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WALKING ON WATER

GIG HARBOR'S SUP FESTIVAL RETURNS

BY JENNIFER PRESTON CHUSHCOFF



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Have you ever stood on shore, watching people glide by on stand-up paddle boards (SUP), longing to try it for yourself? Well, mark your calendar for September 22's SUP in the Harbor festival, which features a race and parade.

The Gig Harbor SUP event was started by Stand Up for Peninsula Schools (also known as SUP) in 2017 as an annual celebration to bring awareness to concerns over school maintenance and overcrowding, and also to have fun.

"People of all ages come together to help kick off a new school year" says Shana Nash of Stand Up for Peninsula Schools. "This year, we are especially happy to recognize our amazing community for passing a capital bond in April, so the mood will be even more celebratory than

before!" This money will assist in the construction of new schools.

Festival participants are welcome to bring their SUPs down to the water and can register to participate in advance at StandUp4Schools.org.

Do you want to participate, but don't have a board? Don't despair! Lee's SUP & Kayak is lending out paddle boards and life vests, which are required by state law. \$5 gets you on the water, and the funds go to Stand Up for Peninsula Schools. In the past, Lee's has barged in 70 to 80 boards for the event.

Come prepared to share the water, as last year's event drew more than 100 participants. This year promises to be very popular as they are introducing SUP with PUPS, led by the Gig Harbor Dragon Boat team. "Our furry friends are welcome to join their owners on boards in the



It is quite a sight to see

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEE'S SUP & KAYAKS



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paddle board parade,” says Nash. If you’re new to paddling with your pooch, Lee’s SUP & Kayak will help with tips and tricks.

Deborah Krishnadasan, also with Stand Up for Peninsula Schools, mentions that valet and a reserved drop-off area will be available to assist participants. “Simply pull up and drop off your board!”

If SUPing isn’t your thing, don’t worry. All human-powered vessels are welcome: kayaks, canoes and sailboats. The Gig Harbor BoatShop not only has a rare Willits canoe but several classic rowboats to rent.

If you’re a landlubber, you’re covered too. The event features on-shore activities including live music, games and face painting. Key Peninsula’s Gnosh food truck will be on-site with their famous “Nibbles” like garlic, parmesan, herb fries, and the “Figgy Piggy Samm’iche” loaded with fig jam, bacon, brie and caramelized onions.

Nash points out that while many attend to paddle board, dozens stay

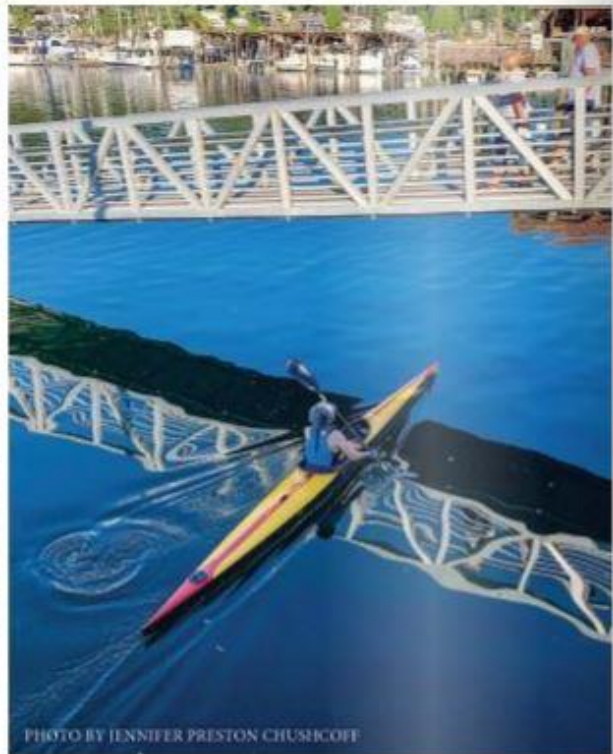


PHOTO BY JENNIFER PRESTON CHUSHCOFF

on shore to enjoy the excitement. “It is quite a sight to see all the paddle board participants parade along the waterfront.”

The best place for viewing will be from the Skansie Brothers Park. The parade leaves from there and turns around at Tides Tavern.

There are other points along the waterfront where you’ll be able to grab photos and cheer on your team. You can sit and sip a cold beverage deck side at the historic Tides Tavern. Additional viewing spots for the route include Jerisich Dock and the Maritime Pier.

As if you needed another excuse to try, paddle boarding is good exercise. It simultaneously improves core strength, the upper body and balance. It’s also a serene way to spend a few hours on the water. If you’re quiet and observant, you’ll spot shorebirds including great blue herons and sandpipers. Harbor seals hang out close by too.

If after borrowing a paddle board from Lee’s SUP you’d like to purchase one, there are several shops along the waterfront to buy gear, including Ship to Shore Marine & Kayak, a spot that does demos on their custom-built water feature.

The Gig Harbor Fly Shop sells and rents kayaks and SUPs as well. And if you’re ready to take your watery adventures up a notch, they host international travel expeditions for anglers.

Gig Harbor SUP & Kayak Rentals is on the water off of Harborview Drive, and they offer military discounts. They’re also associated with Gig Harbor Electric Boat Rentals, which features two-hour scenic cruises.

Whether you are out on the water or just watching, hours spent near the cool blue sea are never wasted.

Registration to participate in the race and parade costs \$20 for an individual and \$50 for a family up to five members. (The fee is only required for the official paddle board events.) All proceeds support Stand Up for Peninsula Schools. Visit StandUp4Schools.org for more info.

SUP IN THE HARBOR 2019

Sunday, September 22, 1 to 3pm

Schedule of Events

12:30pm: Registration and Check-In (onshore activities and music from 1 to 3pm)

1:15pm: Kick off Ceremony

1:30pm: SUP Relay Race (two-person teams. Make own team or individuals will be paired)

2:15pm: SUP Parade (attempt to break their record of 103 paddleboarders)

2:45pm: School Rally, Raffle and Awards

Skansie Brothers Park - 3211 Harborview Drive

Jerisich Dock - 3215 Harborview Drive

Tides Tavern - 2925 Harborview Drive, 253.858.3982, TidesTavern.com

Gig Harbor Boatshop - 3805 North Harborview Drive, 253.857.9344, GigHarborBoatShop.org

Gig Harbor Brewing - 3155 Harborview Drive, 253.474.0672

Gig Harbor Fly Shop - 3115 Harborview Drive, 253.851.3474, GigHarborFlyshop.com

Gig Harbor SUP & Kayak Rentals - 8205 Dorotich Street, 253.358.3491

Gig Harbor Electric Boat Rentals - 3419 Harborview Drive, 253.857.6060

Ship to Shore Marine & Kayak - 3403 Harborview Drive, 253.858.6090

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