

THE 1990s: THE CHAMPION YEARS

Excellence in Racing

Sail West in 1987 had moved the club into national and international recognition. As well, the sailors of the club had begun to think of higher racing aspirations. In the early 1990s, Shona Moss joined the club. She had competed in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona on the Canadian team in the Europe class. She really inspired people to think big in their sailing goals.

Marc Peers together with his sailing buddy Roy Janse successfully campaigned a Tornado and made it to the Atlanta Olympics. The Wabamun Tornado fleet led by Chris Rypkema, provided strong support for their campaign. First Marc and Roy tackled the Canadian scene with regattas at Wabamun, Vancouver and later at CORK in Kingston. After enduring a couple of summers of racing in Europe, living on Kraft dinner and sleeping under the boat cover, they went on to win the Tornado North Americans. That success qualified them for the 1996 Olympics in Athens. Although they didn't win a medal at Athens, it was an achievement

in itself that sailors from the Wabamun Sailing Club had competed in the Olympics.

On the local scene, there was a very strong Alberta junior program. With Fie Hulsker of the Calgary Yacht Club as manager and Krystoff Machnowski as team coach, the Alberta Junior Sailing team in the 1990s was tremendous. The Wabamun contribution was significant both in the juniors as well as the parent participation for the team, Ken and Cheryl Smith, Keith and Susan Driver, and Fred and Mae Hadley provided the motivation and leadership for the Wabamun juniors.

It was certainly the strongest junior program in the history of the club. The kids were well coached and went on to race and win all across Canada from Victoria to Halifax. As an example, in 1997 Erin Smith won the women's singlehanded Canadian Youth Championship, John Russell and Jonathan Driver won the men's double handed Canadian Youth Championship and Rob Woods came 6th in the Byte class.



(TOP) MARC PEERS, WABAMUN OLYMPIAN. *Photo by Keith Driver*

(MIDDLE) CHRIS RYPKEMA WAS A VERY ENTHUSIASTIC TORNADO SAILOR AT THE CLUB. His wife Suzanne is crewing for him on this day. *Photo by Keith Driver*

(BOTTOM) KRYSTOFF MACHNOWSKI WAS THE ALBERTA JUNIOR SAILING TEAM COACH. *Photo by Keith Driver*



(RIGHT) THE ALBERTA JUNIOR SAILING TEAM IN THE MID 1990S.
Photo by Keith Driver

(BELOW) JOHN RUSSELL AND JONATHAN DRIVER MOVED UP TO THE 470 CLASS AND EMBARKED ON AN OLYMPIC CAMPAIGN. Photo by Keith Driver



John Russell and Jonathan Driver worked their way through junior training and competitions in the Laser 2. In fact, they won the Canadian Youth Championships in 1997 and then went on to race in Japan in a 420 at the World

Junior Regatta. They moved on to the 470, an Olympic class boat, and for a few years trained and competed internationally at the highest levels of racing in the world.

With a team break up, Jonathan Driver went on to complete his post secondary education. John Russell and a sailor from eastern Canada qualified for the Canadian team but fell just short of Olympic qualifications for Athens in 2004.

The successes of the junior sailors seemed to inspire the adult club members to raise their expectations in racing. Travelling

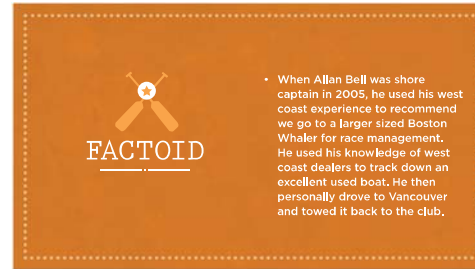
to major regattas became more common than in the past. Tornado sailors Chris Rypkema and Sandy Keith regularly went to CORK in Kingston. 505 sailors such as Shona Moss and husband Steve Lovshin, Carl and Val Fuchshuber, and Peter and Jordyce van Muyden made trips to southern California to compete. Roy Tichowsky began travelling all over North America to compete at Fireball North American and Worlds Regattas. In 1999 Roy was chosen as Commodore of the Americas by the International Fireball association in Britain. He held the position for seven years.

Excellence in Race Management

Another goal that Wabamun members pursued was to improve their skills at race management. For many years, Klaus Grueber and Keith Driver had been the most qualified and experienced race officers at WSC. However by the 1990s, their race management activities reduced and a new generation of members stepped in.

Peter van Muyden had sailed a Sea Spray, an International Canoe and also a 505. However his new passion became race

management. Peter received his National CYA Level III race officer certification in 1992. His enthusiasm for it was catching and by 1993 Gordon Langer became a National CYA Level III race officer. Jordyce van Muyden received her club CYA Level II around the same time. The entire Langer family of Gordon, Chris, and their boys Doug and Adam all combined to form an outstanding race management team. Together with Peter and Jordyce the two families were dubbed: "The A team."



- When Allan Bell was shore captain in 2005, he used his west coast experience to recommend we go to a larger sized Boston Whaler for race management. He used his knowledge of west coast dealers to track down an excellent used boat. He then personally drove to Vancouver and towed it back to the club.

(BELOW LEFT) ROY TICHKOWSKY RACES AROUND THE BUOYS DURING SAILWEEK. Marianne Schafenaeker is crew on that day. *Photo by Robert Rose*

SOME OF THE "A TEAM MEMBERS." Gordon, Adam and Chris Langer are in the new larger Boston Whaler. Gordon and Adam have probably set more marks than any other members of the club in 50 years! *Photo by Jordyce van Muyden*



Peter also personally wrote the first race computer scoring program in 1987. The software was used by the club for almost 20 years. Peter went on to achieve CYA Senior National Race Officer (old level IV) in 2006 and in 2008 attained the position of International Race Officer (ISAF). This is the highest level of race management certification in the history of the club.

Initiatives and Accomplishments

Membership numbers continued to be a serious concern for the club in the 1990s. In 1993, the number of active members hit a new low of 62. The executive tightened the budget and limited the expenditures on club improvements. However, it was still possible to achieve a number of improvements. The wheelchair access pedway to the clubhouse washrooms was completed in 1991 and in 1993 the new boathouse was completed and the barge superstructure was rebuilt with aluminum.

Many of these projects were done with financial assistance from government grants.

To boost membership, the executive started the idea of an annual Open House day. Various media groups were invited out for the day and a number of activities were offered to the public. Free boat rides were the main attraction. Unfortunately, it was a lot of work for the members with no significant increases in membership numbers.

However, it prompted some interesting activities. One of the ideas for the Open House was a fast boat building and race event. Teams had one hour to construct a boat from one sheet of plywood and "sail" it out around the moored barge and back.



PETER VAN MUYDEN DRESSED FOR ANOTHER DAY OF RACE MANAGEMENT ON THE LAKE. Peter led the use of GPS for race management starting in 2000.
Photo by Robert Rose



ADRIEN ROOTSAERT LED THE DESIGN & REBUILD OF THE BARGE SUPER STRUCTURE WITH ALUMINUM IN 1993. Also seen here is Wayne Rootsaert and Kent Roberts who did the welding.
Photo by Keith Driver



(BELOW) RICK STROPPE AND KELLY MAH LAUNCH THEIR "ONE HOUR" BOAT. *Photo by Keith Driver*



RICK DISCOVERS WITHIN FIVE MINUTES THAT HIS BOAT IS NOT VERY "SEAWORTHY!" *Photo by Keith Driver*


FACTOIDS

- 1998 saw the club's first fully functional website. There had been a couple of false starts previously but with the efforts of Debbie Guigg and Norris Weimer it became a permanent communication tool for the club.
- For many years the hauling of the barge in and out of the lake was by sheer manpower.
- In the late 1990s the club finally built a trailer and used a truck and a rope.
- In 1990, the club named it's first woman commodore, Edith Dittman, an active Tornado sailor. Her husband Adam Wanczura organized the men to be the food servers during the Commodore's Sailpast reception.



(BELOW) SERVERS WEARING APRONS AT THE 1990 SAILPAST RECEPTION
included from left to right: Robert Rose, Gordon Langer, Adam Langer, Peter van Muyden, Dale Holland, Fred Hadley, Wayne Rootsært, Peter Irwin, Bob Drew and Adrien Rootsært!
Photo provided by Robert Rose

(ABOVE) ADRIEN ROOTSAERT SUPERVISES THE FALL BARGE PULL OUT WHILE SANDY KEITH RIDES ON BOARD.
Photo by Keith Driver



During the 1990s the club played host to a significant number of events. Here is a brief summary:

- 1990 Tornado Nationals
- 1993 Fireball Nationals
- 1993 Canadian Youth Nationals held at Skeleton Lake
- 1994 Enterprise Nationals
- 1994 Women's Regionals
- 1997 505 Nationals
- 1997 Tornado North Americans
- 1999 Fireball Nationals

It was an impressive list of achievements for a small prairie sailing club!