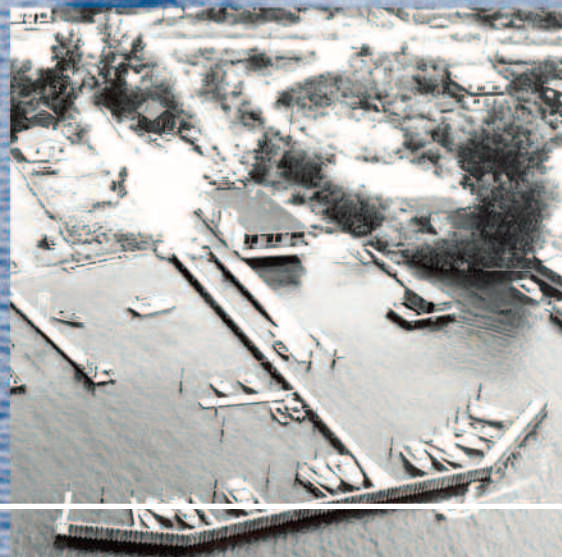




# VERNON YACHT CLUB

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition  
1953-2003







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Bruce Barnard, Commodore  
Vernon Yacht Club

This has been a wonderful year of reliving the 50 year history of the Vernon Yacht Club. We have recognized and honoured those who started our club and the many who have helped build VYC into the wonderful club it is today.

Our 50th Anniversary celebrations have been absolutely 'awesome' and we thank all our members for their active participation and involvement as we continue to work together to further improve our club.



Congratulations to the Vernon Yacht Club on your 50 years of colourful history and active community involvement. The City of Vernon looks forward to witnessing your next 50 years of progress.

Sean Harvey  
Mayor of Vernon



Congratulations on 50 years as a growing asset to the Province of British Columbia and the Okanagan Valley and may the next 50 years be as successful.

Tom Christensen, MLA  
Okanagan - Vernon



On behalf of the District of Coldstream, we offer our congratulations on your 50th Anniversary. We have witnessed many changes at the Vernon Yacht Club throughout the years and we wish you every success in the future.

Mayor Brian Postill  
District of Coldstream



## Vernon Yacht Club

7919 Okanagan Landing Rd.

Vernon, B.C. V1H 1H1

Phone (250) 545-5518

Fax (250) 545-0388

From its humble beginnings 50 years ago, with 33 founding members, the Vernon Yacht Club's membership has grown to a robust 280 members, with full moorage in the marina, and an active social scene. Today, as we celebrate our fiftieth year, our membership capacity is full. Hence we have begun the process of expanding the marina moorage which will enable us to increase our membership. With an annual turnover of approximately 15%, persons who would like to join the Club have an excellent opportunity to do so. With the huge potential of economic development in the Greater Vernon area, together with the announcement of Vancouver winning Olympics 2010, boating people moving to this area seek out the Vernon Yacht Club to enjoy its tremendous infrastructure, all owned by the membership.

To join the Vernon Yacht Club there is a one time initiation fee, annual dues, and moorage fees. The latter are set annually by the Club Executive. Once you become a regular member, you enjoy all the clubhouse and marina privileges. There is also the opportunity to join the Vernon Yacht Club as an Associate Member with certain limitations and restrictions. Persons interested in joining the Vernon Yacht Club are invited to speak with any Club member, or Club staff. Check out our website at

[www.vernonyachtclub.org](http://www.vernonyachtclub.org).

You are always welcome at the  
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*Vernon Yacht Club*



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Revised March 2013

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"The purposes of the society are to promote the enhancement of boating as a recreational and pleasurable pastime, to encourage inter club and inter community nautical activities and to provide facilities for any of the foregoing." The Vernon Yacht Club under the stewardship of the Staff Captain works extremely hard to promote social activities for Club members, encouraging members to participate in Club events and inter Club events with other Yacht Clubs on Okanagan Lake.

## Social Events

The Clubhouse is the focal point of many of the social activities. It is equipped with an air conditioned lounge featuring a fully equipped bar, dance floor, sound and video system, wrap-around deck with retractable awning, and games room complete with a full size pool table, foosball game and table tennis. Outdoors there are a horseshoe pit, picnic lawn area and waterside deck.

Interestingly, the ladies of the Club over the past 50 years have made significant contributions towards the betterment of the Clubhouse and social events. In March 1958 "the wives have banded together to form their own "union" called the Auxiliary....will undertake to raise money in their own devious feminine ways to assist in providing interior furnishings and fixtures." (Tiller Topics, March 24th, 1958) "It all started with a group of VYC lady members

who took an interest in the enhancement of the club's social activities by working many hours procuring and preparing food...Now under the banner of "First Mates" the group is organizing into a full fledged entity within the Club with a purpose to sponsor, organize and support VYC activities." (Tiller Topics, July 1997). Today the same enthusiasm is evident in the socials organized by the VYC ladies.

### Annual social events include:

**Commodore's Ball and Sailpast** - Members dress formally to enjoy fine dining and dancing. Guests include fellow Yacht Club Commodores and local dignitaries. The following day VYC Members sail past the Commodore in line of precedence. Many of the boats carry on to Ellison Park and raft up to celebrate the event.

**Invasions** - Okanagan Yacht Clubs plan an




annual schedule of "invasions" whereby boats invade a fellow Yacht Club for inter club merriment and sharing of Okanagan boating comradeship. Many longlasting friendships are born from these invasions with members always looking forward to the next invasion.


### Christmas Party and Christmas Carol Ships -

The VYC hosts an annual Christmas Party with an exchange of gifts. A highlight is the parade of sail boats lit with Christmas Lights parading around the Vernon Arm to the pleasure of nearby residents and other Vernon residents who come out to see the unique spectacle.

**Pig Roast** - Held Annually in September, the VYC Pig Roast is always sold out early. Chefs roast a pig on a spit all day to delectable perfection. Members and guests enjoy casual dining and dancing throughout the evening.



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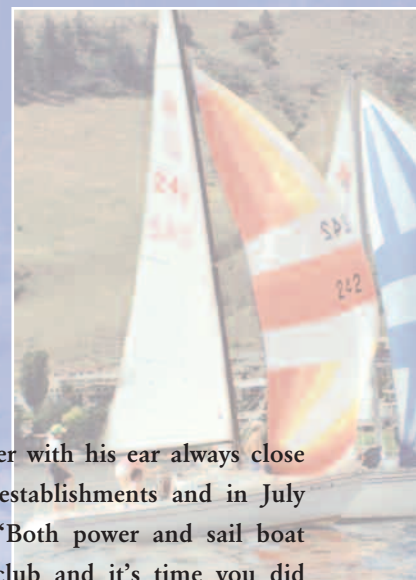
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Rotted pilings and rusted steel, Okanagan echoes of the big sternwheelers churning the lake at the turn of the century; volunteer firemen racing rafts across the bay (1930); plywood powerboats and rowing races, the Okanagan Landing Regatta, North Okanagan Aquatic Association, North Okanagan Sailing Regatta for the Rose Bowl Cup (1940); nautical coffee talk at Vernon's Okanagan Café and at Johnny's Grill, the mayors challenge (1950); the imagination, vision, determination and hard work of the club's founding members; all set the scene and contributed to the Vernon Yacht Club being granted its charter, June 23, 1953.

During the 1890s the CPR drove pilings along the south shore of Okanagan Lake at Vernon to support the heavy decks and rails needed to load and land box cars transported by barge

Theo Adams, a community booster with his ear always close to the ground, frequented both establishments and in July 1951 commented to John that, "Both power and sail boat people have been talking yacht club and it's time you did something about it."

To generate interest a sailing race was organized for August 1951. The wind did not attend but many people did. Encouraged, the organizers arranged a meeting for November at the OK Landing United Church hall. With a good attendance it was quickly decided to form a yacht club, with Dr. Hugh Campbell Brown elected Commodore, Dr. Leon Causier Vice Commodore, Horace Gailbraith legal advisor, and Austin Collins as Secretary. Another thirty signed up as founding members, each contributing a few dollars, and June 23, 1953 the Vernon Yacht Club received its charter as a society.

# Navigating

## the First Fifty Years

the length of the lake. This Okanagan Landing terminus ceased operations during the 1930s and most structures were removed, leaving a drowned forest of pilings and bolts to rot and rust in the shallows.

1900-1950, residents of 'The Landing' area organized a variety of annual power and sailing regattas on the lake. Interest in boating grew with the population and during the early 1950s power boat aficionados would congregate for steaks at Vernon's OK Café while sailboaters gathered for toasted cheese sandwiches at Johnny's Grill where John Dedora, passionate sailor and a founding member of the Calgary Yacht Club, and his wife Eileen had chosen a sailing theme for the grill. Mayor

Meanwhile, the hunt was on for a waterfront club site. Enter the rotted pilings and rusted steel, bane and boon to the club. This debris from the paddlewheel era resulted in depressed values for the affected water front properties and in 1955, with the assistance of Dr. Campbell Brown, the club purchased one lot with a small building and 50 feet of lake frontage, directly across the road from the doctor's then new house. The Campbell Brown residence remains and the VYC is the only Okanagan yacht club to own its property.

Before boats could enter the water from this lot, heavy equipment on a barge was recruited to begin pulling the forest of pilings, the Commodore and two other club dignitaries wading out



chest deep to set the choker cable. Unfortunately, all other members were out of town that week. A launch ramp was built in 1956 and served the public and the club for several years. The following year the first club house opened, funded by members purchasing 15 year debentures at 7%. Built at water's edge, the clubhouse had a stone fireplace and chimney and a verandah which imitated a ship's upper deck. The first Commodore's Ball was held that year at the Allison Hotel ballroom and club records of the late 50s mention: many deadheads in the lake; midnight cruises on Charlie Holmes' 50-ton float, "If you arrive late, stick around the launch ramp with your lights on and someone will come ashore to pick you up"; family cruises "with time for the children to swim before eating and have them home by 10:30 pm"; junior club formed; Ladies Auxiliary formed.

1959 saw the opening of the club's federally funded breakwater and the member funded docks behind it. In June 1960, the treasurer was seen knocking his head on a wall, muttering, "annual dues, annual dues." By July, payment of dues was reported as "gratifying."

During the early 60s, the club held predicted log family cruises, hosted Girl Guides and the Spokane Outboard Club, assisted the Canadian Power Squadron to establish in the Okanagan, obtained a liquor license and assisted in having navigation lights installed at Rattlesnake and Cameron Points and at Grant/Whiskey Island.

Then on February 14, 1967 there came an opportunity in disguise; the clubhouse burnt to the ground. Within 48 hours there were plans to rebuild, bigger and better for the future, using non combustible concrete blocks. With much hard work by members the new building opened October 22, 1967.

During the 1970s an annual fishing derby became popular, a world record 9lb 6oz Kokanee landed in 1988. Membership grew slowly, and by the early 1980s planning for an enlarged marina was underway. The waterfront lot to the west was purchased from a member and in 1987 work began on a major redesign and expansion of the marina. Members were

assigned to highly organized work parties and slaved like the pyramid builders, the new marina opening in May 1988.

In 1989 the new marina became the sight of what was then the largest on water boat show in BC, organized by members and becoming an annual event.

During the 1990s the number of sail boats increased steadily, two more of the adjacent lots were purchased and a further expansion in 1998 added moorage and a floating breakwater. Photographs of that period compare with those of the preparations for D-Day as eight 50 ton concrete caissons were formed and poured in the parking lot prior to being floated into place.

Now in its 50th year the Vernon Yacht Club's membership numbers 250 and growing. Power and sail boaters are evenly represented with boats ranging from 16 to 35 feet in approximately 200 berths. Cruising the club-sponsored moorages around the lake and visiting other clubs are



favorite pastimes and an active sail racing fleet of 30 boats holds weekly competitions in the bay. Members of other Okanagan yacht clubs enjoy invading the VYC and the club's spring time Charity Regatta is well attended by competitive keel boat sailors from throughout the valley.

At Christmas and New Year, club sailboats wintering on the water have evolved a tradition of dressing the rigging with lights and cruising the bay for the enjoyment of residents and it is reported that some of these die hards sail each week, all winter, on the almost ice-free lake. Other members volunteer to skipper a pontoon excursion boat for elderly and infirm members of the community. The concrete club house has served well and is frequently the scene of formal and not so formal socializing. Some members are also Power Squadron members and provide boating courses throughout the year. Recently the club has provided moorage and a meeting place for the Vernon Sea Scouts.

Now on course to its 100th anniversary, the Vernon Yacht Club's tradition of imagination, hard work, membership participation, and community service will continue to bring together those lively souls who love to mess about in boats.



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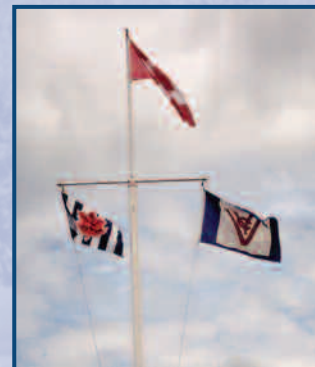
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## Training and Safe Boating

For the past 42 years the Vernon Canadian Power and Sail Squadron and the Vernon Yacht Club have enjoyed a close relationship. The Yacht Club provides its Clubhouse as a meeting place and a training facility. The Canadian Power and Sail Squadron promotes safe boating through its training programs and offers many boating related courses to both the general public and VYC members. The VYC Flag is proudly flown alongside of the CPS Flag on the flagstaff overlooking the marina as a tribute to the Yacht Club and Power Squadron's dedication to promoting safe boating .



In addition to supporting the CPS the VYC maintains mooring buoys throughout the North end of Okanagan Lake. Members of all Okanagan Yacht Clubs and the general boating public enjoy the use of these familiar orange buoys.

The Vernon Yacht Club is proud to be affiliated with Safe Boating programs. During the VYC's annual Spring Boat Show the Canadian Coast Guard and other safe boating agencies are invited to make presentations to promote safe and enjoyable boating. Indeed one of the benefits of becoming a yacht club member is the sharing of boating experience and knowledge with other yacht club members. As well, it provides reciprocal use of yacht clubs around the world.

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# Community Involvement



Okanagan Charity Sailing Regatta

The Vernon Yacht Club takes a great deal of pride in being able to support community organizations with activities on Okanagan Lake. By providing complimentary moorage, the VYC effectively aids several community minded organizations.

Heaven-Can-Wait is a 24 foot pontoon boat operated by volunteer captains on behalf of the Okanagan Quality Life Society. The boat is used primarily to take live-in seniors and disabled persons for an on the water experience throughout the summer months. In addition to moorage, the parking, loading and clubhouse facilities provided by the VYC, significantly contribute to the success of "Heaven-Can-Wait".

The VYC is deeply concerned for the safety of persons operating watercraft and therefore provides moorage to the Okanagan Landing Volunteer Fire Department which operates a 21 foot fire and rescue boat specifically to provide its services in the Landing area. The volunteer firemen train on the boat and they respond to fire and other emergencies on or near the water. Close proximity to the Fire

Station helps to reduce response time. The VYC ensures that the firemen have the needed facilities to use the fire and rescue boat.

The Navy League Cadets Canada, #69 Okanagan Corps and Royal Canadian Sea Cadets, #63 Kalamalka Corps, maintain the "Chinook", a 23 foot training sloop. The VYC is proud to be associated with the Navy League and Sea Cadets by providing moorage and marine experience to Vernon youths who participate in the Navy Cadet program.

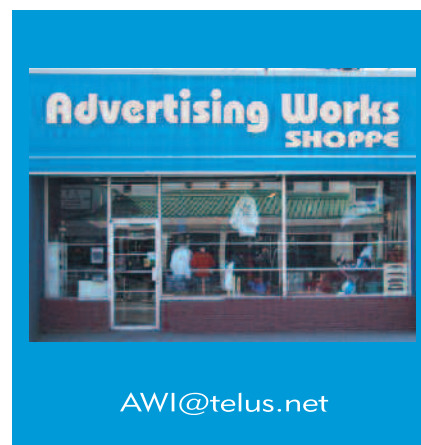
Annually the VYC sailors hold the "Okanagan Charity Sailing Regatta". Upwards of 50 boats participate in the regatta, with each boat raising funds for the United Way campaign. The VYC fully supports this event and makes its clubhouse and marina facilities available to all participants for an entire weekend of sail racing.



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On February 20th, 1958, then Tiller Topics editor J.T.B. Jackson wrote; "You are now staring at Vol. 1, No. 1 of 'Tiller Topics', official organ of the Vernon Yacht Club, staring back at you with a brand new face and shiny new policy to start a new year, which promises to be an eventful one for the Yacht Club, and, we predict for the 'Topics'."

## Newsletter - Tiller Topics

"The Club over the past few years have rather spasmodically published bulletins calling your attention to coming events and future endeavors and during the last year we subtitled the newsletter 'Tiller Topics'. The name not only seemed to have the membership acceptance but actually assumed a rather nostalgic appeal to many of the Club...To set the records straight, the 'Topics' will be mailed regularly to all members of the Club as part of their membership entitlement, and in addition copies will be sent to all Yacht Clubs with whom we are affiliated and share a common interest."

And so "Tiller Topics" as the official newsletter was born. The "Topics" has since continued to be published by member volunteers to all members. It has changed in format throughout the years, however the "Topics" has remained as the primary means to communicate to all members of the Club. Tiller Topics has become an historical record of happenings at the Vernon Yacht Club and reading through the copies one gets a real sense of the work done by various members throughout the 50 year history of the Club.

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## Vernon Yacht Club

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**50th ANNIVERSARY**

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