


1960–1971 THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The 18th day of March 1960 was the founding of the Wabamun Sailing Club. Five members of RCNSA officially signed the application to form a society under the Societies' Act of Alberta. Dan Sorochan was one of them.

It was a huge step. They had no money and no land for a clubhouse but they had a vision and lots of enthusiasm.

In the first year there were more members than just these five listed on the application. Racing was organized off cottage beaches. A schedule was worked out and each weekend was hosted by one family. Some member's cottages were in Kapasiwin, some at Point Allison, some at Rich's Point and some at Ascot Beach. So the racing location moved around the lake quite a bit over the summer.



FACTOIDS

- Originally the club was called the Wabamun Yacht Club. In 1966 the name changed to the Wabamun Sailing Association. Later that same year it was changed again to the Wabamun Sailing Club.
- As a society, we were required to prepare club bylaws. One of the members was a lawyer and agreed to write them. As time went by and no bylaws appeared, Ross Cheriton finally took it upon himself to write them. Needless to say as a "non lawyer" he did a pretty good job as most of the club's original bylaws are still in use today.

The Societies' Act
APPLICATION

WE, the undersigned, HEREBY DECLARE that we desire to form a society under the Societies' Act and that:


- The name of the Society is The Wabamun Yacht Club.
- The objects of the Society are:
To foster and develop yachting on Lake Wabamun, in the Province of Alberta, and in so doing, to provide for the recreation of the members and to promote and afford opportunity for sporting and social gatherings.
- The operations of the Society are to be chiefly carried on in Edmonton and at Lake Wabamun, both in the Province of Alberta.

DATED this 18th day of March, A.D. 1960.

Name	Occupation	Address
"George Charles Field"	Lawyer	11532 - 72nd Avenue Edmonton, Alberta.
"Charles M. Learmonth"	Medical Doctor	10322 - 132nd Street, Edmonton, Alberta.
"Robert Gordon Hurlburt"	Businessman	13911 Valleyview Drive, Edmonton, Alberta.
"William Donovan Ferris"	Businessman	12794 - 102nd Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta.
"Rodney Pike"	Businessman	8710 - 120th Street, Edmonton, Alberta.

WITNESS as to the above signatures:
"June B. Glace"
316 Kreselle Building, Edmonton, Alberta.


THE SOCIETIES' ACT APPLICATION



WABAMUN SAILING CLUB

10820 - 119 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
September 4, 1968.

RICHES POINT
(Approx. 1 mile West of Calgary
Power Plant on The North Shore
of Lake Wabamun.)



Thanksgiving
Regatta

OUR 5TH THANKSGIVING REGATTA

DATE: Sunday, October 13, 1968.

TIME: 11:30 A.M. - Skipper's Meeting.

1st Race: 11:50 A.M. - White flag

2nd Race: 1:30 P.M. - White flag (approx.)

3rd Race: 3:00 P.M. - White flag (approx.)

Weather permitting all three races will be sailed Sunday between 12:00 noon and 4:00 P.M. In case of very light or very strong winds we will attempt to sail one or two races. If impossible, the racing will be postponed until Monday, 10:30 A.M. The same schedule will apply.

REGATTA FEE: \$2.00 Per Boat.

PRIZES:

1. Top score - ROLSON'S Trophy to the Skipper and Crew scoring the least points in the total series of races (no throw nuff) scored per the modified Olympic scoring system. All Races are Open Handicap series and will be calculated per the 1968 Portsmouth Yacht Club Rules.
2. Five yachts of a kind constitutes a class. A winner in each class gets a prize.

continued.

In 1964 Dan Sorochan started the first ever Thanksgiving Regatta and turkey dinner at his cottage. The idea was immediately popular and in 1965 Dan hosted it again at his cottage. There were 18 boats in the races and 85 people for the dinner. Dan's idea has continued on at the club ever since. Here is an ad taken from a 1968 Mainsheet. Notice the stats below!

P.S. - Previous Thanksgiving Regatta Statistics

1964 - Temp. 78° above, winds light, 12 sailboats, 42 adults & jrs.

* 1965 - Temp. 69° above, winds light, 18 sailboats, 85 adults & jrs.

1966 - Temp. 73° above, winds 15-20 MPH, 20 sailboats, 93 adults & jrs.

1967 - Temp. 67° above, winds 10-15 MPH, 23 sailboats, 97 adults & jrs.

1968 - We predict ideal sailing weather, winds, you provide the sailboats and attendance to make 1968 statistics.

* - Strong Winds on Sunday, Race was Sailed Monday.



(LEFT) DAN SERVES HIS GLUHWEIN HOT WINE WEARING HAWAIIAN SHORTS AT THANKSGIVING! Photo by Ross Cheriton

(BELOW) THE FLYING JUNIOR, the most popular training boat at this time,

Right from the start of the Thanksgiving Regatta tradition, every year Dan personally made and served his famous "Gluhwein" hot wine. It was just something he loved to do for his fellow club members.

Dan Sorochan was a strong supporter of junior sailing and in 1964 became the Northern Alberta Junior Sailing Coordinator. Dan helped organize the Prairie Y-Flyer Junior Sail Off at Pigeon Lake. John Henderson and John Howard represented the Wabamun Sailing Club and were among six winners who got to travel to London, Ontario to compete in a national Y-Flyer Regatta. They were some of the first ever Wabamun juniors to travel nationally.



In 1965 Walt Howard took it upon himself to prepare and issue the club newsletter. He chose the name "Mainsheet." He would write it at work and have his secretary type it up. She would make all the copies and do the mailing. For several years he personally covered all the newsletter costs. His writing style and topics for the "Mainsheet" were very unique.

In 1965 another new boat appeared at Wabamun. It was the fast, exciting Fireball. Most had wooden booms. Some were home built and some were fibreglass made by Smallcraft of Canada. They were only slightly faster than a Y Flyer so the handicap races were close! It was destined to have a big future in the Wabamun Sailing Club.

Here's a quote from the September 20th 1968 Mainsheet:

"If as a reward for a virtuous life we had our choice of the perfect crew, we would no doubt ask for one with the strength of a gorilla, the agility of a cat and the I.Q. of Einstein. Since none of us are blameless, the best solution seems to be that offered by an old time skipper, which was to get a young active woman with strong hands—preferably married and as pretty as possible. The reason, we suppose, for choosing a married woman is that they understand involved situations and are used to dealing with blockhead males. In choosing a good-looking woman you naturally get a high I.Q. as can be genetically proven."

FIREBALLS RACING IN THE 1970S.
Photo by Keith Driver



Buying the Land

Over the winter of 1965 and 1966, there were a number of extraordinary meetings to make the decision to buy some club land at the lake. A possible site had been found at Rich's Point. George Prudham owned a large lot and had built a cottage on the best part of it, but there was a low lying marshy section which he was willing to sell. The challenge for the club was how to cover the cost. There were only 16 members in the club at the time so money was limited!

The club was fortunate to have a very strong treasurer at that time named Gerry Pearson. Gerry led the club through the financial planning and put it on a good path for success. They chose to go with membership debentures to cover the bulk of the land and buildings cost. Gerry has been credited with being the most important member to have given the club its 50 year financial stability.



THE CLUB'S PROPERTY IN 1968
Photo by Al Davison



- When the club property was first purchased from George Prudham, it contained a channel that ran back to the Prudham's boat house on a diagonal. Through natural action of the waves and wind the channel naturally began to fill in. The boat house is still there next door to the club on the Legate's property. It's now a storage shed.
- When the club first acquired its land in 1966, Ross and Muriel Cheriton lay claim to being the first trailer park overnight campers in the club history!

The land was obtained in the summer of 1966. However it needed a lot of work to make it useful. A contractor was hired and three dump trucks brought in fill from the gravel pit up by the highway. They worked all day for three days running back and forth between the club and the gravel pit. With the fill laid down and spread, and top soil as a cover, grass seed was the final step.

The first building on the site was a one car garage that was used as a clubhouse. Ken Anderson recalls that they organized a work party and had it built in one day! It was a humble start but had lots of potential.

When the land purchase was made from George Prudham, the lot was subdivided. The County of Parkland decided at that time to take the west 100 foot wide strip as a future park. The county did not use the land at that time so the club went ahead with its development and used it for themselves. This county decision was to haunt the club in future years.

Using the Land

Following the purchase of the land, most activities were carried on at the club. However for several years the club did still hold programs at other beaches (Kapasiwini Day, Ascot Day, Point Allison Day).

For many years there had been an annual Down the Lake Race between Kapasiwin and EYC at Seba Beach. One year with light winds, boats didn't finish until 9:30 PM! In 1966 the race was changed to run from Rich's Point to Seba Beach. And of course back the next day. That year, EYC hosted the Down the Lake Races, the Y-Flyer Nationals and the Provincial Regatta all back to back. There were 42 Y-Flyers at the Nationals and 100 boats entered in the Provincials.

On Saturday evening, they sold over 300 steaks and hamburgers to the sailors.

FACTOIDS

- In 1965 John Henderson (age 14) and John Howard (age 13) won the Down the Lake Race in a Y-Flyer. Later that year, the club made a new rule that all the competitors in the race to be at least 17 yrs old.

- With regattas becoming more common and larger, a coordinating organization was needed. The Alberta Sailing Association (ASA) was created in 1966. The ASA was empowered to act as a spokesman for sailing in Alberta in dealing with Provincial and Federal government organizations for the promotion and funding of sailing.



DOWN THE LAKE RACE

Before the advent of the club yearbook, there was only an annual sailing schedule that was prepared and issued. To the right is the 1966 schedule. Notice they waited until mid June to start when the water was a little warmer!



FACTOID

- Barbara Hicklin, Jean Harper and Muriel Cheriton ran every race every weekend for six years. It was first done on shore, then off the pier and finally off the clubhouse balcony. They also did all the scoring of races. Before the age of computers all scoring and handicap calculations were done by hand. Muriel Cheriton was seen on a number of occasions with her slide rule in action on the pier. She was known to finish the handicap calculations before all the boats were even on shore!

WABAMUN SAILING CLUB RACING SCHEDULE - 1966					
JUNE					
Sun.	19	10:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	26	10:50 a.m.	Series Race		
JULY					
Fri.	1	10:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sat.	2	1:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	3	10:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Mon.	4		Start of Saba Junior Sailing Part 1 (July 4 - 15)		
Sat.	9	1:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	10	10:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sat.	16	1:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	17	10:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	17	1:50 p.m.	Class Race-Mohamud Y-Flier Championship		
Mon.	18		Start of Saba Junior Sailing Part 2 (July 18 - 29, Aug. 1 - 3)		
Sat.	23	1:50 p.m.	Saba vs. Expendable - Commercial Fisheries' Trophy		
		10:50 a.m.	Hug for first boat in other classes		
		12:50 p.m.	P. J. Start Others Start		
JULY (con't)					
Sun.	24	10:50 a.m.	Expendable to Saba - Western Island Services' Trophy - Open Class Handicap.		
Mon.	25, 26		Edmonton Yacht Club Race Week Saba Beach - Lawson Trophy S.C.S.		
Wed.	27, 28, 29		Y-Flier Nationals at E.Y.C. - Saba		
Sat.	30, 31		Alberta Provincial Regatta E.Y.C. - Saba		
AUGUST					
Sat.	6	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	7	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Mon.	8, 9, 10, 11, 12		Junior Sailing Elimination Week at Saba (subject to change)		
Sat.	13	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	14	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Mon.	15		Start of Junior Sailing Saba Part 3 (Aug. 15 - 25)		
Sat.	20	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	21	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sat.	27	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	28	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
SEPTEMBER					
Sat.	3	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	4	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sat.	10	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	11	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sat.	17	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	18	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
Sat.	24	2:50 p.m.	Series Race		
Sun.	25	11:50 a.m.	Series Race		
OCTOBER					
	8, 9, and 10		Wilson Trophy Thanksgiving Race		

WSC RACING SCHEDULE, 1966



1967 was the year Dan Soroohan was commodore. For the first time, his junior sailing program paid off in spades for the girls. Arlie Lewis and Wendy Howard won the All Girls Flying Junior Alberta Championship at Glenmore Yacht Club in Calgary. They flew to Charlottetown and competed in the All Girls National Regatta in Charlottetown. Dan also hosted a coordinated EYC/WSC two week junior sailing course at his cottage. There were 35 kids in attendance. It was the beginning of the future combined EYC/WSC training organization that eventually has become the Northern Alberta Sailing College.

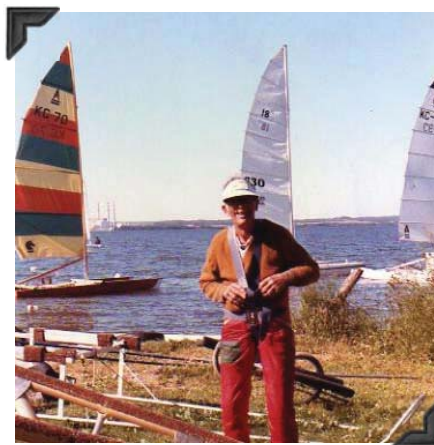


WITHOUT A LARGE CLUBHOUSE, THE FRONT LAWN WAS HUGE. Fred de Geest wrestles with one of his kids in the foreground. Also in the photo are Ed Kyte, Dick Harper, Bob Stevens, Erwin Mertens and Dan Sorochan. Notice in the background the fleet of Y-Flyers that are stored on shore. *Photo by Ross Cheriton*

WALT HOWARD CONTINUED TO BE MAINSHEET EDITOR WITH HIGHLY AMUSING RESULTS. Here's a quote from his August 15th 1967 issue:

Sunday, August 13th races were held at Kapisiwia with 18 boats taking part. Results are attached. Your Editor (Y977) set a record of sorts that will probably stand for quite some time. Y977 was 50-70 feet from the line when the starting flag was raised. According to the Race Committee, it was 21 minutes and 17 seconds before Y977 crossed the line with all other boats well on their way to the first mark. Proving that "Church isn't out till the singin'" your Editor pressed on and crossed the finishing line in 6th position. We might also mention that Fred de Geest was not informed until late Sunday morning that the races were to be at Kapisiwia and arrived a good 15 minutes after the first race started but still managed to finish ahead of two boats.

Congratulations to Robbie Henderson, who on corrected time won both races. Next week's races to be at beautiful Point Allison where "field and forest" meet to host the lake. (Your Editor is unable to resist puns of this sort and no doubt would be fired except for the fact he is in the "acting and unpaid" category).



Growing the Club

By 1968 the club was firming up a long term vision. Ross Cheriton led the planning and implementation. Roads, fences, a longer pier, boat launching ramps, a two story clubhouse, indoor bathrooms, and a trailer camp were all on the list. But the club needed more members and the associated money to pay for all these things. In 1968 there were 34 members with seven Flying Dutchmen, 15 Y-Flyers, six Fireballs, and a catamaran called a Unicorn owned by a new enthusiastic member named Dick Harper.

DICK TIGHTENS HIS TRAPEZE before going out for a blast around the lake on his Unicorn. *Photo by Ross Cheriton*

FACTOID

- The first catamaran sailors to join the club in 1967 were Dick Harper and Harry Endres. They both had previously sailed a couple of years at EYC. They brought a whole new type of sailing to the club that lives on even today.

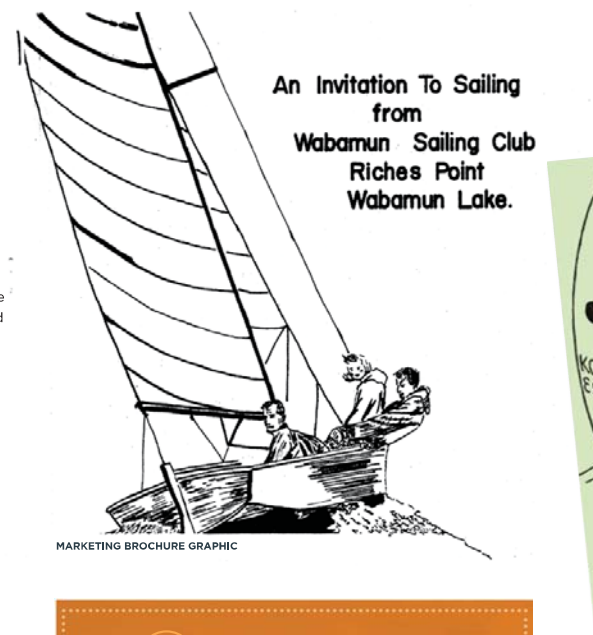
The club recognized the need to install a flagpole. It would add a nautical look to the club and provide a practical solution of where to fly the racing signal flags. It was designed and built by Fred de Geest. Fred worked in the oil patch and had access to drilling rig pipe so that is what he used to build it. It was first erected in 1968. It was later moved farther east when the new clubhouse was built.

To attract more members, 1968 saw the club's first marketing brochure (right). Ross Cheriton wrote it and also had it published in The Edmonton Journal.

It must have worked because by 1969 the membership had jumped to 58.

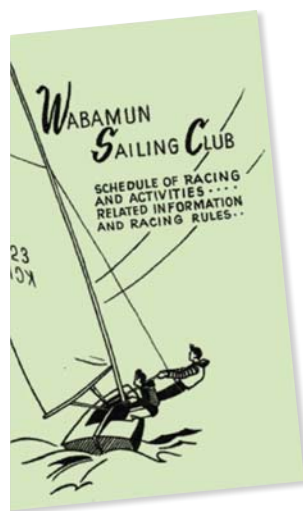


FRED DE GEEST AND FRIENDS FIRST RAISE THE CLUB FLAGPOLE IN 1968.
It's just like the sands of Iwo Jima!
Photo by Ross Cheriton



FACTOID

- 1970 saw a quiet entrance of another class of catamaran called the Sea Spray. It was a low cost smaller cat that did not carry a trapeze. It would go on to be very popular in the club for many years.



TAILGATE MEETING. From left to right: Gerry Pearson, Dan Sorochan, Bob Stevens, Ross Cheriton and Maurice Robinson. *Photo by Toni Trommelen*

1969 saw the first formal club yearbook (left). Marg Anderson and Linda Barrett published it for a number of years.

Ross Cheriton was commodore in 1969 and moved forward on a number of activities. The junior sailing program proceeded with 51 kids in attendance. Ross announced a competition for the design of a club burgee. Ross was also instrumental in

developing the plan for the entire property (fences, roads, power lines, boat launches, clubhouse, etc.).

In 1969 Ross did not have a Commodore's Sailpast as the event did not exist. There was instead a race after which Ross and Muriel invited everyone back to their cottage (situated across the road from the club) for a beer. This was the first time there

was a social component to the race and set the stage for the future Sailpast.

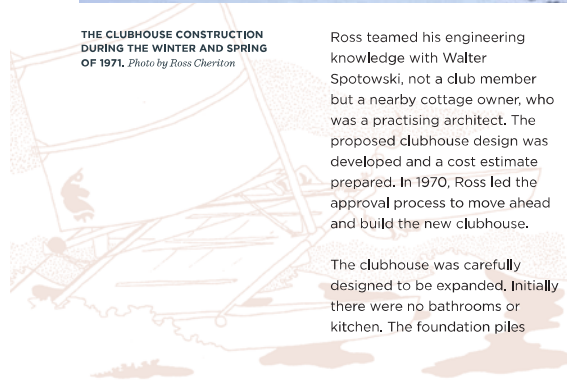
Building the Clubhouse

In June 1970 Ross Cheriton ran a meeting off the tailgate of a car in the club parking lot. At the meeting the membership approved the \$17,000 expenditure for the new clubhouse.





THE CLUBHOUSE CONSTRUCTION DURING THE WINTER AND SPRING OF 1971. Photo by Ross Cheriton



Ross teamed his engineering knowledge with Walter Spotowski, not a club member but a nearby cottage owner, who was a practising architect. The proposed clubhouse design was developed and a cost estimate prepared. In 1970, Ross led the approval process to move ahead and build the new clubhouse.

The clubhouse was carefully designed to be expanded. Initially there were no bathrooms or kitchen. The foundation piles

were driven in the fall of 1970 and the clubhouse was finished by the spring of 1971.

The exact location of the clubhouse was chosen by Dan Sorochan and Ross Cheriton. They came out to the property one fall afternoon with some survey stakes and a hammer. They walked around the site and pounded in the four corner stakes where they thought it would look best. And that's where it stands today!



FACTOID

- The first club owned powerboat was a used fiberglass 16 foot runabout with a troublesome 45 hp Chrysler engine. It was purchased in 1971 and used for a number of years until the inflatable Avon and first Boston Whaler were purchased in the late 1970s. The engine was later transferred to the first barge to give us even more challenges. It was probably the same engine that led to Archie Child's recommendation to create the Equipment Manager position in the mid 1980s!



(RIGHT) HOT COMPETITION AT WABAMUN'S FIRST EVER ALBERTA PROVINCIAL REGATTA IN 1971. Notice all the wood booms! In the background is Wabamun's first Enterprise sailed by Keith and Susan Driver. John Henderson races his new Fireball KC7073, Photo from the WSC archives

(TOP) SKIPPER'S MEETINGS WERE ALWAYS HELD ON SHORE BEFORE RACING, EVEN FOR CLUB RACES. They weren't always the formal affair one sees at regattas today! Photo by Ross Cheriton



Provincial Recognition

The Alberta Provincial Regatta was held at the Calgary Yacht Club in 1970. With the planned completion of the new clubhouse, Wabamun Sailing Club was asked to hold the Provincial Regatta in 1971 for the first time. It was a big step up for the fledgling club.

On the August long weekend Bob Stevens as Alberta Provincial Regatta Chairman together with Dick Harper, club commodore, together proved to everyone that Wabamun now had the facilities and the people to host a major event. It was a resounding success. Saturday night had a big dinner and one of the first big dances upstairs in the clubhouse.



- In 1971, Dick Harper was commodore. The club held its first ever Commodore's Sailpast. It proved to be a great social event for the members.

- Sailweek was started in 1970 by Ross and Muriel Cheriton. Each summer the Cheritons would go to their lake cottage for a week of sailing. They were keen to sail and socialize but no one else was there during the week. Ross invited everyone to come out that week. The turnout was tremendous. Ross recalls the first Monday morning discussion with Dick Harper about what they should do. There was no plan as they didn't know if anyone might show up!



**THE CLUB TRAILER PARK
CAMPGROUND IN THE EARLY 1970S.**
Photo from the WSC Archives

The initial trailer park had only ten spots and was quite primitive. There was no grass and minimal gravel on the road. It was a few years before decks and gazebos were built by members!

Sailweek was so successful it immediately became a permanent part of the club's annual sailing program. Initially it was strictly a sailing event. There were five days of races as well as races Wednesday evening. Experienced sailors gave workshops and seminars on sailing and racing too. Social events gradually became part of Sailweek because of the available evenings during the week. As the years went by, different members took a turn at hosting Sailweek. As new ideas were tried, people would decide whether to incorporate them into future Sailweeks as a permanent event.

One of the other things that had occurred in the last few years was the development of the trailer park campground on the property. The front row was laid out first and the back row was left as bush. Now that members who did not own cottages could stay at the lake for the weekend, the social atmosphere just blossomed on the summer weekends.

With the construction of the clubhouse, power was also brought onto the site. For the first time, there was power for the clubhouse, boathouse, trailers and of course power tools to drill holes in boats!



**ONE OF THOSE LAZY, CRAZY, HAZY DAYS
OF AN EARLY SAILWEEK.** Notice the 16 foot runabout power boat which was the committee boat. Sundance power plant had only one stick in those days.
Photo by Ross Cheriton