

A History of the Outdoor Club of Victoria, 1992 - 2012

by Eric Burkle, BA Hons., MA



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Prepared for the club's 70th anniversary, held at Uplands Golf Course, Victoria, on March 3, 2012.

Preface

It was with some trepidation that I accepted the request to research the OCV's history for a short presentation at the club's 70th anniversary in March 2012. On the one hand I looked forward to the work as I would be able to trace back many shared activities and fond memories. On the other hand I sensed it would be a lot of work to review all the material. It was even more than I feared.

A previous major effort to retrace history was the club's 90-page booklet on the occasion of its 50th anniversary in 1992. This effort was coordinated by a committee of seven people and some 25 others who contributed. The club is in no position to repeat such extensive work. This history, being one man's work, is a more modest effort. Rather than writing a chronological piece that would recount year-by-year what went on, I have followed the style of the 50th anniversary booklet with shorter pieces around specific topics in the hope of giving the reader an understanding of how the club has evolved during these last 20 years.

Much of my university education included academic training in history. And while this is not meant to be an academic research paper, I tried to be equally rigorous in my approach, relying on original club documents and sifting through dusty files and binders. We cannot just rely on memory for this type of history as memory is not a digital camera or a personal computer. Our memory constantly reconstructs, forgets, reshapes itself. There is no instant and precise recall as with a computer. As someone once said: When I was younger, I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not.

The length of this paper was not intended. Although some gaps were found, all available club records were studied and extensive notes kept. It would then have been a shame to use the material just for a short summary, for it is not likely someone else will do such research again in the foreseeable future. However, only a portion of the notes taken were included below to keep the history short enough for the general reader but also detailed enough for future reference.

Overview

For those who have been with the club for a long time, the last two decades have been an amazing ride. We entered the digital age and the new millennium with our first website,

gained new members and lost familiar faces. The program of hikes has expanded from just two hikes on Sundays to mostly three or four spread over the weekend, plus hikes during the week. Almost 90 outings and campouts have taken place, at times stretching our resources, particularly our dwindling number of hike leaders, but taking members to beautiful and fascinating places in the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountains as well as places closer to home. It would not be unreasonable to argue that the club has perhaps had as many hikes in the last two decades as it had in the previous five, for until 1991 the club offered two or fewer hikes on weekends, and in the early years there was not even a hike every weekend.

We had our highest membership numbers ever in the 1990s, but have since been faced with decreasing numbers and a higher age profile than ever before in the club. But these numbers tell only part of the story as the club has been able to maintain an extensive program of hikes and events. However, fewer active hikers and volunteers can lead to organizational stress if the club is perhaps trying to do too much. For example, in 1992, there were 156 hikes for a membership of 286. In 2010, there were 268 hikes for 165 members, a 72 percent increase in hikes with a 42 percent decrease in membership. It should not surprise when there is sometimes a shortage of volunteers. The reader will have to determine whether this level of activity is sustainable given our aging membership and shrinking base. The fact cannot be ignored that there are challenges facing the club and that they are deeper than just the attendance numbers at the next social event. On the other hand, there is no need to despair because we also have strong assets.

Many reforms have been tried over the years and changes made. Indeed it is a constant challenge for the club's Executive, as it is for most organizations, to keep the club relevant to its members in this fast-changing world. The ties that bind, a love of physical exercise and the beauty of the outdoors, have kept the club strong throughout this time and will guide us into our future.

Celebrating our club anniversaries

The Outdoor Club, the third oldest hiking club on Vancouver Island, celebrated its 50th anniversary, a major event in the life of any organization, on the May 15-18, 1992 long weekend. It was a splendid four-day event at Camp Thunderbird at Glintz Lake, organized by long-time Special Events Coordinator Ann Field. Many of us stayed in the rustic bunkhouses on site, while others came for a day or the banquet only, or to join the A and B-hikes led by the Lenos. Others went canoeing or had a swim. The *Times-Colonist* newspaper featured a lengthy article with a photo about the anniversary.

The lasting legacy of the event was the 50th anniversary 'booklet', 90 pages in length, so 'booklet' is somewhat of a misnomer, which ably summarizes the club's first 50 years with a series of short articles on a wide variety of topics related to the club and sketches by our longtime illustrator, Judy Trousdell. As with everything in the club, sales were initially a bit

sluggish – less than 70 copies had been spoken for by April - so 100 copies were printed and sold for \$8 a piece. It is a lasting legacy of the club's first 50 years.

The club's 60th anniversary celebration was planned as a campout on the May long weekend in 2002 at Skutz Falls on the Cowichan River. However, a lack of committed participants forced the cancellation. As it happened, it was a very wet weekend.

The 65th anniversary covered events over three days from May 16-18, 2007, and included a wine and cheese party, a chili supper, a luncheon at Gorge Vale Golf Club, hiking on two days, and a total number of 171 participants during the weekend, including about half of them former members. Hospitality arrangements were made by Ann Field and a committee of volunteers.

The 70th anniversary was held on March 3, 2012 at Uplands Golf Course in Victoria, a last-minute scheduling change because of the closure of the Cedar Hill Golf Course restaurant. The program and buffet lunch were coordinated by Mary Hof, and the event was combined with the Annual General Meeting, election of officers, awards presentations to deserving volunteers, and presentation of the 70th anniversary plaque to be installed at Goldstream Park later in the spring. Some 93 people attended this successful event, including many former members, some from as far away as Alberta. An article and photo about our anniversary appeared in several editions of the *News*, a free local newspaper.

Hikes, outings, campouts and trips

The bread and butter of the club has been day hikes in semi-wilderness areas within an hour's drive from Victoria. Until 1991, there were still only two hikes per week, always on Sundays. In early 1992, regular Saturday hikes were introduced, on alternate Saturdays to start with. There was some controversy initially in going to two days of hiking on the weekend as some members felt the "social aspect of hiking" on Sunday would be diluted by Saturday hikes. Most were A and B-hikes, but a limited number of C and D-hikes (each letter represents a 1,000ft elevation gain) continued to be offered, particularly in the summer or during the campouts. Three hikes per weekend quickly became pretty standard year-round until four hikes were offered starting in 1998, although not necessarily on a year-round basis. The club offers a similar number and mix of hikes to this day.

In addition to the weekend hikes, Tuesday or mid-week exploratory hikes and work parties have been held with varying regularity from the early 1990s until 2006, less frequently so in the latter years. At various times these were led by Stan Buxcey, Denise Kendall, Den Elton, Grahame Ruxton and Loretta Foley. Others led periodic work parties for specific hikes or areas, such as Angie Rossiter for Sombrio until the 1990s, and Bob Spearing at Goldstream Park until the club was told to stop in 2004. (In 2011, the club celebrated the BC Parks Centennial at Goldstream with hikes and a wiener roast.)

Regular Tuesday hikes, in conjunction with Club Tread, started in 2009, and on a similar basis Thursday afternoon hikes commenced in the fall, 2011. Participation by OCV members, though, is light on these hikes. Interest in weekend hikes north of the Malahat has decreased significantly over the last two decades compared to earlier periods. There are still a few hikes every year in that area, some in combination with a Duncan area hiking group, but participation from Victoria is generally light.

The number of hikes the OCV has offered has ranged from about 200 to almost 270 annually during the last decade, a very ambitious program, even if it does include the campouts and outings. However, the club did offer a more modest program when its membership numbers were higher, this is partly the reason for the much smaller number of people on hikes, which has decreased from around 15 for the average hike in the mid 1990s to only six people in 2010 and just under seven in 2011.

The OCV members have always been an adventure-seeking bunch. The biggest hiking event has usually been the annual summer campout, generally held from late July to early August. In earlier years these tended to be of two-week duration; more recently 8 to 12 days. For some decades, the practice has been to have the campout one year within a day's drive of Victoria and the next to within a two-day's drive. Naturally, our focus is on the Pacific Northwest broadly speaking, the outer perimeter being roughly from Jasper to Kananaskis in Alberta, to Glacier Park National Park in Montana and Central Oregon. Places closer to home have included Whistler, Strathcona Park, Olympic National Park, etc.

The number of outings, that is shorter multi-day trips within a couple of hours drive of Victoria, has been significant these past 20 years, with approximately 70 such events. In the 1990s, there were some years with five outings, and one year even with six, in addition to the summer camp. During the last decade the number has generally been between two and four outings per year. Recent examples include Orcas Island, Salt Spring Island, Port Alberni. A complete listing of these, going back to 1988, is being maintained by Shirley Traviss who also ensures that upcoming hikes are listed in the local newspaper.

Increasingly during the last decade, and particularly in the later years, the majority of the campout and outings participants have stayed in cabins or nearby motels. The traditional names for the events have been kept. A few hardy souls still tent, others use a van or camper. The enjoyment and fellowship is still the same, however.

Some of the club's activities involved extended trips to more distant places; one of the earliest was a three-week trip in the spring of 1992 organized by Mary Golding and Stan Buxcey to Death Valley, Tucson and Palm Springs. The unique feature was that the group had chartered a bus in Victoria that took them to these locations. A llama trip in eastern Oregon was organized in late summer, 1992. In 2000, Grahame Ruxton led a trip to the Desert National Parks in the American Southwest.

Other trips that were advertised to club members include the June/July 2001 trip organized by Mick Phillips for two weeks of hiking in the Austrian Alps and one week in the Dolomites. This was followed the next year by one week in Austria and two weeks in Slovakia, also organized by Mick. In 2004, a group went to Portugal and Madeira. Small groups of club members climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in 1992 and 2002, or other major peaks in connection with a summer campout. Participants obviously had to meet certain fitness levels. Another trip to Tucson was organized by Mary Hof in the fall of 2010, a precursor to her club trip to Kauai in early 2012 for two weeks.

It should be noted that the author selected the above trips based on whether they were advertised in the Groundsheet or announced at the meetings and open to club members. Several 'private' trips, at least 'private' in the eyes of some people, were organized by club members but are too numerous to mention here and are outside our scope.

For some 15 years the club had an extensive exchange with the Klahhane hikers in Port Angeles and Sequim, Washington. We would visit them for a weekend of hikes in June and they would usually come here in the fall. The exchanges were coordinated by Ann Field and a dinner was held in the recreation room of her condo building. The exchange lasted from 1985 to 2000. Eventually there was decreasing interest by our club, but many were sad to see it discontinued.

In the course of its history, the club has had a number of unique traditions in relation to some of its weekend hikes. From 1994 to 2001, there was an annual holly hike in December to Mt. Blinkhorn and lunch with soup and cookies at the Kendalls, followed by as much holly as we could pick from their farm in Metchosin. Another December tradition through much of the 1990s and until the early 2000s, was the Mt. Tolmie to Mystic Vale hike which would end with soup at Ann Field's condo.

The Boxing Day hike in Mount Douglas Park has been a long-standing club tradition. As long as anyone can remember, the club has had the annual hike to Mt. Finlayson on New Year's day, usually led by the President, and at times even referred to as the President's hike or President's special, with a potluck social to follow that evening. The hike was discontinued a few years ago due to lack of interest, but revived again in 2012. The Boxing Day hike at Mt. Doug and New Year's hike to Mt. Finlayson are the two longest-running traditional hikes in the club.

A more recent tradition is the A-hike on New Year's day to Christmas Hill, followed by lunch at Tim Hortons; a December hike along the Esquimalt waterfront with lunch at Spinnakers; and for the last decade, a January walk over the Selkirk Trestle to Chinatown and lunch. Many other hikes have become regular features in the club schedule but they are too numerous to recount here.

An annual multi-day ski and snowshoe outing to Mount Washington was initiated by

Loretta Foley in 2009 after similar organized ski outings were discontinued in the early 1980s. A couple of day-long ski trips at Mount Washington were scheduled in 1993, and several private initiatives had continued in subsequent years.

The Outings Committee, and above all the Outings Chair, along with the many hike leaders over the years and decades must be thanked for their work and dedication.

List of Outings Chairs, 1992 – 2012

Outings Chair	Year	Outings Chair	Year
Dave Savory	1990 - 1992	Shirley Traviss	2002 - 2004
Rob Wilson	1992 - 1994	Grahame Ruxton	2004 - 2006
Dirk Maasland	1994 - 1996	Katherine Black	2006 - 2008
Denise Kendall	1996 – 1998	Shirley Traviss	2008 - 2010
Grahame Ruxton	1998 – 2000	Vacant	2010 - 2012
Mick Phillips	2000 - 2002	Noelle Clark	2012
Peter Smith	2002		

Note: During 2010-2012, Vice President, Katherine Black, and Past President, Marlene Harper, jointly acted as Outings Chair in the absence of a permanent Chair.

Let's have a summer picnic

Traditionally, the club has had an annual picnic. Until the late 1990s it was held in June, on the evening where the monthly business meeting would have fallen, generally the first Wednesday of the month (prior to the fall, 1992, it was on the second Wednesday). There were no business meetings in July and August because of the campout and people being busy with other pursuits. Those June picnics were usually held in a local park in the evening after 5pm to allow people to get home from work, and they could include a walk, some games or even a tour given the long daylight so close to summer solstice. For example, in 1989 the picnic was at Beaver Lake and in 1990 at Royal Roads.

From 1992 to 1996, the picnics were held at the Lenos' house at Teanook Lake on Millstream Road, initially on the Wednesday evenings as noted above, but the later ones were moved to the weekend and included regular A and B-hikes. Some readers may think that we have been to Dr. Joyce Clearihue's cottage, Summer Trees at Patricia Bay, forever. Almost, but not quite. The very first club picnics were held there in 1986 and 1991, still on Wednesday evenings. Since 1997, our picnics have always been at Summer Trees but they were moved to a weekend in July or August to take advantage of the warmer water for swimming. An A-hike takes place and in recent years also a bike trip, with refreshments and treats provided at the cottage in the afternoon. Until three years ago the hike was led by Joyce herself; since then the author has assumed this task.

Where shall we meet?

Newer members may think that the meeting place for hikes has forever been at Saanich municipal hall. It seems that no place is guaranteed forever. In fact, for many years, the meeting place for our hikes was on Herald Street, across the street from the then Bay department store. In 1992, the new Saturday hikes had their meeting place moved to the north end of the Town and Country shopping centre parking lot (now Uptown) because of meter parking on Herald Street. In 1994, the meeting place for the Saturday hikes was moved to Saanich municipal hall.

In 1996, another change was made by moving Sunday B-hikes to meet at Saanich city hall because of the better parking and the more central location. Sunday A-hikes continued to meet on Herald Street until 2001 when Saanich municipal hall became our official meeting place for all weekend hikes. Hikes during the week have met at various locations. In recent years it has also become more common to meet at the actual starting point for some of the more urban hikes, otherwise car-pooling from SMH is still common. The gas that powers our cars to get us to our hikes has gone from just under 50 cents a liter in January 1992 to \$1.15 in January 2012, and \$1.26 in March, and members share the cost.

Meeting places for club business meetings have changed several times during the last two decades. St. Mathias Church at Richmond and Richardson had been our home in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1991 we moved to the 800 RCAF Wing at 105 Wilson St. (since torn down), and to First United Church at 932 Balmoral St. in 1994. Since the early 2000s, we have also been using the Burnside Lawn Bowling Club at 274 Hampton Road for some of the business meetings and social gatherings at Christmas and New Year's.

The rhythm of meetings and social events had been well established for many years, but by the 1990s, there were increasing voices that the eight monthly business meetings were too long, too serious, and people wanted more social fellowship. Each Executive member would give short reports at these meetings and the membership was given an opportunity to discuss and vote on a variety of issues that required their input. The business part of the meeting would be followed by a 'mixer' with refreshments. The second half of the evening was given over to a slide show of a club outing or other trip, or sometimes to an outside speaker. Annual general meetings were usually held in February and an annual banquet with awards presentation in March. In some rare cases the two were combined. Many of these would include a special narrated slide show of the summer camp or the year of hiking in review.

As attendance at meetings decreased, sometime barely reaching a quorum, the number of meetings was gradually decreased as well, starting in the early 2000s. In recent years, the only business meetings were held in October and February, with the latter being the Annual General Meeting.

Except for 2002/03 when there were no Christmas and New Year's parties, the club has been holding these special events for decades, although the formats and locations have varied. For much of the 1990s, there was a New Year's day social at Ann Field's condo recreation room; in recent years it has been a potluck dinner at the Burnside Lawn Bowling Club.

For many years, all social functions were financed by member donations separate from annual dues. It was a challenge to convince some club members, but during Richard Keltie's presidency, the social committee was integrated with the rest of the club's finances. Recent years have seen a small charge for hall rent for the Christmas and New Year's events.

To revive interest in social events, in the last couple of years the club also experimented with a pizza and awards night in May in lieu of the annual banquet, and the October business meeting was held as a lunch. Initiated by Mary Hof, these events have been well attended.

In 2000, Daphne Dunbar introduced monthly lunches which were held at different restaurants from the fall to spring, approximately seven or eight times a year, to give those members who could no longer hike an opportunity to meet and enjoy each others company. The tradition has been continued by Marion Edworthy as coordinator. Generally fewer than ten people take advantage of this opportunity on a regular basis which is surprising given the large number of inactive and former members.

Demography is destiny

Demography is the study of statistics which illustrate the changing compositions of groups or populations. It has been said that demography explains two-thirds of everything. There is also the well-known phrase that demography is destiny. So let's go back over the last 20 years to explore how the club has evolved demographically speaking.

The 50th anniversary booklet reported that in the club's early years, and through to the late 1970s and early 1980s, children were a common sight on club outings. This had most certainly ended before the 1990s. Only the occasional grandchild can now be seen on some rare occasion. As well, under the heading "Romance in the Outdoor Club", the booklet highlighted 16 couples who had found themselves through the club up to 1992. Only two such couples can be identified in the last 20 years: Joyce and Stan Buxcey and Richard Keltie and Kayla Stevenson. Will there be any in the future?

In December 2011, the club had 154 members. This includes 10 lifetime members and 14 social members. Only one third are male, two thirds are female, a virtually identical gender breakdown as in 1992. Two thirds of the current members joined the club during

the 1990s and 2000s, one third joined before 1990. It is easy to see that the club has kept a core of longtime members, although there are currently only four still-active hikers who joined before 1980: Bob and Janice Spearing, Alan Warren and Eric Burkle. Seventeen people, or 11 percent of members, live north of the Malahat. One lives in Sooke and a couple on the BC Mainland or overseas. There are also 24 family memberships (couples).

What may surprise is that there are 66 people who joined in the 2000s, despite declining overall numbers. It is hoped they will remain with the club for as long as some of the oldtimers.

Summary of when members joined, as of December 2011

Joined prior to 1980	39 people	25.30%
Joined in the 1980s	13	8.40%
Joined in the 1990s	36	23.40%
Joined in the 2000s	66	42.90%
Total	154	100.00%

Note: Records of when members joined had been kept by the Treasurer (including the author) on little index cards at least until the early 1980s and were reassembled by Mary Hof starting in 2009 and published in the Groundsheet.

What about our total membership numbers over time? In the 1950s, the club had just over 100 members. By the late 1960s or certainly by 1970, the 50th anniversary booklet is slightly inconsistent on this, membership had increased enough to have scheduled hikes every Sunday, and in the summer sometimes two. Members were usually young, in their thirties and forties. The OCV entered the 1970s with 133 members. By the start of the 1980s, there were 225 members, 283 in 1989 and 256 at the end of the decade. Throughout all these periods there were up years and down years, but the overall trend was of growth.

The late 1980s to mid 1990s marked the club's greatest expansion and quite possibly its golden age. There was a significant influx of early and fit retirees who infused the club with new energy. But even the 1990s saw considerable fluctuations, from 286 members in 1992, to 262 members in 1997, down to 203 in 1999.

The decade after the millennium started out with a membership of 236, but fluctuated considerably, sometimes by more than 10 percent a year, but trending steadily lower to the current 154, a number we have not seen since the early 1970s. This, of course, is not the fault of any one person. Every Executive Committee for the last ten or fifteen years has considered how to attract new members. A more inviting website, newspaper articles, a flyer, are some of the methods that have been tried.

By the early 1990s, it had become clear that the club had changed to an organization for the 55-plus. Today, the bulk of the members are in their late sixties and seventies, with a small number that are under 65, some still working, and a similar group that are 80 or

over. This demographic fact permeates what we do as a club but is in itself not something negative. It speaks to the health, vigor and commitment of our members. But it does mean that the club has irreversibly changed, which has implications for the program it can offer or the way it is run. For example, only a small number of members still camp or go on C or D-hikes, accept a long drive to the trailhead, have the energy to volunteer, or want to attend evening meetings. In that sense, perhaps, demography is destiny.

As an ironic but telling aside, the Sunshine Hikers was an offshoot of the OCV in 1976, "for the 60-plus hikers who wanted to slow down a bit" and have a more informal club. It can fairly be argued that a large part of the OCV has reached the point where the Sunshine Hikers were 35 years ago. (Until 1992, OCV members were automatically entitled to membership in the Sunshine Hikers, others needed a sponsor.)

It is sad that the number of obituaries in the Groundsheet has grown considerably. In the earlier decades of the club the passing of a member was rare indeed. The death of the club's founder, Tom Goodlake, in 1989 at the age of 77 was such an instance. The much too early deaths of two well-known active members in 1993, Mac Page while kayaking and Jorgen Svendsen as a result of a bus accident, shocked everyone and is well remembered by the author. As the club aged, so have we. Obituaries seemed to appear more regularly in the Groundsheet as the decades wore on. In 2005, three former club Presidents, Jim Fiddess, Ron Weir and Stan Buxcey all died in the same year. Often the names listed in the Groundsheet were of former, not just current members; they all were part of our larger family, and the club should be commended for continuing the tradition of recognizing the passing of former as well as current members. However, the 19 people who were so recognized in 2011, including three current members, one of whom, Denise Kendall, a former club president, was extraordinary and I hope we do not have another year like it.

Yogi Berra, the Baseball Hall of Famer, once said: "It's hard to make predictions – especially about the future." Some trends are clear. In the last two decades, the population of the Capital Regional District has increased by 20 percent or some 60,000 people, yet from the period of its largest expansion in the late 1980s and mid 1990s to 2011, the club's membership has decreased by more than 45 percent. Not only that, there is a much larger number of inactive members and the average age is higher.

There is perhaps a core of 20 A-hikers and slightly more than 20 B-hikers that come out regularly at least once or twice a month, and the average number of people on hikes is between five and seven plus the leader. Sometimes there are fewer. There are other members whose main interest is in outings and campouts. The number of regular leaders is shrinking, particularly for A-hikes. In contrast, the Outings Chair in 1992 expected all active members to lead at least one hike a year, according to the Groundsheet.

Many other organizations face similar challenges as the Outdoor Club but some hiking

clubs also tend to have a simpler structure and program. The OCV may need to look to other models that pose fewer demands on its small core of volunteers and active members. The current situation cannot be frozen in time. Time marches on, and where will the club be five or ten years from now given the trends noted above?

On a more encouraging note, however, there has been a proliferation of informal and formal hiking and walking groups during these past two decades, in Greater Victoria as probably in other areas, not to speak of virtual hiking groups that increasingly meet via social media on the internet. The next decade will be interesting and challenging for the club. The OCV may become smaller still and may need to make changes to how it operates. But one thing is certain, there will always be like-minded people who love the outdoors and the fellowship that can be found in groups such as ours, and we still have hikers in their seventies who can out-distance many that are much younger.

Although smaller in size and older, at its core the OCV continues to be a strong and viable organization with a committed membership and an amazing program of activities. There is confidence in saying the club will be around for years to come.

Welcome to the digital age

It took a while, but the digital revolution had also touched the club by the start of a new millennium when all the talk was about Y2K. As recently as at the February 2000 Annual General Meeting, the then President mused: "What about the future? An Outdoor Club website, Groundsheet on the net, everyone on E-mail (sic) or a retirement home for OCVers?"

In 2000, in an effort to teach herself how to build websites, Kayla Stevenson started working on a website for the club with new software she had received for her birthday. It started as a fun project to learn website development. The club liked it and the new site went live in the fall. Access was via the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C.'s website at www.mountainclubs.bc.ca/ocv. By 2004, the club had its own URL at www.ocv.ca. As Kayla, who is still our webmaster, recalls, "At first, most members wondered why the OCV would want a website, but now it seems that it is considered useful, even if it doesn't have all the bells and whistles that more modern websites have these days."

The website has been modified several times in its short existence as 12 years is a lifetime in digital terms, including a more extensive photo collection in recent years. For decades, the many club albums provided a comprehensive historical record of our club activities, and they could include more detail, such as people's names and related hike information (people's names are not included on the web because of privacy issues). Much of this information will be lost as the albums have been struggling due to a lack of printed photos in recent years – paradoxically one of the casualties of the digital age. The website,

however, does provide extensive and well laid out information to prospective members on the club's many activities.

While in 1993 and 1994 the club still sponsored photo contests, the rise of the digital camera since then has led to the most surprising fact that fewer people take pictures of club hikes, and more importantly, make the effort of showing and collectively sharing the experiences of club hikes and outings. A regular and important feature at the Annual General Meeting or the club banquet, or at the monthly meetings, was a narrated presentation of slides of the summer campout or a look back at the year's hikes, outings and trips. This has become a rarity and the collective experience has been diminished.

In 2000, there was a call in the Groundsheet for people to bring their new cell phones on a hike, but to be used only for emergencies, also part of the digital revolution.

By the second half of the 1990s, more and more members had their own personal computer, and email for personal use had become much more common. There was a first request in the Groundsheet in 2000 to advise the Membership Chair if members wanted their email address listed on the membership list. Initially the new email addresses were listed in the Groundsheet, 25 such addresses by the summer of 2001 and 31 by the end of that year.

Since 2002, email addresses are an integral part of the membership list, along with other contact information. At the end of 2011, the list showed that 87 percent of members had email and almost all of those received the Groundsheet electronically. Although email use in Canada is reportedly declining, email traffic from the club has increased substantially in recent years. Members receive email when a leader or hike is changed, or as (repeat) reminders of meetings and outings, perhaps beyond what is necessary or what similar clubs are doing. While some consider it a bane, email has taken the place of meetings and direct personal contact. One wonders how the club ever managed without it, yet it did so quite well for over 60 years. Social media is not currently being used by the club.

To return to the comments by a former President at the start of this section, while the Groundsheet hasn't been put on the website, the schedule has. A senior's residence for OCVers has not yet been established, although there was a lot of talk about it at the time.

The Groundsheet

The Groundsheet, our newsletter and in many ways the most detailed record of what goes on in the club, predates even the Outdoor Club. The first Groundsheet is reported to have been published in October 1935 for the Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club of Canada, the oldest hiking club on the island. Being the brainchild of Tom Goodlake, he brought the Groundsheet with him when he founded the OCV.

The Groundsheet has had a number of different formats over the years. For many years, until 1985, it included detailed write-ups of every hike, on legal size paper run off on a sometimes rather messy duplicating machine. It became too much work to write and copy, and a much shorter version was adopted. By 1991, the Groundsheet was produced on a computer then printed commercially and folded by hand for mailing. The annual costs of producing and mailing it were at around \$700. The general format then for the next decade and a half was a roughly two-page schedule, which included hikes and social events or meetings, followed by generally two pages of announcements and other information. Until the early 2000s, the Groundsheet often also included a couple of classifieds from members selling used outdoor clothing or equipment.

In 2005, the format was again changed. The schedule was turned into a folded flyer that could be distributed to recreation centres and public libraries, similar to what another hiking club was doing at the time to attract new members. Meetings and social activities were removed from the schedule and put into the main part of the Groundsheet so as not to have uninvited strangers show up at some of these events. Some 800 extra copies were printed and distributed for the next couple of years until the lack of volunteer distributors and a sense that our website reached a larger audience put an end to this experiment. However, the flyer format has been maintained, perhaps more due to inertia than practicality.

The Groundsheet with hike schedule has expanded from a total of 4 to 6 pages with schedule to 8 to 10 pages of Groundsheet plus a separate two-page schedule which does not show all meetings or social events. Perhaps with some tweaking it can become more compact and above all less work to put together. The Publications Chairs over the years have done a commendable job turning it into an attractive newsletter without which we could not have functioned as well. The vast majority of members have been getting the Groundsheet as an email attachment since 2008.

The Executive

The Executive keeps the club running on a day-to-day basis. It takes a great deal of effort and commitment by this small group of dedicated volunteers. Monthly business meetings have shrunk from eight to two during the past decade and have made life somewhat easier, but the Executive generally still meets quarterly. Many like the work and stay on the Executive for years, but almost always it has been a challenge to fill at least some of the positions. However, not until the late 1990s could we not find volunteers to fill all the positions. The Vice President's position, usually a critical stepping stone before becoming President has been vacant on several occasions since, not a healthy situation, but fortunately volunteers could always be found to stand for President.

Other positions have gone vacant on the Executive, particularly since the mid 2000s. The

Conservation Chair has not been filled since 2005 and was discontinued, ending decades of extensive involvement for the protection and expansion of wilderness areas, but interest by the club had been on the decline for some time. It has been equally challenging to fill the Special Events/Socials Chair in recent years despite a substantial reduction in the number of meetings. There was no permanent Outings Chair during 2010-2012, something that has never happened before, so the Vice President and Past President acted in the position.

In 2010, the constitution was amended to remove term limits for Executive members and who could run for President. Term limits had been two years for the President and six years for the other Executive members; someone running for President was expected to have served in an Executive position before. These limitations were found to be too restrictive.

For the last several decades there have usually been between 10 to 12 positions on the Executive, the higher number when there was a Conservation Chair and when Special Events and Socials were held by two people. Ten has been the established number in recent years. For much of the time there has been a relative balance between males and females on the Executive. Interestingly, since the mid 2000s, the number of males, which had stood at four, decreased gradually to the point where there has been no male volunteer to serve on the Executive since 2010, a first for the club. Almost every Executive Committee has tried new things to keep the club relevant, from a retreat in 1995 for some long-term planning, to efforts to make business meetings more relaxed and increase attendance at social events. It continues to be a challenging task given the issues noted throughout this history.

List of Club Presidents, 1992 – 2012

President	Year	President	Year
Stan Buxcey	1991 - 1993	Mick Phillips	2003 -2005
Marion Edworthy	1993 - 1995	Eric Burkle	2005 - 2007
Richard Keltie	1995 - 1997	Marlene Harper	2007 - 2009
Brenda O'Regan	1997 - 1999	Mary Hof	2009 - 2012
Denise Kendall	1999 - 2001	Katherine Black	2012
Dave De Shane	2001 - 2003		

The boring (but necessary) stuff: waivers, insurance, constitution and dues

Unfortunately, the boring stuff is needed to keep the club running smoothly. It is worth reminding the reader that the club's constitution mandates the following:

- a. to provide an organization to bring together those who are interested in and enjoy various outdoor activities, in particular hiking, cycling, camping, skiing,

- canoeing and back-packing;
- b. to express the views of members of the Society on outdoor affairs in matters of interest to members of the Society;
- c. to provide occasional recreational gatherings other than the above activities.

In 1992, Rob Wilson introduced the club to the waivers, a form that has since been modified and expanded on several occasions. Although the club for a time had modest liability coverage through the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC, in late 2005 the membership approved its own more extensive insurance which has been in place since 2006, similar to what many other hiking clubs tend to have.

Almost every Executive initiates some amendments to the bylaws and standing rules. They are all intended to ensure consistent administration of the business of the club under the *Society Act*. These changes have been too numerous to list them here. The most recent amendments related to term limits and eligibility to run for President were noted in the section above dealing with the Executive. A social membership category was introduced in 2005, and in late 2008, after discussion that had gone on for several years, the club decided to withdraw from its long membership in the FMCBC in response to concerns over reorganization, communication and budget issues. (The OCV also was affiliated with the Friends of the Royal BC Museum until 1991. There was some intense discussion when the club voted to withdraw from this organization.)

The annual club dues have been kept low. Hiking is still one of the cheapest hobbies around, although some of the high tech clothing has become pretty snazzy over the last 20 years. However, there have also been substantial savings to the club in recent years due to a much reduced number of business meetings and the electronic mailing of the Groundsheet.

List of annual dues

Year of change in dues	Single members	Family member
1987	\$16.00	\$28.00
1993	\$17.00	\$30.00
1994	\$19.00	\$32.00
1995	\$20.00	\$36.00
2004	\$23.00	\$41.00
2008	\$37.50	\$56.00
2010	\$22.00	\$40.00

Note: A social membership category was introduced in 2005. Dues are half price if joining after September 30.

Awards and recognitions

There has been an increased effort in recent years to give special recognition to club

members who have made significant contributions. The fir cone awards, sometimes incorrectly referred to as the pine cone awards, have been around for a long time. They are given for a member's effort on some aspect of club activity – sometimes in a lighthearted way - and are awarded at the annual banquet or awards night.

In 2003, at the initiative of Mick Phillips, a Special Service Award's category was created for people with a long record of service to the club (recently also referred to as the Outstanding Service Award). An awards committee was set up with specific terms of reference and set criteria for the various awards. This formalized the sometimes contentious recognition of deserving members. The awards committee is generally chaired by the Vice President when there is one, otherwise by the President or Past President.

OCV President Stan Buxcey wrote in 1992, "Life Membership is an honour that is infrequently bestowed on a very small number of worthy members. The choice is always difficult." Originally the recipient was called an Honorary Member or Life Member. More recently the term Life Membership has been used. This is the highest award in the club. There were 11 life memberships awarded during the club's first 50 years. There have been 13 in the last two decades.

Life memberships awarded between 1992 and 2012

Ron Weir	John & Ruth Clay	Jane Renaud (Waddell)	George Kelly	Ann Field	
Stan Buxcey	Denise Kendall	Bob & Janice Spearing	Jean Robinson	Eric Burkle	Brenda O'Regan

The Outdoor Club of Victoria Trails Information Society

A small and committed group of Outdoor Club members started work on the *Hiking Trails* series of trail guides for Vancouver Island in late 1971. The members would select the hikes to be written up, provide write-ups and even help draw some of the maps. Jane Waddell (Renaud), who went on to serve as President of the society, was later awarded the Life Membership in the OCV for her work in getting it started. Although it was set up as a separate society in 1972, for many years it continued to give regular reports at the OCV's business meetings or asked for club volunteers to help distribute the book to local bookstores.

By 1993, to eliminate confusion and because its operation had grown to such an extent, the society changed its name to the Vancouver Island Trails Information Society. This non-profit society has sold more than 100,000 copies and continues to sponsor environmental initiatives, including trail building on Vancouver Island which also benefit OCV members. At its website at www.hikingtrailsbooks.com, it continues to promote hiking on Vancouver Island and receive orders from around the world. Another successful offshoot of the OCV.

The Outdoor Club of Victoria Fund

The OCV celebrated the millennium in two remarkable ways. One was the establishment of the Outdoor Club of Victoria Fund under the auspices of the Victoria Foundation. This millennium project was an initiative of Dr. Joyce Clearihue, a longtime member of the club who was also very involved with the Victoria Foundation. Initially, the target was to raise \$25,000, but the fund has since grown to approximately \$50,000 through tax-receipted donations from members. Each year, in perpetuity, the returns generated by this growing endowment fund are used to support donor-advised projects, such as trail building and maintenance, protecting the environment, supporting search and rescue and other worthy outdoor-related causes which the club selects. In 2010, Joyce was given a pine (sic) cone award by the club for years of outstanding service.

Another remarkable event was the way the OCV celebrated the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st century. On December 31, 1999, Ann Field and the socials committee organized a remarkable evening that celebrated Canada with all its time zones, combined with a late-night hike to Mount Tolmie for a champagne toast and later to watch the fireworks. After a sumptuous dinner, the first official toast was at 7:30pm to celebrate the arrival of midnight in Newfoundland, 8pm in the Maritimes, 9pm in Quebec and Ontario, and so it went until it was midnight in B.C. Next day was the traditional New Year's hike to Mt. Finlayson led by the President, to be followed by a potluck dinner, again at the recreation room at Ann's condo building on McKenzie Avenue. There have been no more club events on New Year's eve since.

Losses, gains and assets

First some losses, and among those we must recognize the many members or former members who have passed away. There have been many club alumni these last 70 years, perhaps a couple of thousand. Some were members for only a short period, others spent most of their life with the club and added greatly to the rich diversity of its members. They were part of our larger family which the club represents to many of its members.

Another loss, and not everyone may see it that way, are the fewer opportunities to meet club members through more frequent meetings and slide presentations which did create a sense of community, sharing of experiences, and greater opportunity for A and B-hikers to mix socially. The meetings also created a greater sense of accountability and transparency in that the Executive reported on an almost monthly basis and provided an opportunity for members to discuss and vote on issues throughout the year. Some may be relieved by this, but it makes for a very different organization. Some people have noted that the A and B-hikers operate like two separate groups. Those who have been through an earlier period with the club will know that the sense of community is quite different. This is why large social events, such as a club anniversary, are such welcome

events that bring everyone together again. Our Executive works hard to keep the club as meaningful a part of members' lives in the future as it has been in the past.

Over the years, we lost many areas for hiking but gained others, particularly some new parks in the 1990s. Which side of the ledger the opportunities for hiking fall is not clear. We have gained more hikes on the schedule for fewer members. It should be noted that many past leaders have led their hikes from memory and never wrote down the details or trained someone to take over. That surely is a loss for all, perhaps as much as losing wilderness to development.

Among the gains that deserve pointing out is that we have had many new members over these two decades, interesting new conversation partners on hikes, and some have made a real contribution. Without new blood no organization can survive. There has also been increased interest in some of the social events as a result of experiments with the formats and we hope this will continue.

Email can be both an asset for improved, timely communication and a curse if not handled well. However, people who used to manually produce and mail out the Groundsheet must surely be relieved to be living in the digital age. The club website is also an important asset. It broadcasts our existence to the world and encourages people to contact and perhaps even join us.

An asset that not every hiking club can match is our rich history, including the many photo albums and historical records that were found significant enough to be retained by the City of Victoria Archives. These assets are an important part of the city's rich social history.

An asset that should not be forgotten is our diverse and committed membership. Although numbers have come down and the average age has crept up, statistics tell only part of the story. At its core we still have a large and viable club with an extensive program that is planned and delivered by a core of dedicated volunteers with amazing skills. Not many clubs can match us.

This is only a partial list of our losses, gains and assets, but hopefully it gives people something to think about and discuss with others. The cycle of life includes many gains and losses. May there be more gains than losses in the Outdoor Club's future.