



Canadian Fleet Newsletter

Classic Yacht Association

After an absence of far too many years, I am pleased to present my attempt at resurrecting the Canadian Fleet newsletter.

To ensure continuation of our newsletter, Marc Johnson has agreed to become our new editor and I encourage all of you to submit future articles to him. Thank you, Marc!

This edition is both a recap of 2023 and a preview of 2024, which is shaping up to be a great cruising season.

In this issue we have an interesting article from Sharon Gibson on cruising in France as well as “Cats eye View” on cruising by IL CONTE, the cruising cat. Thanks to his owners, or should I say staff Garth & Doreen McBride for assisting him!

Fair Winds, Calm Seas
Gord Wintrup



Ahoy fleet,

Welcome to 2024! As I write this the snow is falling and so all is grinding to a halt in Beautiful BC. I am so looking towards summer already. I can proudly state I was already underway cruising over New Year's. I guess one positive of the recent cold snap is that the deep freezing makes the rotten planks easy to spot, which goes into the negative file quickly!



Our little fleet is doing well with our member numbers and renewals for this year. I think we have the opportunity for growth and show some leadership in the boating community. We are looking at providing some small financial help with a donation to support marine trades training. I talked to

Quadrant Marine Institute, which is a great privately owned and operated training program. They were happy to chat with us and were encouraged by our support. One local wood boatyard in Victoria is even advertising for employees which is encouraging. An apprentice from the program who helped put new planks on Messenger 10 years ago, is now an instructor in Vancouver!

Please continue to stay engaged on the continuing difficulties that many waterfronts are having with tenure and water leases. We will try to keep all members advised of opportunities to help when and where we can as this will impact us all. Ladysmith Community Marina, Mosquito Creek, and the Sunshine Coast are all having significant and frightening difficulties. I suspect it's not going to stop at these sites and will require considerable support from all to engage these difficulties.

A big thanks to Gord Wintrup for spending the time and effort to get this issue out to our fleet!

Fair Winds
Bill Noon
2024 Commodore CYA Canadian Fleet

2023 Highlights

For a few of our members, our Maritime activities began early in the year, but our “official” fleet gathering is usually the Burrard Yacht Club Classic Boat & Car Show that was held June 10, 2023, with 22 boats (13 CYA member boats) along with 44 classic cars.

The feature boat this year was the iconic “S.S. Minnow” from the popular 1960’s TV series “Gilligan’s Island”. The wheeler is owned by Nanaimo businessman Ken Schelly who has her restored to perfection. We hope to see her as a CYA fleet vessel in the future!

Burrard Yacht Club donates all gate receipts, 50/50 draw money, as well as

silent auction funds to the adaptive sailing association of B.C. Today, ASABC operates eight specially designed Martin 16 Sailboats and provides an average of 1,000 sails each year. The 2023 show contribution was \$6,400.00.

CYA boats attending were ADELANTE, ALONDRA, BIANCA, DOUBLE EAGLE, ESCALANTE, GLADSONG 11, KAREN GAIL, MADERA, MESSENGER 111, MY FAIR LADY, SUNRISE NEWYORK, TSONA, & WANDERER.

A special thanks goes out to Michael Topliss for the countless hours he puts in year after year to bring this show to fruition.



The Burrard Show –
“S.S. Minnow”

CYA & The Canadian Chris Craft Rendezvous

The Canadian Chris Craft Association held their 2023 Rendezvous in Ladysmith last July. CYA boats attending were GLADSONG, ONLY YOU, BIANCA, & DEANZA along with non Chris Craft members ALONDRA & MY FAIR LADY who crashed the party.

Thanks to CYA members Dave & Jackie Peebles, Michael Manchon & Tracy Nisbet for organizing the event. Make plans to attend the 2024 event taking place in Ladysmith July 19 – 20.

2023 Canadian Fleet Rendezvous

The 2023 Canadian Fleet Rendezvous was again held in Ganges with 38 boats in attendance on August 28 & 29. This event is rapidly turning into a “Can-Am” Rendezvous as Pacific Northwest Fleet boats almost outnumbered the Canadian boats! With drought conditions through most of August, the weather gods decided to throw a challenge our way and produced a bit of rain and wind, causing us to cancel yoga on the dock. On Tuesday we were treated to a tour of the Island and dropped in on Mike DeRoos, a Salt Spring Island artisan – scientist who has crafted a career as a skeleton articulator – assembling whale bones and installing them in museums around the world.



It was then off to Salt Spring Wild Cidery for a scrumptious lunch before returning to the marina to prepare for our potluck dinner and live music. Plans are already underway for the 2024 event, again to be held in Ganges August 26 & 27th.



Cruising The Canal du Midi (by Sharon Gibson)

My introduction to travelling in the South of France took place in October of 2022, when my partner Gord, booked us on an incredible Viking Rhône River cruise. We spent an amazing week on board the Viking Delling travelling from Avignon to Lyon with numerous stops at several quaint villages and scenic historical sights (and of course a few great wineries). Our skilled and very experienced Viking crew navigated the beautiful waterways and the 12 imposing locks along the way with ease.

Being an apprehensive boater at best I have to admit that I was totally relaxed and enjoyed every aspect of our journey.

Fast forward a few months, when Gord suggested that there was the potential for yet another new and slightly different boating adventure in the South France in May of 2023. Our friends Dave and Jackie Peebles were planning to rent a canal boat on the Canal du Midi and had asked us to join them. The plot twist being that this time we would be the crew! Fortunately, Gord, Dave and Jackie had many years of boating experience. After 40 plus years as a teacher and school administrator it was obvious, I would once again become a student. Having always been an advocate for lifelong learning this new adventure would be the ultimate test!

After flying to Paris, we travelled to Bordeaux by train where we spent a few days visiting wineries and exploring this magnificent city. Our next destination was the incredible medieval city of Carcassonne for a brief but very relaxing stay before making our way to the Le Boat marina in nearby Trèbes to pick up and provision the canal boat that would be our home for the next two weeks. Our plan was to meander along the Canal du Midi stopping at as many scenic destinations as possible before returning our canal boat to the drop off point in Ste. Gilles at the end of our journey.

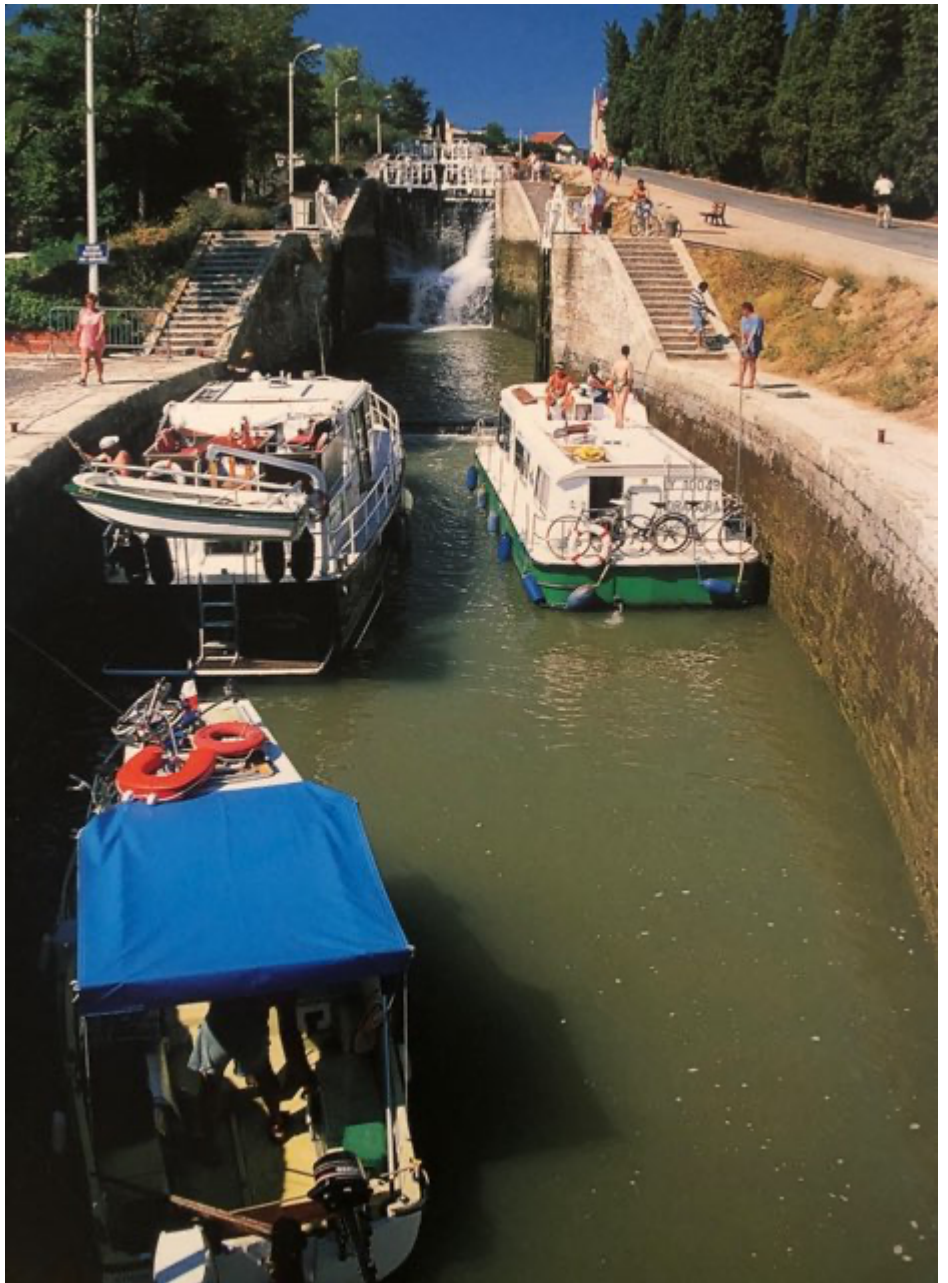
Canal boats are restricted to a leisurely pace of 6 knots enabling boaters to fully absorb the peaceful serenity and beautiful scenery found along the banks of the Canal du Midi. The numerous lush vineyards and banks covered in brilliant red poppies made the perfect backdrop for the first day of our adventure. Blended with sunny blue skies it was absolutely mesmerizing!

However, as we headed toward our first lock I quickly became aware of the urgency to be readily prepared to enter the lock. As the only rookie on our boat I was most appreciative to have our friend Dave, a Power Squadron instructor, who patiently guided me through the process.

Thankfully he also had a great sense of humour as there were 43 more locks to go and I knew I would need more tutoring to ensure I was handling the bow line correctly.

Gord was at the wheel steering us toward the waiting area for the first lock and Jackie was in position ready to hand off the stern line. Dave walked ahead on the bank and was waiting at the lock to secure our lines and to give me final instructions on when to pass him the bow line and when to release it and pull it back in once the huge gates opened and we were able to exit the lock.

I have to admit it was definitely stressful as timing is everything and there's not much margin for error. We made it through, and I vividly remember letting out a sigh of relief thinking in hindsight this was definitely easier than I thought it would be. My elation was short lived when I found out that this had been only a single lock whereas many of the others we would encounter would be multiples and once we reached Beziers there would be a huge elevated lock system with eight levels and nine gates that would take approximately an hour to complete.



Even though locks were an integral part of navigating the Canal du Midi the towns, villages, wineries, ancient castles, and cathedrals scattered on the hillsides and along the banks of the canal are the real focal points that made this adventure so memorable. Dave became our personal tour guide at each site. Once we tied up he would scout the area to locate the points of interest, great restaurants, phenomenal bakeries and local markets for all of us to visit later in the day.

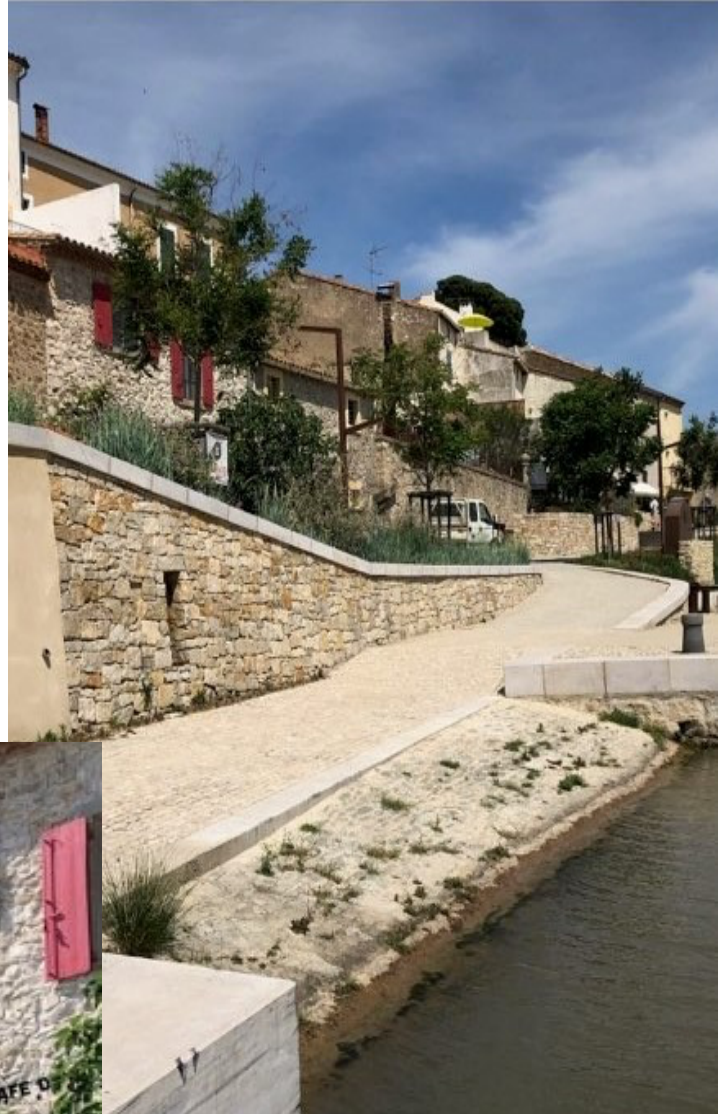
We chose the small tranquil village of Marseillette for our first overnight stay along the Canal du Midi. We loved the ease and convenience of being able to tie up in a quiet spot on the canal bank where our closest neighbour was a mother duck proudly parading her ducklings past our boat on their way for an impromptu swimming lesson. We soon discovered that this small village had only one store and a bakery however they were both closed when we were there. Fortunately, there was a small bar/restaurant frequented by the local residents (who found our limited ability to converse in French quite amusing) where we were able to have a casual dinner and a glass of wine.



Our next stop was Homps where we were able to dock at the Le Boat marina. Even though the town is quite small we found a lovely restaurant in the back garden of the local winery only a short walk across the bridge from the marina.

Another picturesque location was Paraza where there were a handful of colourful cafes and restaurants adjacent to the new concrete quai where we were able to tie up for the night. The beautiful Chateau du Paraza winery at the top of the hill is well worth the walk.

Our next major stop was Beziers one of the oldest cities in France located 14 km from the Mediterranean Sea where the Orb River is intersected by the Canal du Midi. This is also where we encountered the architectural highlight of the Canal du Midi the Nine Locks of Forseranes also known as Beziers' water staircase created by Pierre-Paul Riquet and constructed between 1662-1681. To say these locks are a breathtaking sight would definitely be an understatement! If I wanted to be



completely honest standing at the top looking down before we began our descent through each of the levels (for me) was slightly terrifying. However, with the skill, experience, and strength of the rest of our crew we safely navigated our way to the final lock of the "water staircase"!

As we began to near the end of the Canal du Midi there was yet another body of water the Étang de Thau, near the town of Sète to navigate before reaching the Mediterranean. The Étang de Thau is large lagoon covering, covering 7500 hectares (18km by 6km) that is separated from the Mediterranean by a thin cordon of raised sand. This area is known for it's strong winds which make it a popular spot for kite surfing. Watching the kite surfers' manoeuvre through the wind currents is quite a spectacular sight. But if you plan on crossing in a rented canal boat, be sure to check the weather forecast before attempting to cross.

To say the least, each day on our canal boat brought new experiences especially when we reached the salt marshes of the Camargue . This area is home to more 400 species of birds the most famous being the greater flamingo who are attracted to its brine ponds and can be seen in large numbers along the canals. There are also several herds of white Camargue horses whose original coat colour changes from gray to white when they reach the age of three.

Throughout our trip Dave discovered several great restaurants but the most memorable was a small 5-star restaurant called In-Fine tucked away on a narrow street in Frontignan. Chef Gregory Doucey prepare an outstanding 5 course chef's choice farm to table dinner for us that we are all still raving about. Be sure to check them out on the Michelin guide app!!

Our final stop before returning to the Le Boat drop-off point in Ste. Gilles was Aigues-Morte. This incredible ancient walled city was the perfect spot to end our journey.

Should an inexperienced boater rent a canal boat for a two-week trip on the Canal du Midi? Probably not. But if you have three skilled and experienced boaters who are willing to let you take care of the bow line (with lots of guidance and tons of patience) why not!!



A Cat's Eye View of Cruising on OLMAHA

My name is Il Conte (The Count). I'm a 16-year-old purebred Bengal cat, born in Hamburg, Germany, now living in Victoria, BC. We Bengals, with our Asian Leopard ancestry, are adventurous and curious. We love water, have a really good sense of smell and VERY loud voices.



At the request of the Canadian CYA newsletter editor, I'm presenting an account of my experiences on my summer home, the MV OLMAHA, my Mum and Dad's 97-year-old wooden boat. For my first 10 years I lived with Mum and Dad in an 1895 apartment on the banks of the Spree River in the Tiergarten district of Berlin, Germany. My only adventures were, constrained by a leash, venturing down 220 steps to the street for walks along the river. My boating experience was confined to watching a myriad of river boats passing by from my favorite balcony and admiring a beautiful boat that was moored across the river.



MV AIDA, 1932 Swedish-built yacht across from my house

One day, I was suddenly stuffed into a carrier normally used just to take me down the street to my kind veterinarian. Now I became the victim of a frightening 35-hour journey on trains, planes, automobiles, and ferries, ending only when I was released in a place that smelled strangely familiar. It was a collection of small totally unfamiliar rooms, but with an unmistakable odour exactly like that of the suitcases and clothing Mum and Dad brought back to Berlin after their long summer absences. After taking advantage of a much-needed litter basket and full food and water bowls, I just had to see what these new surroundings were like! Going up a short flight of steps I discovered a room with lots of windows where I could see I was on a boat (OLMAHA) that looked much like the one across the river in Berlin.

The next morning, after a much-needed sleep, I immediately established my daily OLMAHA morning ritual by yowling at the door to be let out onto the deck. Dad warned me to stay on OLMAHA and not get off onto the dock but to limit my activities to exploring OLMAHA's deck and roofs. I quickly found the best vantage point to monitor the humans passing on the dock.



My favourite observation post

However, early the next morning, during my deck patrol, a small-long-short legged “cat” with a very long tail jumped out of the water and began run quickly around on the dock right in front of me! Being a cat, I ignored the order to stay on OLMAHA, jumped down and began a game of tag with my new playmate. It was really frustrating, as it kept jumping into the water to disappear under the dock, only to pop up further along. Dad suddenly appeared to take me back aboard OLMAHA and explain that my playmate was an otter pup whose mother could appear at any time to do me serious harm. At dusk that night I had another misadventure when another “cat” loped by along the dock. This one was large and quite round with dark rings around its eyes and a bushy ringed tail. Again, ignoring orders, I went back onto the dock to check it out but, while carefully following this creature, I became totally lost in the network of docks. I was really scared! The big white boats all looked the same and had a weird plastic smell, nothing like the familiar smell of OLMAHA. I finally found a boat that smelled more like OLMAHA, but when I wanted to climb on board, the ladder to get me aboard looked completely different to the one I had used yesterday. While hearing my name repeatedly called, I shouted in my loudest Bengal voice “Over here! I’m over here!” I was so relieved to see my dad close by and he escorted me back to OLMAHA, and complimented my nose for finding the only other wooden boat in Van Isle Marina.

Continuing to ignore the order to stay aboard OLMAHA, I began boarding and exploring all the adjacent boats until, early one morning, I found new little boat thing to explore, floating between the bow of a big boat and the dock. After carefully appraising the necessary leap, I expertly launched myself for what should have been a perfect landing. The curved bouncy surface I landed on was wet with dew and too slippery to give me any traction, despite my very sharp long claws. Sliding backwards in slow motion, all my never-used-before swimming instincts kicked in and I was back onto the dock and onto OLMAHA in two seconds flat. It took me hours to wash my fur dry and I was really, really thirsty afterwards. The consequence was that I did not get off onto a dock for years and still walk with caution down the side-deck on OLMAHA if an inflatable dinghy is alongside.

During my first summer cruising on OLMAHA, I was so shocked whenever the Detroit 6-71 was fired up. The frightening racket sent me to hide as far away as possible in the aft cabin, where it didn't hurt my ears so much. After years of cruising it still takes me a few moments to collect my wits when the engine is started, I have to yowl in protest, but once underway it's somewhat tolerable. Laying at anchor is my favorite as I can watch the birds and swimming creatures that come by and especially, contrary to the rules at home, I get to sleep in bed with Mum and Dad. When we're at anchor, regular early morning deck patrols are marked by special pleasures of licking up the fresh dew off the brightwork and using my loud Bengal voice to wake up the whole anchorage. I love to stand anchor watch from the bow.



Keeping anchor watch in Mackenzie Sound

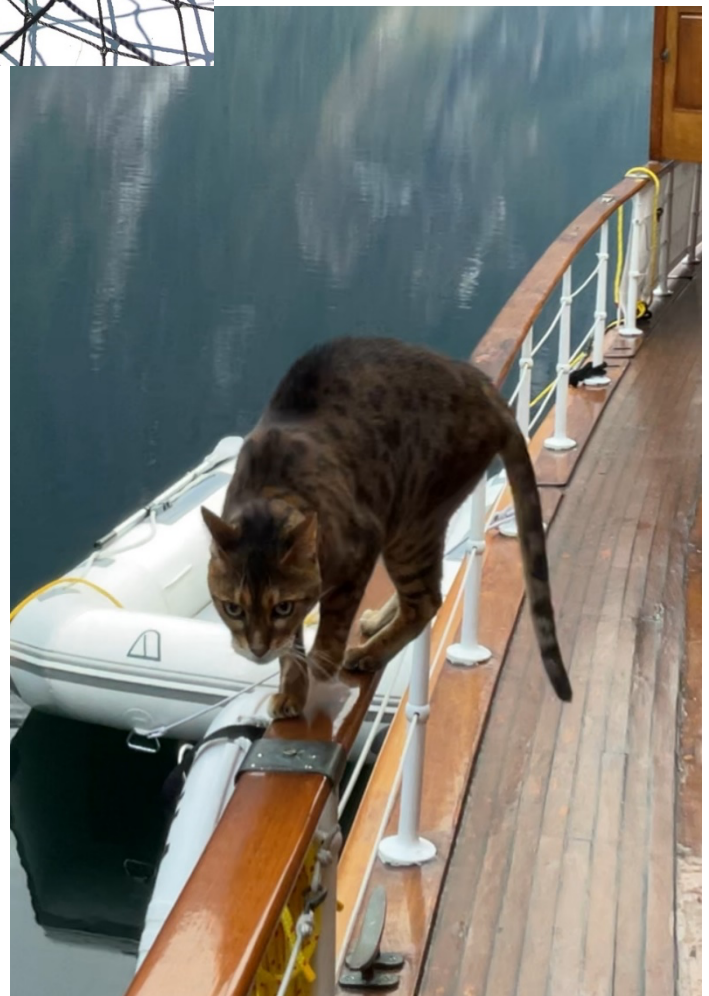
One morning I found a netted thing-on deck that had a container in it that clearly was filled with fish treats for me. I discovered it had a side gate that let me inside the net but frustratingly I couldn't open the fish treat container. When I tried to back out of this trap, the gate wouldn't let me out and Dad had to rescue me. I never got the fish treats.



Trapped in the crab trap and no way to get fish treats

Despite repeated lectures that walking on the slippery deck rails puts me at risk of falling into the water, it is a favourite pastime. I've never fallen off into the water even when making point U-turns. Bengals are good acrobats!

Years after my first and only swim, I continued to obey the no-getting-onto-the-dock rule until, after a long cruise in the Broughton Archipelago, we docked at the Blind Channel Resort. Here I felt confident enough to resume exploring docks at dusk. But I got lost again! When trying to find my way back to OLMAHA, I found a boat that smelled like OLMAHA but it wasn't! Confused, I sat on the dock beside it and yowled for Dad. He came to rescue me and, explaining I had found Gord's boat, MY FAIR LADY, escorted me back to OLMAHA. To date I have not ventured onto a dock again, and not sure I ever will. I'm scared that maybe Dad won't be able to find me! But all in all, I look forward to more summer adventures on OLMAHA.



Showing off my acrobatic skills

Classic Yacht Association
Canadian Fleet

Commodore..... Bill Noon

Vice Commodore.....Marc Johnston

Rear Commodore.....Michael Manchon

Staff Commodore.....Randy Olafson

Treasurer.....Dave Peebles

Notices:

Thank you to all:

The success of our newsletter depends on all of us giving input to our editor. Please support our incoming editor Marc Johnson by submitting your ideas and articles to him.

Looking forward to meeting up and socializing with everyone at the various shows and our rendezvous.

Gord