

Message from the President

November 2020

We have had a few months to adjust to our meetings and workshops being online and I think that we have done a fantastic job. It has even given us new opportunities for the club to participate in. One opportunity is being a part of the BC Interclub Speaker Series. Four clubs are organizing a speaker from within Canada starting with VCC hosting Rick Martin in November. The other speakers will be in January, March and May with VCC using our Zoom account (many thanks to CAPA – Pacific Zone for funding the Zoom upgrade so clubs on the west coast can participate). The speaker cost will be divided to allow smaller clubs the opportunity to see speakers they wouldn't normally be able to bring to their own club.

I am grateful again this year to be working with an exceptional group on the executive. We are always looking for innovative and creative ideas for our Club. We also encourage our members to present us with new ideas. An example of this is the newly formed Mobile Photography SIG. Thank you Graham Budd for your leadership in this new opportunity. Stay tuned for some more new initiatives in the coming months.

Although I featured this information in my message this time last year, I believe it should be repeated again. Especially while most of us will not travel outside of British Columbia this year due to the pandemic. While researching information for wildlife safety issues I came across a great blog on Discover Vancouver Island (<https://www.discovervancouverisland.com/blog/bear-wolf-cougar-safety/>). Have a look for some great tips:

- Never come between a mom and her babies
- Never approach them, they need their space
- Do not pack smelly foods
- Use animal-safe garbage and storage bins
- Do not walk at night alone, or in the forest alone without a bear bell
- Always keep dogs on a leash
- Be prepared for an encounter with bears or cougars
- Prepare your bear spray
- If in a group, stick together to seem larger
- Determine three things: the kind of bear, if it has cubs and if it is protecting a food source
- Speak slowly in a calm tone
- Back away slowly, keep an eye on the animal and allow for a clear exit
- Look as large as possible
- Do not run or turn your back
- Maintain eye contact if the animal is watching you

We all want to capture amazing photos but remember that we share the forest and we need to respect the animals and be safe.

Teri VanWell, President