities gave to the students. They were well aware some of the volunteers were women who had been treated for breast cancer so they left with an understanding that being physically active is beneficial at any stage in life. Five of the schools participated in our regatta in September and the infectious enthusiasm of the participating teenagers added an extra spark to the event.

We are considering ways to continue involvement with the schools. We now know the level of volunteering really stretched us and it is not something we could sustain. We will work directly with the three schools closest to the Grand Canal Dock, where we paddle, and are looking to the Irish Dragon Boat Federation and a local water sports club to take the project to the next level.

Meet Susan Rowe, the IBCPC National Representative from Ireland



As new teams join the IBCPC, the Steering Committee is working with these teams to appoint a representative who will liaise between the country's team and the IBCPC. Being active in their respective communities these individuals will ensure there are good communication channels to and from the IBCPC.

Susan Rowe was diagnosed with breast cancer at age thirty-five. Not on her life plan but coming through it all Susan believes she is a stronger person. She always participated in sports and was happy to find a new one and, in so doing, have the bonus of the support and encouragement of fellow breast cancer paddlers.

Susan started paddling in Dublin in 2010 with, not only the first breast cancer dragon boat team in Ireland, but also the first dragon boat club in the country. Her team, Plurabelle Paddlers has about sixty paddlers with new members constantly joining. Susan feels privileged to be part of a fantastic group of women who choose to live positive and healthy lives. They also have a lot of fun!

In 2011 the Plurabelle Paddlers participated in the International Dragon Boat Federation's first Cancer Survivors Event in Malaysia and in 2012 they took part in the European Dragon Boat Championships in Nottingham. They were pleased to receive medals in both competitions - not bad for a team which is only cutting its teeth in the sport.

Susan also represented the Plurabelle Paddlers on the Internationally Abreast team which took part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Thames River Pageant in June and looks forward to catching up with everyone again in Sarasota in 2014.

Susan works in Finance/Information Technology. She enjoys spending time with her friends, cooking, and watching most sports, particularly rugby. She also loves to travel with Italy being her current favourite destination of choice."



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Living with Cancer During Holidays and Celebrations

By: Carole Keys

Living with cancer or not, holidays and celebrations can be stressful. Every nation and religion celebrates holidays at various times in the year.

Living with cancer is very stressful for families and the stress can be increased by holidays and celebrations. For those living with cancer-related fatigue, whether currently in treatment or having finished treatment, the expectations for the holiday seasons can become overwhelming.

The keys to a less stressful holiday are to “act” rather than “react” and to communicate and negotiate with family and friends.

Write down your holiday goals. Prioritize these goals. Decide what is truly important to you and your family and change or eliminate what is not. Honesty and communication are vital between those living with cancer and their loved ones. I suggest a family meeting to discuss which traditions are important to each of you and how these can be accomplished.

Be realistic. As families change and grow and health issues challenge you, traditions often change as well. Work on creating new rituals and traditions.

Relax expectations of yourself and others. So the table is not set the way you have always set it, ask yourself, does this really matter?

Learn to say “No”. Say “Yes” only to those projects or activities you want to do and you’ll avoid feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Be careful of “shoulds”. It is better to do what feels best for you and your family, not what others think you should do.

Make no apologies. If you need to miss or retire from a gathering with noisy grandchildren, a staff party, or the neighbourhood annual get together do so without regret or an elaborate explanation. “I don’t feel up to it today” should suffice.

Let others help you. Do not be a martyr. Delegate tasks and errands to others.

- Enlist help to clean the house, decorate, grocery shop
- Let bakeries do your baking

- Often relatives and friends are complimented when you ask them to make a special dish that your families use to celebrate: latkes, strudel, loukmades, massalam almond dukkah, plum pudding, chestnut soup, a favourite birthday cake, etc.

- Conserve energy by not shopping in the malls; shop online, give gift certificates or allow a friend or relative to become your personal shopper.

Make time for yourself. Treat yourself as you would your best friend. Do something self-indulgent: a massage, bubble bath, meditate, enjoy music whatever gives you pleasure and helps you to relax.

Get as much sleep and exercise as you are able: going for a walk with friends and family is a wonderful way to get exercise and visit with those you love. Spend time with the joyful people in your life.

Let the focus of the holiday season be about being together with those for whom you care. Cancer can give you permission to do things differently. Let the season flow.

Expect strong emotions on holidays. Let every holiday be a celebration of your life and what you have in your life!



Carole enjoys being a trainer with Willow Breast Cancer Toronto, Canada. In this role, she travels across Canada meeting current and future facilitators of breast cancer support groups. She offers peer support for people and their families who have had a cancer diagnosis and facilitates several support groups at Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre in Oshawa, Ontario. Carole and her husband like to travel; particularly to visit their daughters who live in Manitoaba, California and Japan.

The 2014 IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival – Sarasota, USA

By: Liz O'Connell, Pink Dragon Ladies, Tampa, FL



The next IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival will be held in Sarasota, Florida, USA from October 24 to 26, 2014. Building on the traditions established in Vancouver, Canada (2005), Caloundra, Australia (2007) and Peterborough, Canada (2010), the 2014 IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival will be a global event with a local touch. Halfway between Tampa and Miami, Sarasota is the ideal location for the 2014 Festival – offering an intimate small town feeling AND a spacious venue for racing, workshops, skill training, social interaction and celebration. Sarasota offers a wide range of amenities on a manageable scale - served with a generous helping of Southern Hospitality!


The host teams are putting finishing touches on arrangements. Our logo was carefully designed to symbolize what we are all about. The palm tree represents Florida and the Gulf Coast, the pink ribbons form a globe to signify the international movement breast cancer dragon boat paddling has become and the waves represent our beaches and waters where we paddle together.


The Festival's website will be launched in February 2013. There you will find details about registration fees, hotels, transportation, Festival activities, and local attractions. On-line registration will be available through the website, and you can follow the ramp-up to Sarasota 2014 on our Facebook Page!

An e-mail notification will be sent to all IBCPC registered teams to announce the launch of the website and the deadline for "early bird" registration. Teams wanting to register must be members of the IBCPC. Make sure your team is a member so you can participate and have the time of your life! Check it out at www.ibcpc.com.

What in the World is Going On?

 **May 9 & 10, 2013 Sea of Galilee, Israel**
The second dragon boat festival in Israel will take place this weekend.
www.dragonboatisrael.com

 **May 11 & 12, 2013 Rome, Italy**
Come to Rome and celebrate Pink Butterfly's Ten years of paddling.
Watch this space for more details soon.

 **May 18 & 19, 2013 Venice, Italy**
Forza Rosa event and Venice's famous Vogalonga.
Watch this space for more details soon.

 **May 25 & 26, 2013 Florence, Italy**
Dragon Boat Pink Meeting the third annual event being held the week after Venice's Vogalonga www.florencedragonlady.it

 **July 24-28, 2013 Szeged, Hungary**
11th International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) World National Championships www.idbf.com

 **October 24-26, 2014, Sarasota, Florida, USA**
IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival
www.teamsosmiami.com

Please check your government's travel advisory policy before making your commitments. Teams may submit event information through our website. Visit www.ibcpc.com and click on the newsletter icon.