

Opinion

Published by Black Press Ltd at
4407 - 25th Ave. Vernon, B.C.

The **Morning Star**

The North Okanagan's
Community Newspaper
Published Sunday, Wednesday, Friday

The Morning Star, founded in 1988 as an independent community newspaper, is published each Sunday, Wednesday and Friday morning. Submissions are welcome but we cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited material including manuscripts and pictures which should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
ENTIRE CONTENTS © 1988 MORNING STAR PUBLICATIONS LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Black Press
COMMUNITY NEWS MEDIA

Community Newspapers
Association
of British Columbia

Switchboard: 250-545-3322

E-Mail:

newsroom@vernonmorningstar.com

Web site:

www.vernonmorningstar.com

Mailing Address:

4407-25th Ave., Vernon, B.C. V1T 1P5

Fax: 250-542-1510



Publisher

Ian Jensen
250-550-7906



Managing Editor

Glenn Mitchell
250-550-7920

Circulation Manager
Tammy Stelmachowicz
250-550-7901

Creative Co-ordinator
Michelle Snelgrove

Accounts Manager
Brenda Burgess

Classified Supervisor
Carol Williment
250-550-7900

Editorial Staff

Kristin Froneman	550-7923
Roger Knox	550-7922
Kevin Mitchell	550-7902
Katherine Mortimer	550-7924
Richard Rolke	550-7921
Jennifer Smith	550-7913
Lisa VanderVelde	550-7909

If you did not receive The Morning Star, call circulation for re-delivery: 250-550-7901



Launching into summer

Apparently this weekend is supposed to be a bit of a reprieve weatherwise as the mercury should drop a little and there may even be a little precipitation.

Both good things for us and our forests, hopefully sans storm activity, and a welcome break from the dry, record-breaking heat of the past few weeks.

Now it sounds kind of funny to complain about hot, dry weather in the Okanagan, after all that's pretty much what we're known for and why people flock here to take advantage of our wonderful lakes – but there's always that too much of a good thing, well, thing.

I don't mind the heat at all but when it gets north of 34 or 35 my motivational mojo goes south and I'm more likely to hole up in the basement than actually enjoy the great outdoors.

But that seems very wrong too as we do live in Canada and the summer season, no matter how intense it may get at times, will be over in the blink of a mosquito's eye.

So we do get out there when we can and both times of late it's been absolutely wonderful, which always makes you wonder why you don't get out there and take advantage of all this place has to offer on a more regular basis.

After all we live on three lakes. And that's where I'm going to start, on the smallest and most underrated lake around.

We finally got our boat out of the garage and decided Swan Lake was the perfect first outing to test things out.

It was Canada Day and we decided that the other lakes would be too busy, especially the boat launches which I'm a little gun shy about (especially when it's the first time out and my brain hasn't quite adjusted to trailer thinking quite yet).

And we were right.

The launch was a breeze and we were out enjoying the sunshine and quiet waters of Swan Lake pretty much to ourselves. On Canada Day.

Although muddy along the shoreline and no beach or park to speak of, Swan is perfect for packing a snack and relaxing amidst the wildlife. When it gets too hot to handle a quick dip in the middle of the lake is oh so refreshing and even the speeding traffic on the nearby highway makes you appreciate that you're floating peacefully on the water and not in, well, summer traffic.

And so easy to get to. And launch.

Now we also like Okanagan and go out to Mabel, a personal favourite with the kids growing up while camping at the provincial park at the south end, when we can but we've stayed away from Kal in recent years due to the busyness factor. OK, the boat launches weighed into it too.

But last Sunday we went for it along with some friends, who are Kal veterans.

And it was spectacular.

We launched at Kekuli Bay, a first for us and a little daunting as we approached and saw how busy it was, but with a little guidance the rookie handled it as well as could be expected and soon we were off in the great turquoise wonder.

The lake that day was particularly emerald and wondrous and it was the perfect elixir for a hot sunny Okanagan day, and yes there were plenty of boats but still room to tie up and relax and everyone seemed friendly and grateful to be out there.

We even ventured through the Oyama channel, another first and very cool, and on to Wood Lake and down to Turtle Bay and back.

I have to admit it was a great day and left me wondering why would we have avoided this beautiful lake for so long.

We still had to get off the lake, however, and when we returned to Kekuli a little later than what we thought would be a busy time there was still a long lineup to get off the lake.

But you know what, by the time I got the truck and trailer from the overflow parking area, it was magically our turn to come off the lake and everything went off without a hitch, so to speak.

Victoria ignoring risks to water

It's obvious the provincial government isn't taking local water quality, the economy or ecosystems seriously.

It was reported at Tuesday's Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting that Victoria continues to provide insufficient money to keep invasive mussels from arriving in local lakes and bureaucrats have left a proposed protocol for blue green algae in limbo.

When it comes to zebra and quagga mussels, funding three mobile stations searching boats at the Alberta border won't cut it.

"We are trying to put pressure on the provincial government to do more and have five (permanent) inspection stations," said OBWB director Juliette Cunningham.

"There is a cost if we don't stop them (mussels) from arriving here."

They clog water intake pipes, pumps and boat motors. They also deplete food sources for fish and produce toxins that kill fish and birds and contaminate drinking water.

In terms of blue green algae, the substance can impact beaches and water intakes.

A protocol to handle the algae began being developed in 2013, and it was supposed to be released in the spring, but nothing has happened.

"There's a draft in place, sitting on the desk of the deputy minister of health," said Anna Warwick Sears, OBWB executive director.

With both the mussels and the algae, the lack of leadership from the provincial government means critical infrastructure is at risk as is public health and the economy.

It's time for the various government agencies involved to get with the program.