

Sea festivals galore!

With two major festivals taking place in May, the Ladysmith waterfront is a-buzz with excitement.

Vancouver Island

Paddlefest, May 15, 16

Ladysmith Maritime

Festival, May 29, 30.

Vancouver Island Paddlefest

Paddlefest turns 12 this year, and Bud Bell is still involved with the festival. The festival is run by the Vancouver Island Paddlefest Society (of which Bud is the president and one of the original founders), a slew of volunteers and



Pirates take over the town. Ladysmith Maritime Festival 2009.

Below: Vancouver Island Paddlefest draws crowds. Bud Bell of Sealegs, president of the Paddlefest society.

Sheryll, the festival's administrator who is also Bud's wife.

The event itself is jam-packed over two days. May 15 and 16, retailers and thousands of paddlers flock to Ladysmith. Admission to the festival is free.

"The major manufacturers in kayaking come to Transfer Beach," Bell said. "Everything that pertains to kayaking."

Bells said the event is not just for kayakers. He said the festival is for any type of board, canoe or invention that can be paddled.

Vendors aside, there are food concessions and workshops. Land-based workshops are free and water workshops are \$10. Visitors have to sign up on site, but then are free to practice their water exits skills, rolling, self-rescue, paddling and more. Land workshops cover topics like the charting of maps. Also expected are guest speakers who offer classes, have writing books or made films.

Paddlefest is also a great event for families because it is hands-on.

There is a cardboard kayak race that

