

# Diary of a Novice Paddler 2009

## #1 – A Novice Experience by Bonnie Rossander, a paddler with the Deas Divas



While grocery shopping at Safeway, I was intrigued with a raffle and stopped to chat with the volunteer (whom I later learned was this year's President of Abreast In A Boat). Although I didn't win the raffle, Jane Mann called me to see if I would be interested in learning more about the organization by attending a Novice meeting to be held at the VanDusen Gardens. While carpooling in with two other Novices from my area, we all agreed that this was simply a fact-finding mission. Well ½ an hour into the meeting, we all said, "I'm in". The enthusiasm and camaraderie generated by the members convinced the three of us that we definitely wanted to give it a go for this year.

The next event was a pre-season work-out session with a personal trainer which was very worthwhile since it was geared to the strength movements required in paddling. Again the support from the members was very welcoming.

As we were to learn, socializing is as much a part of Abreast In A Boat as the actual paddling and "true to form" there was again a pre-season social to get to know the other crew members and discuss the schedule for the upcoming season. Laughing, giggling and a lot of funny experiences were shared and enjoyed.

Since we have all been working out religiously to prepare ourselves for the season, a Spring Tune-up session was held at BCIT to reinforce the importance of warming-up, building the core, and stretching. Of course, nothing concerning ladies is ever without food, so snacks were provided upon our arrival for the 4 hour work-out session. Three guest professionals were present to ensure the exercises were done correctly and what a work-out it was. I now feel ready for the challenges ahead and am eager to experience my first time paddling.....will keep you informed of my progress!

## #2 – A Novice Experience by Bonnie Rossander

As the season has progressed, so have our paddling abilities. Under the tutelage of Patricia, we are finally getting it! If we could just remember "it" all at the same time; bury your paddle, rotate your hips, lean over the boat, watch your timing! It has been a challenge and every practice, we seem to be improving and building on endurance and stamina.

Our first regatta experience at Deep Cove was quite the learning experience. Of course we didn't know what to expect and when we lined up for the first race and viewed our opponents, my gosh could they have found any bigger or burlier fellows for us to race against? However, we quickly found our "slot" and the day progressed. After the final race where we took second spot while being beaten by one quarter of a second; we were flying

all the way home. Quite an achievement and the coaches were delighted with the crew's performance. It was a great day and when I got home just had enough energy to raise my wine glass!

Practices continue to be filled with fun, camaraderie and a real sense of accomplishment as we build towards the regatta at False Creek. On a personal note, I have been injury free the whole time and really feel the exercises prior to boarding the boat, breaks during paddling and cool-downs have kept me this way. Thank you Patricia.



### **#3 – A Novice Experience by Bonnie Rossander**

We have been working very hard in preparation for the False Creek Women's Regatta and, I must, say with a little trepidation on my part.....gosh a 500 metre race is a long ways in comparison to the Dash at Deep Cove. However, our coaches have been focusing on our endurance and we "seem" to be getting stronger and making progress. Each week we have a different focus and I have a whole new vocabulary;

- Lean on the paddle;
- Catch the water;
- Rotate;
- Dig;
- Backs push now, and of course
- Pink power now!

All this focus from the coaches has been administered with a great deal of humour and fun.....sometimes my sides hurt from laughing rather than “rotating”. As I have gotten to know my paddling friends over glasses of wine following practices, they truly are amazing women and in every sense true “Divas”.

We were thrilled with our finish during the Breast Cancer Challenge race at False Creek.....to finish in the middle of the pack with so many novice paddlers was a real accomplishment! I am so proud to be a “Diva from Deas “.