

# Pedalling the Cycle Tour News

## 2023 – EDITION 4

Monday, September 4



We have now completed three weeks of our four-week Cycle Tour. One week to go and still lots of opportunities to participate in group rides if you choose. Photographed here are the Galiano Gogos. A group will ride out early on Tuesday to meet them for coffee in Sidney. Our kilometre count after three weeks is **18361** kilometres.

Can we meet (and perhaps exceed) our pledged kilometre goal of **23015** by September 10?



Galiano Gogos - Left to Right: Jane, Eleanor, Joan, Marian, Susan, Akasha, Mary Jo and Charlene. Missing: Risa and Siobhan

*Rides this week are as follows:*

**Monday, Sept 4:** Last Monday training ride. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Connector.

**Tuesday, Sept 5:** Meet at Switch Bridge at 6:00 a.m./at the Connector at 6:15 a.m. to ride to Sidney to the Galiano Riders for coffee. Contact [VG4Acycleregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:VG4Acycleregistrar@gmail.com) if you wish to go.

**Wednesday, Sept 6:** – **Two city rides** are offered this week. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Lochside/Blenkinsop connector or at the same time at the Janion building.

**Thursday, Sept 7:** Riders and support persons make their way to Campbell River to start the long ride.

**Friday, Sept 8 - Sunday, September 10:** – **Campbell River to Victoria long ride.**

**Friday, Sept 8 – Friday Gentle Ride.** Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Saanich Municipal Hall.

**Sunday, Sept 10 – Centennial Park to Finale Ride.** Meet at 10:45 a.m. at the Selkirk Trestle. Register at <https://vg4a.ca/events>.

**Sunday, Sept 10 - Grandmothers and Grandkids Ride.** Meet at Ogden Point at 2:40 p.m. Register at <https://vg4a.ca/events>.

This week's African Grandmother piece, *"Thousands March in Eswatini"* has been updated from a blog written by Lisbie Rae for the CBC while she and a group of Canadian Grandmothers were attending the Africa Grandmothers Gathering in 2010.

Pictured here is **Siphewe Hlophe**, organizer of the first African Grandmothers Gathering and March, as she cheers on her fellow grandmothers in Manzini, Eswatini. Photo by Ricki Horowitz.



They marched in the thousands, grandmothers from Ethiopia, gogos from South Africa, nya nyas from Kenya, sho shos from Zambia, nanas from Namibia, grannies from 13 African countries, marching in solidarity through Manzini, Eswatini, in the first-ever International Grandmothers' Gathering on African soil. Striding out right alongside the African grandmothers were 42 Canadian grandmothers, members of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign; I was amongst them, and was forever changed by the experience.

"Phezu Kom Khono!" rang out over a loudspeaker, and thousands of voices, African and Canadian, took up the call. "Raise your arms, women!" called Siphewe Hlophe, head of SWAPOL (Swaziland Positive Living). Described as a "force of nature" by Stephen Lewis, Siphewe was the indomitable organizer of the gathering. In a country with the highest percentage of people living with HIV and AIDS, (a country that has since changed its name to Eswatini), SWAPOL works tirelessly to support grandmothers raising their orphaned grandchildren hammer home the message of prevention, and organize myriad counseling and care initiatives.

Songs and chants broke out spontaneously along the route, as strong women's voices rose in call and response. Bent over with arthritis and years of back-breaking work, older grannies leaned on younger arms to struggle up the hill. They could have ridden in one of the vans provided, but "No," they said, "I'm here to WALK!" Buoyed by the harmonies swelling around me rich as Ladysmith Black Mombasa, I linked white arms with black arms, and we strode up the hill, together.

They'd spoken of the enormity of the challenges they face on a daily basis. "I had seven children; now, only one." "My daughter supported me; what work can I find to raise her children?" "When my husband died, my in-laws took my house." Yet here they were, not only surviving, but sustaining their remaining family and holding together whole communities. They described the solutions they've invented out of desperate need, the tremendous support they draw from collaborating with other women. They clearly identified their immediate and long-term needs, which were summarized in a call to action, the Manzini Statement. *To read more of this article go to:*

<https://www.vg4a.ca/resources/Documents/Lisbie%20thousands%20march%20updated%202023.pdf>



## Stories from the road this past week:

*In response to the question, "Why I am participating in the 2023 VG4A Cycle Tour", rider, writer and VG4A member, Jane Cawthorne, submitted the following:*



Jane and her bike out 'Tackling the Serpentine'

"Shortly after I moved to Victoria, I was having coffee with a friend when a large group of women cyclists rode up who were obviously having a terrific time together. They told us who they were and were so friendly, I knew I wanted to join. What better way to make new friends in my new city? The only problem was I hadn't been riding since an accident in 2017 left me with a brain injury. A few years of de-conditioning, balance issues, and my new tendency to get lost all the time had left me wary of going out on my bike. But meeting the VG4A group was a sign that it was time to try riding again. Now it's a year later and a season of riding with VG4A has brought me so much joy!

Everyone rides with safety at the top of her mind, and having a ride leader and sweep means that I can never get lost. With so many choices of rides, there is always one that is right for me. As a bonus, the rides have taught me how to get around Victoria. I love the focus on progressing to bigger goals. And what can be better than raising money for a great cause by doing something so fun? Thanks for welcoming me and making me a stronger rider. I hope to be riding with you and raising money for the Grandmother Campaign for a long time!"

### *A remarkable rescue – submitted by Christine Scott*



On Thursday, eight riders headed out to Tackle the Serpentine. All was well until as we approached the Royal Roads grounds the leader, yours truly, got a flat. Embarrassed that flat fixing is not a strength of mine, I encouraged Laurie to continue with all but

one of the group who stayed to support me in my effort to change the tire. We had released the brakes and had the wheel out when a text came from Cynthia to let us know that one of our competent "mechanics" and "tire changers", Jean Macdonald, just happened to be walking at Royal Roads with a friend and was now coming towards us. Now, that's

serendipity at work! Jean took charge, the flat was taken care of and we were on our way to meet the others at the coffee spot. Thank you, Jean!



Not Pedalling, but Paddling!

Wanda and Lynn each paddled 88 kilometres this week. Way to cross train ladies!





Photos by Laurie Wilson and others



For a full set of week three pictures please go to  
[https://share.icloud.com/photos/0ccAxFJKJ-koDZFsi\\_tjh1nkQ](https://share.icloud.com/photos/0ccAxFJKJ-koDZFsi_tjh1nkQ).

Don't forget to send your kilometre count to [vg4acycledistance@gmail.com](mailto:vg4acycledistance@gmail.com)

Please add your anticipated Friday - Sunday kms to your total before submitting this coming weekend

Watch for the last edition of Pedalling the Cycle Tour News next Monday  
 We also encourage you to check [www.vg4a.ca](http://www.vg4a.ca) often for current news and information