



## From the editor once again!

Editing errors and all

So, we are currently in stage 3 holding our breath to see what will transpire from this point on. Will it be this?

“All the News  
That's Fit to Print”



Or maybe  
..... variant



Meanwhile, take a minute to check the covid rules for Fanshawe Yacht Club on the club website [www.fyc.on.ca](http://www.fyc.on.ca). (top of the home page)..

The club events schedule for 2021 has been restarted with the **'Wednesday-night-sailor-check-to-see- if- the- race-signals-are- working-and- the- marks - are- well-placed'** being renamed to **Wednesday Night Informal Racing at FYC! Take note that as the days shorten at this time of year, the racing first signal will be at 6:15 PM**

The next event was the Firefly Regatta held August 7th and 8<sup>th</sup>. This was new this year to offer the club a replacement for missed regattas. Enjoy the Firebug report submitted by Rick Goldt in this issue! Results will soon be posted.

It is wonderful to welcome back the Abilities in Motion (adaptive paddling organization) at the club to begin their 2021 schedule. This is their statement to volunteers and paddlers:

We have decided to scrap membership fees this year for all our supporters!  
We are planning to operate this summer but monitoring the Covid-19 situation taking day by day. **Imagine** – being on the water, WOW, learning new paddling skills and not having to pay anything - bigger WOW!

Both Dragon boat clubs are not paddling so far this summer.

Our club [facebook](#) page is much more active this year with photos and comments. Join in if you wish!

Hope you enjoy this issue and feel free to contribute to the next (to be posted in early October 2021).

## 2021 FYC Events



## UPCOMING EVENTS

ED. NOTE: Well sailors, seems we finally have a schedule of events and a good 2 ½ months of sail season yet to go!

*Woohoo!*

Sat - August 7		Firefly Regatta 10 AM - 4 PM
Sun - August 8		Firefly Regatta 10 AM - 4 PM
Sat - August 28		Summer Regatta 8:30 AM - 4 PM
		Annual Corn Roast 5 - 8:30 PM
Sun - August 29		Summer Regatta 8:30 AM - 4 PM

*Woohoo!*

Sat - September 4		Plywood Classic Regatta 10 AM - 4 PM
Mon - September 13		Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM

*Woohoo!*

Sat - October 2		Pumpkin Regatta 9 AM - 4 PM
Sun - October 3		Pumpkin Regatta 9 AM - 4 PM
Mon - October 4		Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM
Sat - October 16		Work Party: Fall #1 8:30 AM - 4 PM

*Woohoo!*

Mon - November 1		Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM
Sat - November 6		64th Annual Banquet 5 - 10:30 PM

ED NOTE: Racing every Wednesday or Thursday, please read on.....

## 2021 Informal Racing at FYC

ED NOTE: This is the original post for 2021 Wednesday Informal racing (Thursday as weather date) starting June 6.

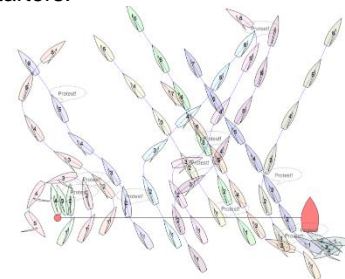
For those that can't remember, for the last couple of years, we have used a flex-date system to allow us to get better wind conditions for our race evenings. Each Tuesday, I will be looking at the Weather Network, to see their weather prediction for Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The primary race evening is Wednesday, and only if the forecast for Wednesday is terrible, then Thursday would be the alternate evening for racing. By terrible, I mean no wind forecast (I not keen on just sitting out there floating around), or being faced with survival conditions. So, Tuesday evening, I will make the choice of Wednesday or Thursday for racing. I also know that when I've picked Thursday in the past, race attendance goes down, so I try not to move it.

For May, June, and July, the race initial warning 2 or 3 beeps from the race hut, will go around 6:20 pm, so the race 5-minute warning should go at approximately 6:25, and the race start will be approximately 6:30 pm. Into August and September, I start to move the starting sequence forward, because the evenings are getting dark early. I mention 2 or 3 beeps for the initial warning, it's been a long winter, and I can't remember if its 2 or 3 beeps.

The race course will be posted on the race hut wall facing the lake, and there is no one monitoring the starting line, looking for early starters.

For those not familiar with the starting sequence:

- 5 minutes before start – one beep
- 4 minutes before start – one beep
- 1 minute before start – one beep
- Start – one beep



I contact all those interested in coming out for these informal races by email. If I don't already have your email, or yours has changed from last year, send me an email to [jb4designs@outlook.com](mailto:jb4designs@outlook.com)

So, come on out. Racing is a great way to improve your sailing skills, and meet fellow sailors. No handshaking, just friendly waves - for now.

See you on the water. Jens Biskaborn – Wayfarer W7663, Laser 20791, Opti 1404



## 2021 FYC Formal Racing - Regattas

**Our first regatta of 2021!!!**

**Report: The FYC "Firefly" Regatta Aug 7,8**

**The view from here: Rick Goldt 38585**

With the prospect of the winner of each class receiving a jar (not sealed) of Fireflies, I signed up for the first annual Firefly Regatta (a supposedly post COVID event) at FYC. I couldn't turn down the opportunity to add to our efficient lighting plans at our home.

Apparently second place would only be awarded a firefly flashlight, and you know how good they are.



The regatta itself was called to make up for the June Bug and Commodore's regattas normally held earlier in the season but because of..... 8 boats of various types registered for the regatta of which the Lasers were by far the largest fleet.

The wind forecast for the weekend looked like light winds, variable in all respects, typical for summer, especially in the mornings when we always seem to like torture ourselves to race before the best winds of the day roll in, in the later afternoon.

It takes a dedicated group to run the races at any regatta from race personnel through to mark layers and standby observant rescuers. So, they stuck by us for the weekend and by the end 7 races were completed for the performance boats (Lasers, Wayfarer, and RS 400) and I believe at least 5 races for the larger sluggish, non-performance, and slower cruising boats (heh, it's my article).



Two races held on Saturday were held at the northern end of the lake in widely swinging zephyrs between southerly to westerly directions. Any leads were not assured as I can attest to both on the positive outcome side and the usually balanced negative side (heart stress here). Nevertheless, the days winds were survived with an even dimmer prospect of lighter winds on the Sunday. Some of sailors were able to

hang around for the impromptu evening barbeque where I am sure I was roasted, if not then after this article.



Sunday morning loomed with a FOG over the City of London and especially over Fanshawe Reservoir. The Race Committee using their foggy navigation skills set up the first course and beckoned the reluctant sailors out to the course (wherever it was). Before one knew it ever so slight breezes began to whisk the fog

away. Gradually during the morning, the breezes increased, and also with even more variability in strength, direction and gusts. Breezes ranged again between south-east – southwest but overall, much better than on the Saturday. Courses were predominately back and forth from under Lookout Point towards the Rowing Centre. With the large boats occasionally being sent way north to the number 6 mark (apparently simulating a cruise). Racing through the day followed the old axiom (try to sail the longest tack upwind early as much as possible) for success. In the Lasers it became a contest to see who could adhere to the principle. A bit of fleet mixing caused some dismay at times. How can so few boats vie for the same small patch of water at the same time. Coincidences aside the day was a pleasant surprise, great being on the water to beat the warmth on land. Now I wonder where the Firefly farm is that the prizes will be gathered from? Would save a bit of trouble having to sail a regatta







## UPCOMING REGATTAS

Please check the club website for all the racing details, instructions and so on. A club email will be sent before each regatta with information as well. Questions or wish to volunteer to help run the races, contact: John Kabel, Racing Committee Chair. This info was posted on our club website at the time this issue was written.

### The Club Championship Regatta

(Previously called Summer Regatta)

8:30 AM to 4 PM, August 28th and 29th

**Eligibility** This regatta is open to all members in good standing with FYC and graduates of the Sailing School in 2019.

**Race Starts** Our race committee always gives preference to **water-based starts**. If that is not possible, for instance due to inclement weather or a shortage of volunteers, land-based starts will be used. See the [sailing instructions](#) for more information.

**First Race:** 11 AM on Saturday, 9:30 AM on Sunday.

**Last Race:** no start sequence will begin after 3 PM on Sunday



### Entry Fees

Single-Handed	Junior Single	Learn to Race
\$30	\$25	\$15
Double-Handed	Junior Double	
\$50	\$40	

### Event Organizer

Please direct all inquiries about this event to:  
Event Organizer John Kabel, Racing Committee Chair

## 2021 Annual Corn Roast - Social

Saturday **August 28** from 5 PM to 8:30 PM  
Following the last race of the Club Championship Regatta that day.



Open to **members**, all **sailing school students** and guests.

The corn roast begins after the racing on Saturday.

Everyone is welcome to attend, including members, sailing school students, paddlers, regatta participants, and family and friends.

### Plywood Classic Regatta

Saturday **September 4** from 10 AM to 4 PM

**Eligibility** Sailors with plywood sailboats of any kind



### Pumpkin Regatta

**9 AM to 4 PM**, October 2nd and 3rd

#### Invitational

Open to **members** and  
all **sailing school students**.



**NOTE:** This regatta is still subject to possible last-minute cancellation because of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Coming together following FYC's COVID-19 Code of Conduct. There will be

no social aspect at this event. Participants bring their own food and beverages. The Pumpkin Regatta and entry to the Fanshawe Yacht Club are conditional on adherence to a strict Covid-19 policy put on place by the Board. The event is limited to 100 people on site at a time. Please limit your attendance to skipper, crew and absolutely essential support people only. PLEASE PREREGISTER (submit your name and phone number only; pay at registration on October 3) and SIGN A COPY OF THE FYC COVID CODE OF CONDUCT if you have not already done so, and submit that at Registration.

### COVID-19 IMPACTS

Skippers and crew are reminded that all provincially-mandated and local regulations for dealing with the Covid-19 emergency are in force. All people coming onto the Club grounds must sign in at the gate with at least their names and phone numbers, for contact tracing purposes. Keep a 2 m distance from other people when not wearing a mask. Skipper and crew not from the same residence must wear a mask on their boat at all times. Failure to adhere to this requirement without good cause may result in disqualification without recourse to appeal. Safety boats may be available and manned; in extreme cases, the Club cannot guarantee that safety personnel will be able to continue wearing a mask throughout a rescue procedure. Please keep the ramps, docks and parking areas near the ramps free of parked vehicles in case of need to deploy emergency vehicles.

### Race Starts

Our race committee always gives preference to **water-based starts**. If that is not possible, for instance due to inclement weather or a shortage of

volunteers, land-based starts will be used. See the [sailing instructions](#) for more information.

**First Race:** scheduled for Saturday at 11 AM.

**Last Race:** no start sequence will begin after 1:30 PM on Sunday

### Entry Fees

Single-Handed	Junior Single	Learn to Race
\$30	\$25	\$15
Double-Handed	Junior Double	
\$50	\$40	

### Event Organizer

Please direct all inquiries about this event to:  
Event Organizer [John Kabel](#), Racing Committee Chair



AIRSHOW LONDON IS EXCITED TO ONCE AGAIN PRESENT SKYDRIVE. OUR 2021 AIR SHOW WILL BE HELD **ON AUGUST 27-29** AS A DRIVE-IN EVENT! JOIN US FOR A SPECTACULAR AERIAL DISPLAY FEATURING THE ONLY CANADIAN APPEARANCE OF THE U.S. NAVY BLUE ANGELS!

*ED NOTE: One of the best places to watch the planes of the air show is from our very own dock! Please join us – bring your snacks, beverages or even dinner and lawn chairs. Our Club Championship Regatta is scheduled for the same date so you can watch the race as well. Or better yet, sail the regatta and see the air show from the comfort of your yacht!!*

*Best idea of all!!! On Saturday, During the regatta, the Air Show will lead into our Corn Roast. Sail and corn roast with an air show – awesome!*

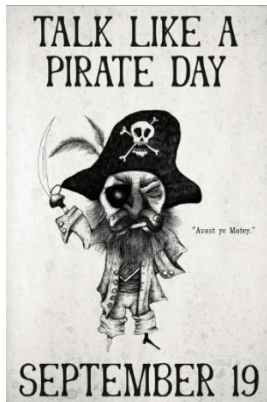
**Friday Show Times: 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM**

**Saturday & Sunday Show Times: 1:00 PM – 5:00PM**

**\*Please note: air showtimes are subject to change without notice.**

[airshowlondon.com/](http://airshowlondon.com/)

## Finally, a most important event: 'International Talk like a pirate day' on Sept 19



International Talk Like a Pirate Day is a parodic holiday created in 1995 by John Baur (Ol' Chumbucket) and Mark Summers (Cap'n Slappy), of Albany, Oregon, U.S., who proclaimed September 19 each year as the day when everyone in the world should talk like a pirate. An observer of this holiday would greet friends not with "Hello, everyone!" but with "Ahoy, maties!" or "Ahoy, me hearties!" The holiday, and its observance, springs from a romanticized view of the Golden Age of Piracy.



There is even a song ...Arrrrrrrrrr

"Talk Like a Pirate" by Tom Mason and The Blue Buccaneers

### *whenever possible, use these helpful vocabulary words:*

**Booty** - Refers to any ill-gotten goods swiped from another party (especially jewelry, cash and wedding silverware).

**Briny deep** - Depending on context, this can mean the ocean or a pickle jar.

**Bunghole** - The opening in a cask of beer or rum that is plugged with a cork or stopper. Use this word sparingly, as it makes middle school boys giggle uncontrollably.

**Cap'n** - Abbreviated form of 'captain.' A term of respect. Even in the corporate workplace, CEOs and other bosses secretly love it when their underlings address them as 'Cap'n.'

**Clemente** - Played right field for the Pittsburgh Pirates, 1955-1972.

**Davy Jones' Locker** - Refers to a grave at the bottom of the sea. Not to be confused with Peter Tork's Locker, which is where the Monkees kept their valuables while performing concerts on stage.

**Dubloon** - It's a Spanish gold coin, but you can use the word to refer to nickels and dimes and quarters, as in 'This vending machine just ate me dubloons, and I didn't get me Twinkie in return!'

**Grog** - Technically, it's diluted rum, although you can use the word to refer to just about any alcoholic concoction. The more grog a pirate consumes, the less he sweats. When necessary, the finer semantic details.

**Landlubber** - A weak-willed ninny who doesn't have the courage needed to brave the briny deep (referring to the ocean, not the pickle jar).

**Jolly Roger** - Pirate flag featuring skull and crossbones. Can also be referred to as the Artful Dodger, the Angry Codger or the Internet Blogger (pronounced with a soft 'G' in this context).

**Johnny Depp** - A sarcastic phrase for a baby-faced pirate who dresses a wee bit too fancy. Equivalent of calling someone 'pretty boy,' as in 'We better not ask Johnny Depp over there to go along on the raid --- he might rip his silk shirt!' An even more extreme version is to call someone Orlando Bloom.

**Keelhaul** - A form of punishment. Even if you don't know what it means, the word just sounds nasty. Next time someone crosses you, get a wild look in your eyes and shout, 'I'll keelhaul ye!' Watch how fast they straighten up their act and show you some respect.

**Matey** - A good friend, but not a spouse. Call your spouse 'matey' during a tender moment and see how quickly it spoils the mood (unless your spouse has a pirate fetish, in which case you should make sure to say this word with a leer and raise the eyebrow over the eye that isn't covered by a patch.)

**'No quarter!'** - This means 'We won't accept surrender!' If you mean you need change, you should say 'No dubloon!'

**Pillage** - If used as a verb, it means to rob and loot ('We'll pillage the town!'). Used as a noun, it refers to a pirate's daily prescribed medication ('Don't take your pillage on an empty stomach or ye'll get the cramps.')

**Poop deck** - Top deck on a large ship. If you don't have a ship, you can use this phrase to refer to the room over the garage. If you really want to make your seventh-grader giggle, use 'poop deck' and 'bunghole' in the same sentence ("Plug the bunghole before it leaks on the poop deck!").

**'The Puffy Shirt'** - Every pirate's favorite 'Seinfeld' episode. All work on the ship comes to a halt when this episode turns up on re-runs.

**Salt (or Old Salt)** - An experienced sailor. (If he sneezes a lot, you can call him Old Pepper, and if his hair is a ruddy red color, Old Paprika is acceptable.)

**Scurvy** - Derogatory adjective meaning lowly or disgusting, as in 'Stand back, ye scurvy dog!' The usage derives from the name of a disease caused by Vitamin C deficiency, suggesting that pirates are fanatical about their intake of citrus fruits and lose respect for someone who falls behind.

**'Shiver me timbers!'** - An expression shouted at moments of surprise. The pirate equivalent of the contemporary 'Ain't that a corker!'

**Swab** - To mop or clean something.

**Swabby** - A lowly worker who mops or cleans things.

**'Swab this!'** - Angry response from a swabby who has been asked to swab something one too many times. (Often accompanied by a gesture that involves grabbing his pirate parts.)

**Walking the plank** - A manner of execution whereby a pirate makes a person walk on a wooden plank until he falls off into the briny deep (the ocean, not the pickles) and sinks to Davy Jones' Locker (not Peter Tork's Locker).

**'Yo ho ho!'** - Pirate interjection expressing great joy. Repeated at increasing volume during the ingestion of grog.

When necessary, abandon ship  
with style





## Show off your enthusiasm for Fanshawe Yacht Club and Sailing School with a cool car decal!

3" x 4" decals: \$2 each

For orders, please email Ren

[fyc.london.marketing@gmail.com](mailto:fyc.london.marketing@gmail.com)



## Henley on the Todd Regatta, postponed again!

Ahhhhhh the long reaching effects of Covid.

In Australia, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Henley on the Todd Regatta on the Todd River in Alice Springs had to be postponed to 2022. This is likely the world's only regatta on a dry river bed, managed Flintstone style and was to be held on August 20.

Of course, there would be sailboats but also Dragon Boats, Sculling, and Pirate battles



## 2021 FYC Sailing School is underway!

This year has seen a very good enrolment in the Sail School classes for adults and kids. Hopefully this will generate new members for our Sailing Club as people learn to enjoy their time sailing and realize that it is a lifelong sport. No end at age 35! (Think Olympics, hockey, baseball). Just so much more wisdom and peace as you sail on!!



A new dock configuration is being tried this year for sailing school boats. For easterly wind situations, the sailors will learn to drop the sails on the water and paddle ashore. Will see how that goes!

## The Broad Scale Monitoring Program for Ontario includes our lake on this cycle!

*ED NOTE: Cycle 1 of this program to monitor fisheries in Ontario's inland lakes was from 2008 to 2012. We made the list for the 2021 cycle.....yay?? This means there will be obstacles in the lake for sailing but they will be well marked. If you are interested--- this is a summary of the procedure and things looked for. You can see results and bulletins :*

Lake bulletins can be found on MNRF's [Fish ON-Line website](#).

*First the letter sent to the lakes included this one from your club email:*

### To Lake Residents, Campers and Visitors



The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is responsible for monitoring the abundance and health of fish populations in the lakes and rivers across Ontario. MNRF science crews will collect information on fish species, take water samples, and check for invasive species in this lake and approximately 145 other lakes from June to September.

**It is important for your safety and for the integrity of our data that these nets are not disturbed.** If you are on this lake while it is being monitored and see MNRF buoys, please don't lift the nets or buoys, and avoid recreational activities or anchoring between and around the buoys. All MNRF nets are clearly marked with yellow buoys bearing the Ontario logo. Nets are checked and moved to a new location every day.

Biological data are collected by our science crews and provide MNRF biologists with valuable information about abundance, age structure, mortality, and maturity of the types of fish in the lake. This information is used to evaluate the health of fish populations in the lake and make management decisions.

The number of fish caught and sampled represents a very small percentage of the total population in the lake. As resource managers responsible for the sustainability of these populations, we are sensitive to the number of fish collected, but strongly believe this information is necessary to responsibly manage this resource.

Aquatic monitoring staff are following all public health recommendations for safety, including appropriate social distancing, wearing protective equipment, and handwashing/sanitizing. MNRF is asking the public to be respectful of staff and help maintain a 2-metre personal distance.

For more on Ontario's aquatic resources, check out [ontario.ca/fishing](http://ontario.ca/fishing) for angling opportunities and monitoring techniques.

If you have any questions or concerns about our monitoring program, contact Steve Vandermeer at 705-934-0594 ([steve.vandermeer@ontario.ca](mailto:steve.vandermeer@ontario.ca)).

**Broad-scale method to sample fish species uses a combination of two types of gillnets:**

- Large mesh gillnet that targets fish larger than 20 cm in length, the size range of interest to anglers;
- Small mesh gillnet that targets smaller fish (size range of interest to large fish)

*Interestingly my son is in molecular/ cytogenetics and they too are using a broadscale method of sampling a person's entire genome to look for variations*

#### Set duration:

- Large mesh: minimum sixteen hours; maximum twenty-two hours
- Small mech: minimum twelve hours; maximum twenty-two hours

*So, the nets will be moved about the lake for these time durations and will be well marked with buoys. Please avoid these areas when sailing!!!*

#### Timing of survey

Surveys should be conducted when surface water temperature is greater than 18 degrees Celsius, and concluded when temperature drops below 18 degrees Celsius. Ideally, it is recommended that sampling take place during the four to six-week period of maximum summer water temperature.

#### Preparing for the surveys

If current depth maps are not available, the researchers will do Bathymetric surveys that are conducted by boat using a depth sounder with a global positioning system (GPS). The depth sounder collects a series of points at timed intervals as the boat moves across the lake. Depths and locations are recorded at each point by the GPS while the boat is driven along the shoreline (at 3–5 m depth), and then back and forth across the lake. A computer is used to connect points of equal depth to create a model representing the depth profile (depth contours) of the lake. Bathymetric data can provide information about lake size, volume, depth, and shoreline length that are factors which can influence the number and types of fish in a lake.

*UTRCA may have already completed their depth survey so this may not happen*

#### Measurements desired

**Water clarity** is measured by collecting a secchi depth reading using a black and white metal disc known as a secchi disc. The deeper the secchi disc can be seen, the clearer the water. It is a simple and inexpensive way to gather data that reflects the productive capacity of a lake. Secchi depth readings are often collected at the deepest location of the lake, on the shaded side of the boat. The disk is lowered until it disappears; the depth is noted, and then the disk is raised until it reappears (depth noted). Secchi depth is recorded midway between these two depths.

The



**Dissolved oxygen and temperature profiles** are recorded using a digital oxygen/temperature meter at the deepest location of the lake. Measurements are observed and recorded at the surface, and then at every metre until 16-m depth, then at every 2 m to the lake bottom.

**Lake water chemistry** is evaluated for information on the nutrients in each lake surveyed. Water samples are taken over the deepest part of the lake within four weeks of ice leaving the lake. Sampling is conducted by lowering a sample bottle to the secchi depth and then slowly retrieving the bottle to the surface

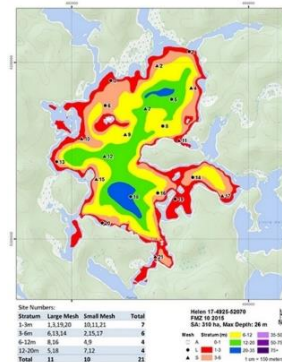
True colour	Dissolved
pH	inorganic carbon
Conductivity	Dissolved organic
Alkalinity	carbon
Calcium	Ammonia/Ammon
Magnesium	ium
Sodium	Nitrate/Nitrite
Potassium	Total Kjeldahl
Chloride	Nitrogen
Sulphate	Total
Silicate	Phosphorous
Iron	

**Zooplankton** (small animals that live in the water or on plants/rocks in the lake) are collected and tested for aquatic invasive species that may not be visible to the eye, like spiny waterflea. Samples taken using fine-mesh nets at three locations in a lake: over the deepest part of the lake; near a boat launch, marina, or other access point; and a location on the windward side of the lake, since some aquatic invasive species are passive swimmers and are pushed through the water by wind and waves.

**Angling activity** Aerial activity counts are completed each year during summer and winter to determine how much fishing is taking place in a zone. Survey flights are conducted weekly, alternating between weekdays and weekends. Counts are conducted between 10 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on scheduled days. The airplane is flown generally at an altitude of 460 m, but lower-level flights occur due to weather or to count larger groups of anglers. Flight paths, direction of travel, and time entering and exiting the survey area are recorded. The number of anglers and boats are counted on each lake during summer surveys. The number of anglers, ice huts, and snowmobiles are counted on each lake during winter surveys.

**Contaminant sampling** is conducted on fish caught during netting. A sample of tissue is taken from sport fish species spanning the range of sizes caught. The information collected is published in the Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish.

A map of Helen Lake showing broad-scale monitoring (BsM) netting locations (black dots and triangles) distributed randomly across depth strata (coloured bands).



## News from the UTRCA

UPPER THAMES RIVER  
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

### 2021 EVENTS for Fanshawe Conservation Area

#### August

Aug 12 **Family Bioblitz** (Fanshawe CA, **pre-registration** required)  
Aug 24 **UTRCA Board of Directors Meeting** (virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic)

#### September

Sept 28 **UTRCA Board of Directors Meeting** (virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic)

#### October

Oct 17 **Fanshawe, Pittcock and Wildwood Conservation Areas close for the season**

Oct 26 **UTRCA Board of Directors Meeting** (virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic)

#### November

Nov 23 **UTRCA Board of Directors Meeting** (virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic)

**To register for an event, go to**

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/upper-thames-river-conservation-authority-6109766065>

### Updated use of the conservation area with Covid in mind

#### Day Use Activities

What activities are permitted on UTRCA lands?

- Consider visiting during the week, if possible, when the parks are not as busy. Be patient and kind. Everyone wants to have fun and we want to keep our visitors safe.
  - Walking/hiking on roadways and trails
  - Biking
  - Picnics and other gatherings with up to 100 people
  - Bird watching and nature appreciation
  - Fishing and boating
- Washroom facilities** and the laundry are open. Stringent cleaning and disinfecting protocols are in place for your safety.
- The **picnic tables** are available for you to use during your visit.

- **Fanshawe and Wildwood CAs:** The picnic shelters may be used on a first come, first served basis. Please follow all public health unit guidelines and restrictions.
  - **Pittock CA:** Please contact the City of Woodstock (519-539-2383 ext. 4101) to book the picnic shelter.
  - The pavilions at Fanshawe CA will not be available for rent this season.
4. The **splash pad** in the day use area at Pittock and beach area at Fanshawe are open
  5. **Canoe and kayak rentals**
    - Fanshawe CA – Canoe and kayak rentals may be available beginning in mid July. CANCELLED RENTALS
    - Wildwood CA – Rentals will not be available this season but the pool at Fanshawe CA is not.
    - Pittock CA – Rentals will not be available this season.
  6. **The reservoirs are open for boating during daylight hours.**  
NO PERSONAL MOTORIZED WATERCRAFT ARE PERMITTED.
    - Fanshawe Reservoir: non-motorized watercraft (e.g., kayaks and canoes) and watercraft with maximum 9.9 hp motors
    - Pittock Reservoir: motorized and non-motorized watercraft (e.g., kayaks and canoes)
    - Wildwood Reservoir: motorized and non-motorized watercraft (e.g., kayaks and canoes)
  7. You can purchase **your 2021 pass** by calling the park directly and speaking to a customer service representative or visiting our gatehouse.
  8. **Boat passes** can be purchased but boaters at Wildwood Conservation Area will be affected by a shorter boating season than usual due to the lack of rain over the past few months. The UTRCA watershed is experiencing low water conditions and this is affecting reservoir levels. **Wildwood Reservoir users**, please read our [Update #2, July 2021](#) before purchasing your pass, so you understand the impact of the current low water conditions on recreational activities
  9. the **food concession** at Fanshawe CA is open



**ED NOTE: Remember your car and boat passes work at all three conservation areas – Wildwood, Pittock and Fanshawe. Hike, bike, boat or attend events at any of the three**

## RULES

**Enjoy the trails and outdoor spaces at our conservation areas! Please be respectful of other users and keep the following in mind:**

- **If you are ill, stay home**
- **Maintain physical distance**
- **Put garbage in cans (if available) or take home with you**
- **Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints**
- **Keep your pets on leash, and always stoop and scoop to keep the parks healthy and clean**

## THIS JUST IN: new UTRCA stickers and patches!!

Are you looking for something small to remember your stay at the FCA? Stop by the camping registration office and pick up a patch, sticker, or car window sticker!

Patch - \$10  
Sticker - \$3  
Car window sticker - \$3



## Mid-month Update: Upper Thames River Watershed moves back to Level 1 Low Water Condition (low water mid-month update, June 23, 2021)

### 30 Day Precipitation

In the past 30 days (to June 22), the Upper Thames River watershed received an average of 66 mm of precipitation or about 83% of normal, ranging from approximately 106 mm west of Stratford, to 41 mm near Ingersoll. The long-term average for June is 80 mm, measured at the London Airport and reported by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

### 90 Day Precipitation

In the past 90 days (to June 22), the watershed received an average of 159 mm of precipitation (about 66% of normal), ranging from approximately 213 mm in Mitchell, to about 104 mm in the Woodstock area. The long term three-month average total for this period is 240 mm, measured at the London Airport and reported by ECCC. A Level 1 Low Water Condition is triggered if the three month or one-month total precipitation falls below 80% (but above 60%) of the long-term average value.



### Monthly Streamflow

30-day average streamflow was generally between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile flow rates, which indicate moderately dry conditions for this time of year.

### Reservoir Status

The UTRCA maintains three large reservoirs and several smaller ones across the watershed. Two of the large reservoirs provide flow augmentation in the summer, meaning they store spring runoff and then slowly release this water back into the river system in the dry summer months. Pittock Reservoir (South Thames River in Woodstock) reached its target summer elevation and is maintaining that level as of June 22. Drawdown begins at Pittock Reservoir on July 01. Wildwood Reservoir (Trout Creek upstream of St. Marys) is typically more difficult to fill. As of June 22, Wildwood Reservoir is about 1.0 metre below its target elevation for that date. Two smaller reservoirs that are drawn down in the fall and filled in the spring are Lake Victoria (RT Orr Dam) in Stratford and Mitchell Reservoir in Mitchell. Lake Victoria was filled in the early spring and reached its target summer level. Mitchell Reservoir traditionally is filled a couple weeks after Orr. At this time, this reservoir has not filled due to the dry spring, although recent rains have raised the level to about 0.6 metres below its target summer level.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Upper Thames River watershed move from a Level 2 to a Level 1 Low Water Condition based on the following factors:

- average 30-day precipitation has improved to within the normal range,
- three-month precipitation totals across the watershed generally between 60% and 80% of the long-term average, and
- stream flows improving from earlier in the spring.

## Reporting on Woodland and Natural Cover Mapping (UTRCA weekly, July 23, 2021)

*ED NOTE: I am aware that a number of our sailors are very interested in the watershed and the management of the environment including water quality .... remember the big green algae floats? Sailors also ask what the UTRCA actually is involved in. This is one of the areas studied.*

*The reports on the various areas of the watershed have been placed on the UTRCA website so you now can look at the area that is of interest to you. Here is the link*

<https://thamesriver.on.ca/watershed-health/watershed-report-cards>

*and the following is the report on natural cover mapping.*

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) works on behalf of its member municipalities to track and provide information on environmental conditions in the Upper Thames River watershed. One aspect of this work involves mapping and analysing woodlands and other natural cover, and reporting on these changes every

five years through the forest condition grades and data in our [Watershed Report Cards](#).

Recently, Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Biologist, has been delivering online presentations on changes in woodland and natural cover in the UTRCA watershed between 2010 and 2015. "GIS and digital air photography from 2000, 2006, 2010, and 2015 enable us to map vegetation cover and track changes over time," Cathy explains. "We expect the 2020 digital air photos to become available in the next year or two."

Cathy's first presentation was at the UTRCA Board of Directors' March meeting. She has also presented to City of London staff and advisory committees, with data specific to the municipality.

Cathy shared the value of delivering this information, saying that, "It is important to share this scientific information with our member municipalities to help inform decision making. Providing data on vegetation changes helps them – and us – evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies. People often request the data after the presentation so they can review the numbers for their own municipalities. It often opens up questions about tree health, tree planting practices, and how we can conserve non-wooded habitats such as meadows."

Staff are planning presentations for Oxford County in the early fall and other watershed municipalities after that.

## The First Nations and the Thames River Watershed

The Upper Thames River watershed is within the [traditional territory](#) of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaapeewak peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario.

The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation and Delaware Nation at Moraviantown. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population.

We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

## Sailors of Fame

- famous implying little more than the fact of being, sometimes briefly, widely and popularly known.

### How a love of sailing helped Einstein explain the universe

If the world's most famous physicist Albert Einstein is any guide, modern-day scientists need to get out of the lab more and onto the water.

Around 1900, a cheeky Swiss patent clerk wrote to a friend about four scientific papers he had been working on in his spare time. He described them as revolutionary, claiming they would one day modify the "theory of space and time". The then 18-year-old had just learnt to sail but maybe physics wasn't the only thing on the mind of the budding genius when he regularly ventured out onto the Alpine lakes of Switzerland. His crew was the daughter of his landlady Suzanne Markwalder. According to Markwalder, when the breeze dropped and the sails sagged, Einstein would whip out his notebook and begin scribbling away.

"But as soon as there was a breath of wind," she said, "he was ready to start sailing again."

The pair became lifelong friends after bonding on their sailing trips.

#### Ripples in time

Suzanne's observation sheds light on how "Young Einstein the sailor" first cracked the laws of physics in 1905. His first three articles relied on a stationary observer. He'd obviously figured out the concepts of space and time while becalmed on a lake. It took 10 more years of sailing to figure out the hard physics bit — what happens when velocity and relativity are constantly changing — or put simply, when the breeze comes up

On the November 25, 1915, he officially published the gravitational field equations of general relativity, the so-called Einstein equations.

Maybe the water and sunshine cleared his head. Either way, his sailing technique was unusual to say the least — in his words: "set sail, make it fast, no thoughts of energy or velocity, loll back, let boat drift."

#### Losing 'Tummler'

Einstein the sailor was not interested in racing and fell into the "cruising" category. He hated engines and is even said to have refused a present of an outboard motor. On a boat, he said he was oblivious to everything else in the world - which might explain why his navigational skills were so poor.

In 1929 his love of sailing inspired some rich friends to present him with a very cool German-designed coastal cruiser called Tummler (porpoise), although he referred to her as his "thick little yacht".

He was pretty rapt with his new boat, writing to the ship builders:

"The sailing boat has my highest respect and also the respect of all the people who have been sailing with it. It combines a high degree of stability with a relatively high mobility and comfort for the operation."

But his joy didn't last long as the Nazis seized the boat in 1933 when Einstein fled to America. He tried hard to get her back but a rescue operation was deemed too dangerous and Tummler was lost.

#### Not so smooth sailing

In his new home in the United States, Albert Einstein was always on the lookout for places to sail.

Rhode Island's heavy fog didn't faze him and he was rescued several times after running aground. He was invited to stay overnight in the White House that year to chat to another sailing tragic Franklin D. Roosevelt.

His grasp of the laws of physics however turned more to chaos theory on the water. In his late 50s while sailing in a remote spot off Long Island on his clunky little sailboat Tinef (which apparently meant "worthless" or "junk"), he was frequently dismasted, ran aground and nearly drowned when he hit a rock and the boat capsized, trapping him under the sail.

According to a friend that sailed with him, Einstein "loved it when the sea was calm and quiet, and he could sit in Tinef thinking or listening to the gentle waves endlessly lapping against the side of the boat".

But Einstein also enjoyed wilder seas.

The laws of physics are more obvious in a constantly changing sea and Albert Einstein knew just where to look: "Nature conceals her secrets because she is sublime, not because she is a trickster."



Albert Einstein had a boat called "Tinef", which is a Yiddish word approximating "little piece of junk." He used to sail it at New York's Nassau Point, where locals remember him being a terrible sailor. #Genius



Western Australia

By Michael Troy Posted Fri 24 Nov 2017

### Improve ur Skills Downwind Downwind Boat Speed Checklist: Avoid the Slows

written by [SailZing Editor](#)

Are you working hard enough on downwind boat speed? It's easy to lose focus, even though downwind sailing requires at least as much concentration as upwind sailing. For this post, we decided to compile a big picture list of things to consider as you try to avoid the slows. You can see the details of some of these factors in the links. This post has been updated from the original, with additional tips and links.



## Downwind Boat Speed Checklist

### #1. Stay in Breeze

This is the most important key to downwind boat speed. Puffs are 3-4 times more “powerful” and last 4-5 times longer downwind than upwind. So, unless it’s blowing hard, your first priority is getting in the puffs as soon as possible and stay in them.

- As you round the windward mark, look upwind for the first puff and position yourself to get in it.
- Force yourself to constantly look behind you at the wind on the water and other boats to help you connect the dots.
- When a puff hits, bear off or gybe to stay in it longer.

### #2. Find Clear Air

You can easily get passed if another boat takes your wind. On the downwind leg, a boat within 5-10 boat lengths may be taking your air. Parades of boats behind you are even worse. Clear air depends on the apparent wind, so use your telltales or masthead fly to check.

- Sight along your telltales or masthead fly back toward the other boat(s).
- If the telltales or fly point to the boat(s) behind, you’re in trouble.
- It may be simple to clear your air just by turning up or down to change your apparent wind. If you can’t just turn up or down, you may have to sail away from the pack.

### #3. Work the Boat for VMG

Compared to upwind sailing, it’s a lot harder to maximize your velocity made good (VMG) downwind. In light air, the optimal downwind sailing angle might be 30 degrees or more above dead downwind. This optimal angle changes rapidly as the breeze builds. Therefore, you have to work the boat, changing your heading as the breeze changes.

- “Up in the lulls, down in the puffs” is a good rule of thumb in light-medium air. However, this is over-simplified. Before heading down, check the following:
  - Let the boat accelerate in the puff before heading down.
  - Check the feel of the boat. Only head down if there is pressure on the main sheet and some heeling force.
  - Look at the upper leech of the mainsail. Don’t head down unless there is some flow. Head back up as soon as you lose speed, pressure, or flow.
- In heavy air, you can head to the mark, and concentrate on control and tactics.

### #4. Reduce Drag with Heel, Boards, and Weight Placement

Be aggressive to reduce drag from the rudder, hull, and boards:

- Minimize helm by heeling the boat to windward.
- Steer with body weight using heel, rather than the rudder.
- Minimize wetted surface by heeling the boat. In medium to heavy air, heel to windward. When you don’t have much weather helm, heel to leeward. In either case, commit your weight to one side and hike for maximum effect.

- Raise your board to reduce drag.
  - You may need more board for steering, if there are boats around you.
  - If you are heading up in the puffs, you’ll need more board so you don’t sideslip as you head up.
  - If the breeze picks up, you may need more board for stability.
- Experiment with fore and aft weight placement.

In lighter air, move forward to keep the bow attached to the water. This makes the waterline longer and the boat faster.

## Twist and the Upper Leech

Twist is the change in angle of attack from a sail’s foot to its head. The photos below show an untwisted (left image) and relatively more twisted (right image) sail shape in two C scows downwind.



Managing twist is especially important in the upper leech, which exerts a lot of leverage on the boat and is easily affected by changes in the wind.

### Why is Twist Important?

- In dynamic conditions, such as puffy winds and waves, a twisted sail ensures that at least some part of the sail is trimmed correctly.
- Twist also helps in light air, where the wind at the top of the sail may be at a different angle than near the surface.
- A twisted upper leech frees up the boat:
  - If twisted forward of the mast, the upper sail helps heel the boat to windward, reducing wetted surface. (Eases the vang to get more windward heel.
  - Reduces weather helm, making it easier to steer up and down for waves and to intercept puffs.
  - Lets you sail further by the lee to intercept a puff or fetch a mark without gybing.

### When is Less Twist Important?

- In more steady conditions, a less twisted sail gives you more power, since each part of the sail is trimmed correctly. In a uniform breeze, a highly-twisted sail will be over-trimmed down low and under-trimmed at the top.
- Too much twist in the upper leech is unstable. A strong puff will twist the upper leech excessively and push the mast to windward, resulting in a death roll.

### Downwind Trimming Strategies

When sailing downwind, the vang and mainsheet give you different capabilities to manage twist and tame the upper leech.

- The vang pulls down on the boom, which directly controls twist by tensioning the leech.

- The mainsheet pulls the boom more sideways than down, changing the angle of attack of the sail. This doesn't affect twist directly, but does allow you to position the upper leech.
- The mainsheet is easier to adjust rapidly than the vang.

These capabilities argue for different strategies to manage the upper leech, depending on wind and wave conditions.

#### **In flat water and steadier wind, keep the boom out and manage the upper leech with vang**

This strategy minimizes twist to maximize overall power, but requires playing the vang to control the upper leech. You'll need a lot of vang as the wind comes up. Some top sailors keep the vang uncleated and play it as the wind changes. In this strategy, use your mainsheet to change angle of attack as you go "up in the lulls and down in the puffs."

#### **In waves and puffy conditions, set the vang and work the mainsheet to control the leech**

This strategy gives you the benefits of twist, while letting you rapidly control the upper leech. This lets boat be free, heeled up to windward for speed, with little or no weather helm. To use this strategy, you must set up to play the mainsheet aggressively.

- Release the tail of the mainsheet and grab the forward part, making the sheet a 2:1 purchase. See the picture below.
- Set the vang to position the upper leech for the average wind speed.
- As the wind speed changes, aggressively trim or ease the main.
  - When a puff hits, trim in to keep the leech from going too far forward.
  - Ease when the puff subsides.
  - During lulls, head up and trim in.
- Trim or ease the main to help you steer.
  - To bear off, ease the main, heel to windward, and let the boat turn down.
  - To sail higher, trim the main and let the weather helm turn the boat up.
- At the crest of a wave, rapidly pump the main in to get over the top.
  - In waves, you may have to move weight aft to keep the bow from plowing.



#### **#5. Work the Sails**

When sailing dead downwind, your sail is at its least powerful, since it's not generating any lift. If possible, you want to maintain some flow over the sail, by heading up a little or sailing by the lee. Look for the following:

- Trim your main to keep power in the sail
  - In light or medium air, feel the pressure in the sail through the mainsheet. You can do this several ways:
    - Turn off the ratchet and hold the sheet normally

- Hold the forward-most part of the mainsheet past the ratchet block for a 2:1 purchase and more feel.
- Hold all parts of the mainsheet past the ratchet block for a 1:1 purchase and still more feel.
- As the pressure in the mainsheet goes light trim in and head up to maintain some pressure.
- Don't let the sail luff.
- Control the leech with the vang
  - Leech telltale streaming periodically.
  - Active leech. You want the leech to respond to changes in wind. Use the vang to tension the leech so the second batten from the top is roughly parallel to the boom and the upper leech waves back and forth in the puffs and lulls.
- Cunningham off to keep draft of sail toward the center.
- Outhaul eased slightly for fullness, but not so much that it reduces sail area.
- Sail by the lee if you want more steering flexibility.

If you sail a boat with a spinnaker or a jib, there's much more to think about. We'll cover this separately.

## **Ten Ways to Use Shroud Telltales**

written by *SailZing Editor*

As racing sailors, we're striving to "become one with the wind," instinctively making use of every little change. If you didn't grow up sailing, you probably need visual cues to help sharpen those instincts. This article responds to a reader request and shows ten ways to use shroud telltales.



### **Shroud Telltales and Apparent Wind**

Apparent wind changes during a puff

Shroud telltales show you the "apparent wind," which is the combination of the true wind and the wind generated by the boat's motion. Changes in either true wind or the boat's motion affect the apparent wind.



To sail fast, we constantly adjust sail trim and steering to match changes in the apparent wind. Since shroud telltales react almost instantly to apparent wind changes, they're one of the best visual cues available.

### **#1. Beginners: Get to the approximate heading and sheeting angle quickly**

Many beginners have read about the points of sail (close-hauled, reach, run), but initially struggle with wind awareness on the water. In teaching, we encourage beginners to **match the leading edge of the sail to the angle of the shroud telltales**, so that the leading edge splits the apparent wind evenly. Do this by either by steering or adjusting the mainsheet.

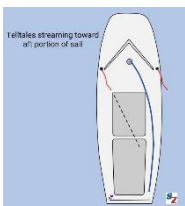




This concept is simple, but it will pay dividends. Experienced sailors become uncomfortable if the telltales are not “right.” For example, as they are bearing off to a reach, they adjust how quickly they ease the main to keep the sail lined up with the telltales. When sailing upwind, they naturally ease the main and/or head up in a lift to match the change in apparent wind.

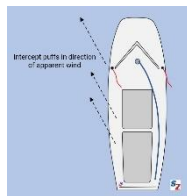
## #2. Recognize when you’re dialed in upwind

A coach once told me to try to sense how the boat feels on a beat when the telltales are streaming back. He was making two points. 1) If you’re sailing fast and pointing well, your shroud tales will be streaming toward the aft end of the mainsail. If they’re not, you need to look for other clues (sail luffing or stalling) and make an adjustment. 2) Learn to use the telltales to develop your sense of feel. Then you can rely on them less and look around more.



## #3 Know where to look for the next puff or lull

Don’t forget that you will intercept puffs or lulls that lie in the direction of the apparent wind. So, use your shroud telltales to tell you which direction to look. This is true when sailing both upwind and downwind.



## #4. Play the shifts, puffs, and lulls upwind

[Shroud telltales help us react quickly to shifts](#). Have a set of telltales slightly above eye level as you look forward. Then learn to interpret changes based on the direction and “droop” of the telltales and the feel of the wind on your body.

- In **shifts without a velocity change**, the telltales will shift direction without much change in their droop. In a lift, the fastest way to respond is often to ease the sail to match, then trim in and head up as you gain speed. In a header, bear off quickly to match the change.
- In **puffs without a wind direction change**, the apparent wind will move aft (the telltales will turn in toward the sail). You will feel more wind and the telltales will droop less. Again, ease the sail to match, and head up/trim as you gain speed.
- In **lulls without a wind direction change**, the apparent wind will move forward (the telltales will point more straight back). You will feel less wind and the telltales will droop more. Resist the temptation to bear off; the boat will coast to a lower speed and the telltales will return to nearly their pre-lull orientation. If the lull persists, you will have to bear off some.

## #5. Play the shifts downwind

Downwind shifts are important, but trickier

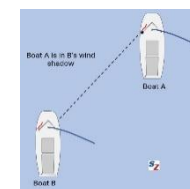
## #6. Work the boat in puffs and lulls downwind

You’ve heard the saying “up in the lulls, down in the puffs.” This is a little too simple – you need to build speed before heading down in the puffs. When a puff hits, see your

shroud telltales droop less, giving you a reminder to build speed and head down. When the telltales start to droop again, head back up.

## #7. Avoid dirty air downwind

If your telltales are pointing back at a boat behind, you’re in the other boat’s wind shadow. This is bad – do something.



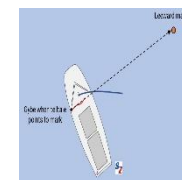
## #8. Identify the “favored” gate

If you’re sailing the rhumb line to the leeward gate, your telltales will indicate if one gate is more upwind than the other. In the diagram, the boat is sailing the rhumb line, which would be directly downwind if the course were square to the wind. Since the telltales are pointing to the left, the left-hand gate is further upwind than the right gate. Therefore, you might choose the left-hand gate, other factors being equal.



## #9. Identify the lay line downwind

When sailing downwind, you can project the direction of your apparent wind to decide when to gybe for the mark. This becomes important when you’re sailing hotter angles in light air. A mast-head fly is better for this, but you can also use shroud telltales.



See the diagram. In light air, you want to avoid sailing directly downwind. Instead, sail hot and gybe when your telltales point at the mark. This will put you on the same hot angle directly to the mark.

## #10. Identify wind shear or gradient

In very light wind, with minimal ripples on the surface, use a set of telltales placed higher on the shrouds. You will likely see different wind speed and direction as you go further up the shroud. A mast-head fly is also great for this condition.

**Egg Shells--** According to legend *witches* would hop on an egg shell found in the sea, sail on it and step aboard the unlucky vessel that had discarded it. So, to avoid this, egg shells were broken into tiny pieces so the witches couldn’t use them as boats.



## Obituary: Ottawa-born Bruce Kirby, a three-time Olympian, designed the iconic Laser sailboat

*ED NOTE: I decided to include this because the design of the Laser was a huge event in our sailing days. We had up to 70 at FYC back in the seventies and Laser regattas back then were comprised of up to 100 plus boats. Really interesting start lines and mark roundings!! It was the first boat I learned to helm and it taught me a lot about all aspects of sailing.*



*There were a group of about a dozen FYC sailors in their late teens and 20s from FYC who formed the PBJYC (Peanut Butter and Jam Race Club). We all traveled whenever we could to out-of-town regattas and just play weekends on Lake Huron. The name came from our diet as we traveled.... only peanut butter and jam sandwiches with beer.*

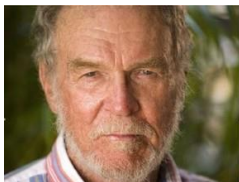
*Sailing in the fleet with restrictions on rigging was the best way to learn the basics and more in sailing and in racing. Your success or lack of came down to the skill set you developed. So much better than sailing in open classes with a variety of boat types and ratings. It also was instrumental in encouraging women to take the helm!*

*This did carry on in our generation's children (nine of them in the Biskaborn, Dietrich and Goldt clans!) who all learned to sail the Laser at FYC and in Georgian Bay. Wonderful days of summer and freedom!*

*We still own boat 3434 and 13755/ 38585 (a new hull after an accident that put a ginormous hole in the side) .... both off the production line in the 70s*

**Andrew Duffy Aug 07, 2021:** Kirby worked as a newspaper reporter at the Ottawa Journal, and later became an editor at the Montreal Star, but his passion for sailing never left him. When the copy desk was quiet, he sketched boat designs on notepads.

Former Ottawa newspaperman Bruce Kirby, a three-time Olympian, designed the Laser, a sailboat that democratized the sport and made him rich. PHOTO BY BEVERLY BROWN



His family belonged to what was then known as the Britannia Boating Club, and it was the centre of their summer lives. Bruce followed radio broadcasts of the America's Cup, whittled model boats from blocks of pine, and watched how sailboats moved through the water from beneath the surface of the waves.

Kirby worked as a newspaper reporter at the Ottawa Journal, and later became an editor at the Montreal Star, but his passion for sailing never left him. When the copy desk was quiet, he sketched boat designs on notepads

Kirby, a three-time Canadian Olympian, died last month at his home in Rowayton, Conn. He was 92.

"Bruce has a huge sailing legacy, but his homerun was the Laser," said Hugh McGugan, board chair of Sail Canada, the country's governing body for the sport of sailing. "It was the right concept at the right time: It was small, simple and tightly-controlled

Bruce Kirby was born into a nautical family on Jan. 2, 1929: His father and grandfather were both accomplished sailors. Every spring, Kirby's entire family moved from their Golden Triangle home to a cottage in Britannia, close to the yacht club. His father built a small sailboat for Bruce and his older brother, David, when they were six and eight years old.

Rod Miller, 88, a retired teacher, was part of a group of boys, including the Kirby brothers, who hung out at the yacht club, where they'd offer to crew on larger boats. "It was a really good life," he said. "We grew up on the river."

During the Second World War, Miller said, the boys collected hollow military shells from along the shoreline — they were lobbed onto the ice of Shirley's Bay by flying boats taking target practice — to mine them for their nose lead. They melted the lead to refashion the material so that it could weigh down the keels of their boats.

Bruce took to racing and was constantly studying sailboats to understand what made them fast. "I used some of his high school textbooks after him," said Brown, "and the margins were full of little drawings of boats. I think he used to daydream quite a bit." After graduating from Lisgar Collegiate, Kirby secured a job as a reporter in the sports department of the Ottawa Journal. He left the paper for a job at the Montreal Star in 1956 when his editors refused to take him off the night shift following his marriage to Margo Dancey, whom he met at the yacht club.

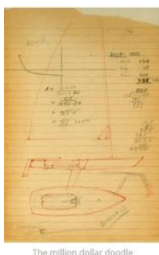
All the while, Kirby continued to compete in elite sailing regattas, including the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, where he finished eighth in the one-person dinghy event. (He would also compete in the 1964 Tokyo and 1968 Mexico City Games.)

Kirby raced a dinghy known as the International 14, and in the late 1950s, he began to design his own improved versions of the boat. He relied on his experience and observations, and on a single book, Elements of Yacht Design, first published in 1904. He had no formal training in naval architecture since, by his own admission, he was "never any damn good at all in math."

In 1965, Kirby moved to Chicago after being offered a job as editor of a sailing magazine, and it was there, in November 1969, that he received a fateful phone call from his friend, Ian Bruce, a Montreal-based boat builder. He told Kirby that he had been asked by the Hudson's Bay Company to come up with a light sailboat, a "car-topper," that families could take with them to the lake.

Kirby sketched an idea as the two spoke on the phone. During the next few weeks — “Best few days I’ve ever spent,” he once said — he refined his doodle: He wanted a boat skinny enough to find speed in a light breeze, but wide enough to offer stability on top of the waves. Kirby also opted for a relatively large sail that would require sailors to lean far over the side — a manoeuvre known as “hiking” — to keep the boat flat and fast on water.

“It’s going to be a pretty hot little boat if we ever have the chance to build it,” Kirby told Bruce.



The million dollar doodle

Hudson’s Bay ultimately decided against the project, so Kirby and Bruce (Bruce died in 2016 at age 83 yrs.) built a prototype on their own and entered it in a Wisconsin regatta in October 1970. Initially called the Weekender, it proved a sensation: people wanted to buy the hot little boat on the spot

Kirby, Bruce and sail designer Hans Fogh made some refinements and brought their creation to the 1971 New York Boat Show. Priced at \$695 and renamed the Laser — to appeal to a younger crowd — they received 144 boat orders in one week.

A global phenomenon had launched. “We didn’t know what the hell was happening,” Kirby later said.

Sailors liked the boat because it was fast and responsive, and reflected the skill of its handler, not the cost of its equipment. The Laser was introduced into Olympic competition in 1996, and was used to promote sailing among emerging nations. More than 250,000 Lasers have been sold around the world.

“The Laser’s simplicity made it something like the platonic ideal of a sailboat,” author Andrew Blum wrote of the famed dinghy. “It is the sort of definitive and lasting design that comes around only rarely, such as the iPhone or five-pocket blue jeans.”

Design royalties from the Laser made Kirby rich, and allowed the father of two to leave journalism for boat design. During the following decades, he designed more than 60 boats, including Canada I and Canada II, 12-metre yachts that competed in the America’s Cup.

In 2018, he returned to Ottawa to be invested in the Order of Canada for his contribution to sailing. He’s also one of the only people ever inducted into both the Canadian and U.S. sailing halls of fame.

**Bringing the Laser to Life** By [Dave Reed](#) May 11, 2016

*ED NOTE: The man who designed the laser (Bruce Kirby) takes a moment to look back and pay tribute to the man who brought it to life, Ian Bruce who died at 83 years in 2016*

Ian was the Jamaican-born son of a Myers’s Rum executive. When he was young, the family moved to the Bahamas, and he later relocated to Canada for his formal

education. He attended Trinity College School in Toronto and then did two years of engineering at McGill University before taking a course in industrial design at Syracuse University.

He spent two years working in my hometown of Ottawa, where he married Barbara Britain, whom my wife, Margo, and I had known since high school. Then Ian landed a job with a big Montreal industrial design firm, where he was approached by a marketing group that asked him for proposals for a line of outdoor sporting equipment. On the list was a “cartop sailboat.” Ian had a small shop near his home in Pointe Claire as a side business, and there he was building my Mark III International 14. We’d raced against each other in the 14 and Finn classes, so it was natural that he’d turn to me to design the “cartopper.”

He had no background in marine design, and my experience was the designing of International 14s. At this time, I was editor of One-Design & Offshore Yachtsman magazine, which is now Sailing World, and we had just moved our editorial offices from Chicago to Stamford, Connecticut. I was in my office overlooking Stamford Harbor when I got the call from Ian that changed both our lives and, thanks to him, the lives of tens of thousands of others. While we talked, I doodled a sketch on a yellow legal pad; it became known as the “million-dollar doodle.”

I took to the drawing board and calculator and worked for a few days drawing a full set of hull lines. Then came the profile and plan views, with daggerboard, rudder and cockpit, and finally the sail plan. The whole package was sent off to Ian’s home in Pointe Claire along with a note suggesting that if his client didn’t want a sailboat, he should put the plans away, as someday “we might make a buck on this boat.”

Sure enough, the marketing group passed on it, so the drawings went into Ian’s bottom drawer. Six months later, in April of 1970, our big break came. The advertising director of One-Design & Offshore hatched the America’s Tea Cup, a regatta for new and nearly new small boats. Monohulls had to retail for no more than \$1,000 and multihulls for no more than \$1,200. It would be held at the Playboy Club on Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, in October.

I called Ian and suggested this would be the perfect vehicle for introducing the new boat. His genius for making things happen came into play. He said he would build two prototypes. He had never built a boat from scratch, so despite herculean efforts, he barely got one boat finished in time for the Tea Cup. He popped hull and deck from their molds, glued them together, tossed the boat onto the top of his car along with the two-part mast, and headed to Lake Geneva. On his way through Toronto, he picked up Hans Fogh, who made the sail, and they drove deep into the night to get to Wisconsin on time.

The three of us put the boat together for the first time on the Playboy Club’s beach. It was a warm and windless day, and the scenery on that beach was seriously distracting. We’d been calling the boat the Weekender for want of a better name, and



Hans had put "TGIF" on the sail. Hans was a silver medalist in the Flying Dutchman and also served as our test pilot. In the first race, he placed second to an adaptation of the Flying Junior hull. He was unhappy with the set of his sail, and that evening he re-cut the luff curve. The next day, the sail looked just right, and he won the first race by a hefty margin. He was leading in what was to be the final race, but it was called for lack of wind.

The boat caused a stir, and Ian was inundated with requests from dealers and buyers. He knew, however, that we had more work to do. So, the Weekender went back atop the car and zoomed off to Pointe Claire. Hans and I were excited about the boat; Ian was ecstatic. His optimism and vivid imagination — hallmarks of his personality — could see that he had something special. It was a lively boat that might appeal to a broad spectrum of the sailing public.

The laser has become a staple of sailing at every level around the world.

#### *Laser Performance*

For the next month, he was the point man for the empirical alterations to the boat. Hans and I worked on the sail plan, with me drawing three different sails, mailing them to Hans and phoning the new measurements to Ian. By this time, he'd built a second prototype with an ingenious mast step that could move fore and aft as well as adjust rake. Working at an incredible pace during this time, Ian also settled a lot of small but important details, such as fittings, tiller length, and rudder rake, as well as vang specs. By mid-December of 1970, we had a final test weekend at Royal St. Lawrence YC, and were lucky to have a day of medium to light winds followed by a morning of 20 knots and sleet.

Ian, Hans and I put the boat through its paces, and Janet Bjorn, one of Canada's best woman sailors, joined us with her fit 125 pounds to round out the test team.

The boat was ready, but we still didn't have a name. That evening, the problem was solved when Dave Balfour, a student at McGill and a good I-14 sailor, suggested "Laser," pointing out that it was a word understood internationally and one to which youngsters were becoming accustomed. Dave also pointed out that the laser logo, used in labs all over the world, would be perfect on the sail because it was symmetric and would therefore have to be put on only one side.

Ian then went into overdrive. He put a boat in the New York Boat Show in early January of 1971. There were 144 boats sold, which I believe is still a record. Dealers signed up and interest was beyond our most optimistic dreams. He got Canadian production up to 10 boats per day in a very short time. He licensed a factory in England, then one in California. Next came a big Irish operation. This factory helped the English plant meet the burgeoning Laser craze throughout Europe and into the Middle East.

Along with this rare talent to do the impossible, Ian was a fine sailor, even though he hadn't found the sport until he was 20. He raced the Finn for Canada in the 1960

Olympics in Naples. In 1969 and in 1970, he won the Prince of Wales Cup for - International 14s, sailing one of my Mark III hulls with an advanced flexible rig he'd developed himself. The boat was cold-molded in England, and Ian took the hull and put it into fiberglass production with a clever interior of his own design.

With the Laser operation running smoothly, he again made the Canadian Olympic team, in 1972, this time in the Star class, and sailed to seventh at Kiel, Germany, winning the final race. During the later part of his career, he brought three Australian-designed skiff classes into North America: The Tasar, 29er and 49er. Semiretired in 2010, he closed his sailboat business and developed a high-tech electric runabout, again putting a tremendous effort into development.

For one who came to the sport relatively late, Ian overcame the deficit with raw talent fortified by creativity and imagination. His mark on the boating world, and small sailboats in particular, is indelible.

