

It has very quickly become as much a part of the summer tradition in Sudbury as blueberries and bathers at Bell Park. The 2008 Sudbury Dragon Boat Festival, running this Saturday, marks the ninth annual edition of a two-day event stemming from a rich Chinese heritage. In the past eight years, a total of 870 teams have competed on the shoreline of Lake Ramsey, with an ever increasing number of out-of-town teams attracted to the fun-filled festival. The mid-July mainstay has spawned a growth of interest in the competitive dragon boat circuit, led first and foremost by the Sudbury Canoe Club's own Team Chiropractic. Competing at multiple events province-wide and beyond - the team heads to Malaysia this August - Team Chiro is but one of three crews that don the SCC banner in races out of town. Last year, the Sudbury Festival surpassed the \$1 million mark in terms of total monies donated to charity since its inception in July of 2000. And yet despite all of this, the reality is that the Dragon Boat Festival is but one of several areas of exciting expansion currently seen within the paddling and rowing community in Sudbury. Once a hotbed of sprint kayaking, the Sudbury Canoe Club has seen an incredible rebirth in their competitive programs that coincided, to some extent, with the advent of the Dragon Boat Festival. Long-time Sudburians will remember an era when the names of Don Stringer, John Beedell, Joe Derochie, Louis Lukanovich, Dave Derochie, Leo, Ralph and Brian Polowich as well as Richard and Bob Quinlan, regularly occupied local sports pages with stories of paddling excellence. As is often the case when sports begin to gather momentum, the paddling community caught a fortuitous break about five to six years back. The son of a club commodore in his native

Sudbury waterfront is a happening place

Hungary, Gergely Lanci had moved to Sudbury more than ten years ago but really immersed himself back into the sport that was his passion earlier this decade. Lanci very quickly took on the role of both coach and head instructor at the Sudbury Canoe Club and it was only a matter of time before competitive paddlers from the Nickel City were once again scouring the province in search of regattas. Late last month, the 2008 edition of the SCC sprint kayak team made the trek to the 50th annual Mississauga Regatta, returning with plenty of hardware. Eric Brunatti and Victor Sabau joined forces with paddlers from the Balmy Beach Canoe Club and West Rouge Canoe Club to capture gold in the C15 (15-person war canoe) classification. Brunatti also returned home with a bronze medal courtesy of his performance in the men's K1 1500 m race, as did clubmate Elissa Cameron in the bantam girls race of the same distance. Completing the Sudbury expedition to the podium in Mississauga was the bantam boys K4 crew - Josh Vardy, Adrian Banete, Eric Brunatti and Victor Sabau - who also managed a third place finish in their final race. Of course, there is plenty more on the go with the gang at the SCC. Dragon Boat Festival weekend is also the time for the pure canoeing enthusiasts to partake in the Sudbury Fitness Challenge Canoe Marathon, while windsurfers and sea kayakers also remain a mainstay of club activities on many a summer day. Sharing the facility with the SCC, the Sudbury Rowing Club is experiencing a simultaneous increase in the level of interest in rowing these days. With high school and university programs now in full gear, the base is set for the development of both recreational and competitive rowers through early adulthood and beyond. Add to that an adaptive rowing component that owes its birth to Minna

Mettinen and has now produced a Para Olympic athlete in Steve Daniels - who is heading to Beijing - and one can see that there is little in the way of down time in the Elizabeth Street facility that houses both the Canoe Club and Rowing Club.

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